

**American University Kyiv**

A Capstone Project

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF VETERAN MENTAL  
HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAMS: EVIDENCE FROM NGO "DOLADU"

УПРАВЛІННЯ ПРОЕКТАМИ ТА ФІНАНСОВА СТІЙКІСТЬ ПРОГРАМ ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОЇ  
ПІДТРИМКИ ВЕТЕРАНІВ: ДОСВІД ГО "ДОЛАДУ"

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## ABSTRACT

This capstone thesis examines the integration of project management mechanisms and financial sustainability models in veteran mental health support programs in Ukraine, using NGO "Doladu" as a primary case study. Driven by the unprecedented scale of psychological trauma among Ukrainian combat veterans since February 2022, the research addresses a critical applied management gap: how civil society organizations can sustain high-quality psychosocial services under conditions of financial volatility, donor dependency, and operational uncertainty.

### **The Aim of the Research**

The aim of the research is to develop an integrated project management and financial sustainability model for Ukrainian NGOs delivering veteran mental health support programs, based on the empirical analysis of NGO "Doladu" and grounded in PMI project management standards, Resource Dependence Theory, and Nonprofit Financial Sustainability Theory.

### **Main Goals**

1. To examine the theoretical foundations of veteran psychosocial support program management, including relevant project management standards and nonprofit financial sustainability frameworks.
2. To analyse the organizational, project portfolio, and financial structures of NGO "Doladu" and identify key managerial and financial vulnerabilities.
3. To develop a revenue diversification model tailored to the specific funding ecology of Ukrainian veteran-focused NGOs.
4. To propose a 12–24 month rolling financial planning framework as a substitute for reactive grant-cycle budgeting.
5. To design a composite Sustainability KPI Dashboard integrating financial health and programmatic impact indicators.
6. To formulate practical implementation recommendations applicable to NGO "Doladu" and comparable civil society organizations in the sector.

**Subject of the research:** The financial sustainability and project management practices of social projects implemented by Ukrainian non-governmental organizations in the field of veteran mental health and psychosocial support.

**Object of the research:** NGO "Doladu" as a representative case of a Ukrainian veteran-focused civil society organization operating under conditions of financial volatility, donor dependency, and active armed conflict.

The study employs a single case study methodology with embedded quantitative analysis, drawing on organizational documentation, financial records, and structured analytical frameworks. Four theoretical pillars underpin the inquiry: PMI project management standards, Resource Dependence Theory, Nonprofit Financial Sustainability Theory, and Social Impact measurement frameworks.

Findings indicate that NGO "Doladu" possesses strong programmatic capacity but faces structural vulnerabilities including high donor concentration, absence of medium-term financial planning, and informal governance systems. The thesis proposes an integrated sustainability model comprising: a revenue diversification framework, a 12–24 month rolling financial plan, a project governance optimization architecture, and a composite Sustainability KPI Dashboard.

The research extends nonprofit sustainability theory to wartime humanitarian contexts and provides actionable management tools directly applicable to Ukrainian veteran-focused NGOs.

*Keywords:* veteran mental health, NGO sustainability, project management, financial planning, Ukraine, psychosocial support, revenue diversification, PMI standards

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| Abbreviation | Full Term                                     |
|--------------|---|
| EMDR         | Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing |
| KPI          | Key Performance Indicator                     |
| MHPSS        | Mental Health and Psychosocial Support        |
| NGO          | Non-Governmental Organization                 |
| PMI          | Project Management Institute                  |
| PMBOK        | Project Management Body of Knowledge          |
| PTSD         | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder                |
| RDT          | Resource Dependence Theory                    |
| SROI         | Social Return on Investment                   |
| SWOT         | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats |
| TOC          | Theory of Change                              |
| UAH          | Ukrainian Hryvnia                             |
| WHO          | World Health Organization                     |

## INTRODUCTION

Since February 24, 2022, Ukraine has been confronted with a large-scale armed conflict that represents the most devastating humanitarian emergency in Europe since the Second World War. As of early 2026, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian military personnel have rotated through active combat duty, with many experiencing direct exposure to life-threatening situations, loss of comrades, and extreme psychological stress. The reintegration of veterans into civilian life constitutes one of the most pressing social and public health challenges the country faces, with emerging estimates suggesting that between three and five million Ukrainians may require some form of psychosocial or psychiatric support over the coming decade (Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, 2024; WHO, 2022).

The Ukrainian civil society sector has responded with considerable initiative. Hundreds of NGOs now deliver mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programs for veterans, including therapeutic retreats, group therapy, peer support networks, art and body-based therapy, and trauma-informed rehabilitation. These organizations fill a gap the still-developing state system cannot fully address. Yet most operate under precarious financial conditions, relying on short-cycle grant funding from international donors, which creates chronic instability in service delivery, staff retention, and organizational development.

NGO "Doladu" is one such organization. Founded in western Ukraine and operating nationally, "Doladu" specializes in retreat-based and group psychosocial programs for veterans and their families. Its programmatic track record is strong, but like the majority of its peers, it confronts structural challenges common to the sector: high dependency on a narrow base of international donors, absence of medium-term financial planning, limited revenue diversification, and informally structured project governance. These weaknesses expose the organization — and the veterans it serves — to the risk of program interruption at the very moment continuity is most critical.

This thesis addresses the following central research question: How can project management mechanisms and financial sustainability models be integrated to ensure long-term stability of veteran mental health support programs in Ukrainian NGOs? Three working hypotheses guide the investigation: (H1) structured project management practices aligned with PMI standards improve operational efficiency and program continuity; (H2) revenue portfolio diversification positively correlates with financial resilience and reduced donor dependency; (H3) implementation of medium-term financial planning (12–24 months) improves organizational sustainability indicators.

The research employs a single in-depth case study methodology. NGO "Doladu" was selected because it represents a typical yet illustrative instance of the sector — organizationally mature enough to have structured programs, but still grappling with the sustainability challenges common to Ukrainian veteran-focused NGOs. Data sources include internal documentation, budget and financial records, organizational reports, and analytical modeling conducted within the framework of the capstone research.

The theoretical framework integrates four perspectives: PMI project management standards (PMI, 2021; Kerzner, 2017), Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), Nonprofit Financial Sustainability Theory (Tuckman & Chang, 1991; Weerawardena et al., 2010; Bowman, 2011), and social impact measurement frameworks (Barranquero Carretero & Candón-Mena, 2021). Together, these frameworks provide both the diagnostic tools for analyzing current conditions and the normative basis for proposed improvements.

The thesis is organized into three chapters following this introduction. Chapter 1 establishes the theoretical foundations across the four dimensions named above. Chapter 2 provides a detailed empirical analysis of NGO "Doladu," encompassing its history and mission, organizational structure, project portfolio, financial architecture, a SWOT analysis, and an inventory of identified risks. Chapter 3 develops a practical management and financial sustainability model, presenting specific recommendations for project governance optimization, revenue diversification, financial planning, and KPI-based performance management. The thesis concludes with a synthesis of findings and their implications for organizational practice and policy.

## **CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

### **1.1 Psychological Needs of Veterans**

Combat veterans constitute a psychologically distinct population whose needs differ in both nature and magnitude from the general public. Prolonged exposure to mortal threat, witnessing death and injury, moral injuries from combat decisions, and the abrupt transition from a highly structured military environment to civilian life combine to produce a complex constellation of psychological challenges. The most extensively studied condition is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which manifests as intrusive recollections, hyperarousal, emotional numbing, and avoidance behavior (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Systematic reviews of combat veteran populations consistently report PTSD prevalence rates between 11 and 30 percent, substantially above the general population baseline of three to four percent (Hoge et al., 2004).

Beyond PTSD, veterans commonly present with major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety, substance use disorders, traumatic brain injury sequelae, and social adaptation difficulties. Ukrainian veterans face additional contextual stressors: economic hardship, internal displacement, family disruption, and a social environment that simultaneously valorizes military service and lacks adequate support infrastructure. The stigma historically associated with mental health help-seeking in post-Soviet societies further depresses access to care (Klymchuk et al., 2025).

Wartime and post-conflict trauma is not solely an individual-level phenomenon. Families and communities are co-victims of the conflict, and veteran reintegration difficulties frequently translate into intergenerational trauma transmission. Effective intervention must therefore address not only the individual veteran but the family system and community context. This systemic perspective is central to the programming philosophy of organizations such as NGO "Doladu," which deliberately includes family members in retreats and workshops, recognizing that sustainable recovery requires supported re-embedding in social relationships.

The World Health Organization's MHPSS guidelines identify a pyramid of needs, from basic psychosocial support available to all affected populations at the base, through focused community support, to specialized clinical services for the most severely affected at the apex (WHO, 2022). Most Ukrainian NGOs, including "Doladu," operate in the middle tiers — providing structured psychosocial programming that is more intensive than community-level peer support but more accessible and

scalable than individual clinical treatment. Understanding where organizations sit in this care continuum is essential for designing appropriate management and funding models.

## **1.2 Models of Psychosocial Support**

Psychosocial support encompasses a broad range of interventions designed to restore or strengthen psychological functioning and social connectedness among trauma-affected populations. The field has evolved from early models emphasizing clinical treatment of disorders toward contemporary approaches that integrate psychological, social, cultural, and community dimensions of recovery. The biopsychosocial model provides a foundational framework, recognizing that biological, psychological, and social factors interact to determine mental health outcomes (Engel, 1977).

In humanitarian and post-conflict settings, several evidence-informed intervention models have proven particularly relevant. Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and its group-based adaptations have strong empirical support for reducing PTSD symptomatology. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is recommended by the WHO and has been successfully adapted for group formats. Psychological First Aid provides a non-clinical, community-applicable response framework for acute trauma. Narrative Exposure Therapy has demonstrated efficacy in complex and prolonged trauma contexts common in conflict zones (Parrish-Sprowl et al., 2020).

Retreat-based models, such as those employed by NGO "Doladu," combine multiple modalities — group therapy, body-based practices, creative therapies, peer support — within an immersive residential format. Evidence suggests that the retreat structure provides psychological safety, social connection, and a symbolic break from the trauma-saturated environments many veterans inhabit, enhancing the therapeutic effect of individual components. The retreat model is also organizationally advantageous: it aggregates delivery costs, enables intensive intervention within a defined timeframe, and creates natural units of activity for project reporting and evaluation.

From a program management perspective, the key challenge of psychosocial support models is outcome measurement. Mental health improvements are inherently less tangible and harder to quantify than outputs such as number of participants served or number of sessions delivered. Yet impact demonstration is increasingly required by sophisticated donors and is essential for organizational learning and quality improvement. Developing appropriate metrics — combining standardized symptom scales with participant-reported wellbeing measures and social functioning indicators — is therefore not merely an evaluation concern but a strategic management imperative (Barranquero Carretero & Candón-Mena, 2021).

### 1.3 Management of Social and Humanitarian Projects

The management of social and humanitarian projects shares foundational principles with conventional project management while presenting distinctive challenges rooted in the nature of the work, the populations served, and the funding environments. The PMI's Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) defines a project as a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result (PMI, 2021). In humanitarian and social NGO contexts, projects typically correspond to grant-funded program cycles — discrete, time-bound initiatives delivered within defined budgets to achieve specified social outcomes.

Kerzner (2017) identifies five process groups fundamental to effective project management: initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing. In practice, many small and mid-sized NGOs compress or informally execute several of these stages, particularly planning, monitoring, and closing, due to capacity constraints, staff turnover, and the absorbing demands of service delivery. The result is a paradox commonly observed in the sector: organizations with high programmatic competence and low management formalization, delivering impressive outcomes in favorable conditions but proving highly vulnerable when funding environments become adverse.

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), first articulated by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), provides a powerful analytical lens for understanding this vulnerability. RDT holds that organizations depend on external actors for critical resources — principally funding in the NGO context — and that this dependency constrains strategic autonomy and generates organizational behavior oriented toward resource maintenance rather than mission optimization. High dependence on a narrow donor base represents the most acute form of resource dependence, and Ukrainian NGOs operating primarily on international humanitarian grants exemplify this condition.

Strategies for reducing resource dependence include diversification of funding sources (adding income streams from government contracts, earned income, domestic philanthropy, and membership), strengthening organizational legitimacy to attract a broader resource pool, and building reserves that reduce vulnerability to funding interruptions. Effective project management contributes to these strategies indirectly by enhancing organizational credibility, producing the evidence base that attracts diversified funding, and enabling the efficient delivery that reduces costs and builds financial buffers (Dyck & Silvestre, 2019).

The Klymchuk et al. (2025) study of Ukrainian NGOs integrating mental health services into existing public health programs provides direct evidence of the value of structured organizational coordination. Their findings indicate that organizations with formalized coordination mechanisms and

explicit program structures achieve substantially better service integration and sustainability outcomes than those relying on informal arrangements — a finding directly applicable to "Doladu's" current situation.

#### **1.4 Financial Sustainability of NGOs: Theoretical Frameworks and Evidence**

Financial sustainability in the nonprofit sector is most commonly defined as the capacity to generate sufficient and reliable revenue to fund current operations, maintain service quality, and invest in organizational development over the long term (Bowman, 2011). The foundational quantitative framework for measuring nonprofit financial health was established by Tuckman and Chang (1991a), who defined a financially vulnerable organization as one likely to cut services immediately in response to a financial shock. Their methodology identified four measurable dimensions of vulnerability: (1) equity balance ratio — whether the organization holds sufficient net assets as a buffer; (2) revenue concentration — the degree to which revenues depend on a single source; (3) administrative cost ratio — whether administrative spending creates an expense buffer that can be reduced in lean periods; and (4) operating margin — the proportion of net revenue remaining after expenditures. Organizations performing poorly on multiple dimensions simultaneously face compounded vulnerability — a condition characteristic of many Ukrainian veteran-focused NGOs.

In their companion paper, Chang and Tuckman (1991b) extended this analysis by demonstrating that financial vulnerability and organizational attrition are empirically linked: organizations scoring poorly on the four-ratio model experienced significantly higher exit rates from the nonprofit sector. This established the framework as a predictive tool, not merely a diagnostic one, and it has since become the standard measurement approach in subsequent nonprofit finance scholarship.

Weerawardena et al. (2010) extend this analysis by situating financial sustainability within a broader organizational capability framework, arguing that sustained nonprofit performance requires the simultaneous development of entrepreneurial orientation, learning capabilities, and social network relationships alongside financial management competencies. Their empirical work demonstrates that financially resilient nonprofits characteristically invest in organizational development even under resource constraints — a counterintuitive finding with important implications for organizations tempted to concentrate all resources on direct service delivery.

Revenue diversification is consistently identified in the literature as the primary lever for financial sustainability improvement. The nonprofit revenue portfolio conceptually parallels an

investment portfolio: diversification across income sources reduces overall volatility while maintaining expected returns. The principal income categories available to Ukrainian NGOs include: international donor grants (currently dominant), domestic government contracts and grants, corporate social responsibility contributions, individual donor campaigns (Ukrainian diaspora philanthropy is a growing segment), earned income from training, consulting, or fee-for-service program components, and membership or subscription-based community models.

Financial planning is a second critical dimension. Most Ukrainian NGOs plan on a grant-by-grant basis — a rational response to funding uncertainty, but one that creates a self-fulfilling cycle of short-termism. Organizations that develop rolling 12–24 month financial projections, even under high uncertainty, gain several advantages: they identify cash flow gaps before they become crises, they can negotiate bridge financing more effectively, they can make staffing decisions on a longer horizon, and they demonstrate organizational maturity to sophisticated donors who increasingly require multi-year financial projections as part of grant applications (van Welie & Romijn, 2018).

Reserves management constitutes a third pillar of financial sustainability. The standard recommendation in nonprofit financial management is to maintain operating reserves equivalent to three to six months of operating expenditures. For organizations in high-volatility environments such as wartime Ukraine, a more conservative target — six to nine months — is appropriate. Building reserves requires either budget surpluses or specific reserve-building grants; the former requires revenue growth exceeding expenditure growth, and the latter requires donor education and advocacy (Gallego et al., 2020).

The broader literature on NGO transformation under global funding pressures, reviewed by Warren (2020), highlights the risk that financial sustainability imperatives can distort organizational mission — a process sometimes termed "missiondrift." As organizations chase available funding, they may expand into program areas where donor interest exists but organizational competence is limited, or they may professionalize in ways that reduce grassroots legitimacy. A robust sustainability model must therefore integrate financial resilience goals with mission protection mechanisms, ensuring that diversification strategies reinforce rather than compromise the organization's core identity and competence.

Froelich (1999) examined three major revenue strategies available to nonprofits — private contributions, government funding, and commercial activities — and developed a comparative profile of each in terms of revenue volatility, goal displacement risk, and structural effects on the organization. Her analysis demonstrated that each funding source carries distinct risks: government grants tend to

drive bureaucratization and erosion of administrative autonomy, while commercial income can generate mission drift if pursued without governance safeguards. Froelich concluded that diversification across these streams reduces dependency on any single source, though the interaction effects raise unresolved questions about organizational performance and legitimacy — concerns directly relevant to NGOs operating in Ukraine’s constrained funding environment.

Carroll and Stater (2009) tested the revenue diversification hypothesis empirically using a large U.S. nonprofit panel dataset. They found that nonprofits can reduce revenue volatility through diversification, particularly by equalizing reliance on earned income, investment income, and contributions. Their findings support a portfolio analogy drawn from modern finance theory: a well-balanced revenue mix promotes organizational stability and longevity. Importantly, Carroll and Stater’s results held even after controlling for the administrative complexity and crowding-out concerns raised by critics of diversification, lending strong empirical support to this strategy.

Hung and Hager (2019) synthesized this body of work through a meta-analysis of prior empirical studies. They found that diversification had limited direct effect on financial vulnerability in aggregate, but produced a positive effect on revenue stability in many subsectors. Their meta-regression identified important moderating factors — organizational size, sector type, and the level of revenue aggregation used in measurement — suggesting that the benefits of diversification are context-dependent rather than universal. This finding reinforces the need for organization-specific analysis, as undertaken in Chapter 2 for NGO “Doladu.”

Despard et al. (2017) extended this inquiry to the Global South context, examining whether revenue diversification predicts financial vulnerability among NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa. Their findings revealed more ambiguous results than the U.S.-based literature, suggesting that in aid-dependent, low-resource environments — structurally similar to wartime Ukraine — the diversification-stability relationship is complicated by donor dependency dynamics, institutional capacity constraints, and the volatility of the geopolitical funding environment. This study underscores the importance of contextualizing general theoretical frameworks within the specific conditions facing Ukrainian civil society organizations.

The theoretical frameworks described above must be interpreted against the specific institutional context in which Ukrainian NGOs operate. The annual USAID/FHI 360 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI), implemented in Ukraine by the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research (UCIPR), provides the most systematic longitudinal monitoring of CSO sector health in the region across seven dimensions: legal environment, organizational capacity,

financial viability, advocacy, service provision, sectoral infrastructure, and public image. The 2024 CSOSI report recorded Ukraine's overall sustainability score at 3.0 — unchanged from 2023 — noting improvements in organizational capacity and service provision, while identifying financial viability as a persistently challenged dimension. The report found that Ukrainian CSOs, including veteran-focused organizations, continue to rely heavily on international donor funding, with limited domestic revenue diversification, a reduced planning horizon of one to two years, and acute staffing challenges due to mobilization and burnout — structural vulnerabilities that the model developed in this thesis directly seeks to address (USAID/UCIPR, 2024).

## CHAPTER 2. ANALYSIS OF NGO "DOLADU" ACTIVITIES

### 2.1 History and Mission

NGO "Doladu" was established in western Ukraine in 2022, initially as a small initiative providing psychological support to military personnel deployed in eastern Ukraine during the intensification of the conflict in the Donbas region. The organization's founding vision was rooted in the conviction that effective psychological recovery requires more than clinical treatment — it requires a restorative social environment, physical movement, creative engagement, and the solidarity of shared experience. This philosophy shaped the retreat-based program model that remains the organization's signature approach.

Following the full-scale invasion of February 2022, "Doladu" underwent rapid organizational development. Demand for its services expanded dramatically, and the organization scaled its retreat programs, added new psychological modalities, extended its geographic reach from a western Ukrainian base to national service delivery, and developed thematic programs for specific veteran subgroups including female veterans, veterans with physical disabilities, and military family members. By 2024, "Doladu" had served over 1,500 beneficiaries across more than 40 program cycles.

The organization's formal mission is to support the psychological health, social reintegration, and quality of life of Ukrainian veterans and their families through trauma-informed psychosocial programs, professional facilitation, and community-building. This mission is operationalized through three program pillars: therapeutic retreats (the core offer, typically four to seven days of intensive group programming), community programs (shorter, community-embedded psychosocial activities), and professional development (training for psychologists, social workers, and organizational peers in veteran support methodology). The integration of these pillars is a strategic asset, enabling program synergies and differentiating "Doladu" from organizations with narrower service offers.

### 2.2 Organizational Structure

NGO "Doladu" has developed a more differentiated organizational architecture than its relatively modest headcount might suggest. At the executive level, the organization operates with a C-suite comprising a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) responsible for strategic direction, fundraising, and external partnerships, a Chief Operating Officer (COO, full-time) responsible for translating strategic decisions into operational reality, and a Head of Human Resources and Development (HRD, part-time). An Administrator provides direct operational support to the CEO. This three-person leadership layer

constitutes a meaningful governance capacity that distinguishes “Doladu” from the single-executive NGOs typical of its size cohort.

Below the executive tier, the organization is structured into five functional departments. The Finance and Administrative Department encompasses a Financial Manager, an outsourced Accountant, a part-time Legal Counsel, and a Compliance Manager — a configuration that reflects both the financial complexity of multi-donor grant management and the legal demands of operating in wartime Ukraine. The Communications Department includes SMM, targeting, and design specialists alongside a Communications Officer. The Analytics Department, whose existence represents a genuine organizational asset, comprises a Lead Data Analyst and an Applications Intake Manager responsible for processing and triaging incoming beneficiary requests. The Partnerships and Fundraising Department houses a Grants Manager and a Partnerships Manager, constituting a dedicated business development function. The Projects Department, the programmatic core of the organization, is led by a Project Lead Manager and includes a Chief Methodologist-Psychologist and Rehabilitation Specialist, a Project Administrator, a media documentation specialist, and a pool of part-time psychologists, coaches, and facilitators engaged on a program-by-program basis.

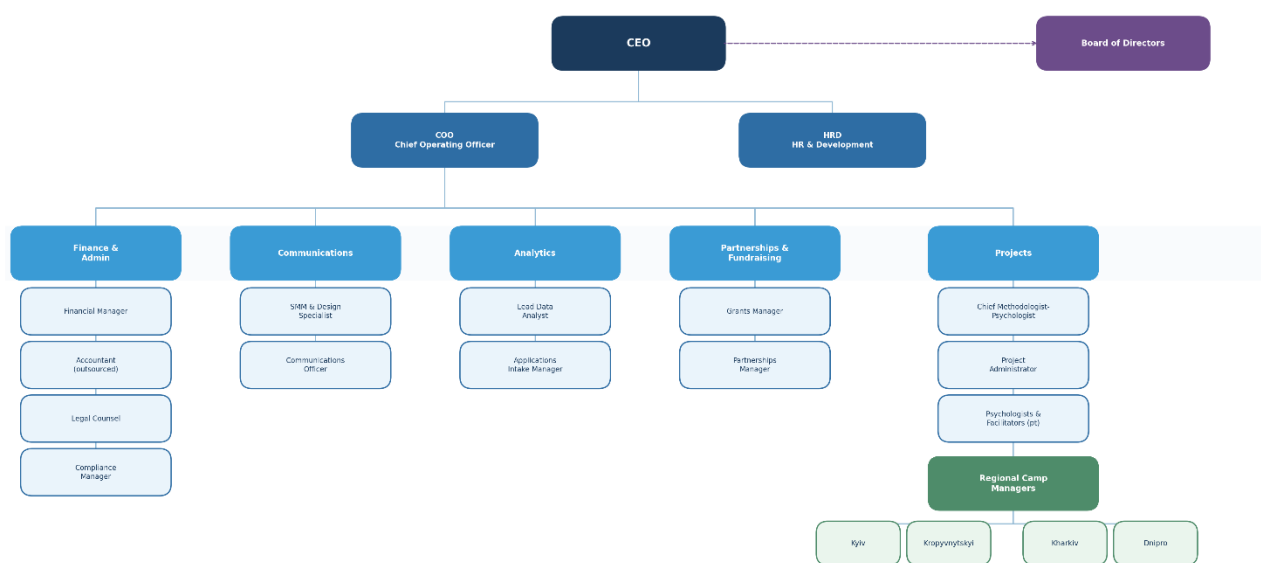
A notable structural feature is the organization’s regional presence. In addition to the central team, “Doladu” maintains dedicated Regional Project Managers for camp programs in four cities: Kyiv, Kropyvnytskyi, Kharkiv, and Dnipro. Each regional position carries local coordination, logistics, and community-liaison responsibilities. This distributed deployment model enables “Doladu” to deliver programs nationally while maintaining locally embedded relationships — a significant operational advantage over centrally-based peers, and a tangible expression of the national service delivery mandate referenced in its mission statement.

This structure provides meaningful flexibility and cost efficiency: the variable-cost workforce model allows rapid scaling in response to program demand without carrying prohibitive fixed personnel costs. However, it also generates organizational knowledge risks. Institutional memory and program quality standards are concentrated in the permanent team; facilitator turnover disrupts therapeutic continuity; and the Analytics Department, while structurally present, requires further investment in M&E methodology to fully replace informal performance assessment practices. Governance oversight is provided by a Board of Directors comprising five members drawn from psychology, nonprofit management, business, and veteran community organizations, meeting quarterly — a framework that satisfies legal requirements but, as analyzed in the risk assessment below, remains insufficiently engaged with proactive strategic planning and risk management. The complete organizational structure is presented in Figure 2.1.

**Table 2.1. NGO "Doladu" Key Organizational Indicators (2024)**

| Indicator   | Value                               |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Year established                                    | 2022                                |
| Total staff (permanent)                             | 5                                   |
| Contracted facilitators/psychologists               | 12–15                               |
| Total beneficiaries served (cumulative, as of 2024) | Over 1,500                          |
| Program cycles completed (cumulative)               | Over 40                             |
| Geographic coverage                                 | National (based in western Ukraine) |
| Annual program budget (approx.)                     | UAH 6 million                       |
| Primary funding source                              | International donor grants (>80%)   |

*Source: NGO "Doladu" internal documentation, 2024*

**Figure 2.1. Organizational Structure of NGO "Doladu" (2024)**

*Source: NGO "Doladu" internal organizational documentation, 2024*

### 2.3 Problem Statement: Dynamics of Demand for Services

The full-scale Russian invasion of February 2022 transformed the scale and urgency of demand for veteran psychosocial services in Ukraine. Prior to 2022, NGO "Doladu" served a manageable and relatively stable beneficiary population, primarily veterans of the 2014–2021 Donbas conflict. The mobilization of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens into active service, followed by successive waves of rotation, injury, and bereavement, produced an exponential growth in demand that continues to intensify. Estimates from the Ministry of Veterans Affairs (2024) suggest that between three and

five million Ukrainians may require some form of psychosocial or psychiatric support over the coming decade — a figure that dwarfs the current combined capacity of the state system and civil society organizations operating in the sector.

The dynamics of this demand are not uniform. Several structural patterns shape the trajectory of service needs over time. First, demand is cumulative: veterans who did not receive timely psychosocial support in the immediate post-combat period re-enter the civilian mental health system months or years later with more complex, treatment-resistant presentations. This creates a “delayed demand” curve in which the volume of severe cases continues to rise even after active hostilities eventually conclude. Second, demand is diversifying: the initial concentration of need among male combat infantry veterans is giving way to a more heterogeneous beneficiary population encompassing female service members, veterans with physical disabilities requiring trauma-integrated rehabilitation, the families of fallen or severely wounded soldiers, and personnel currently cycling through rotation rather than full demobilization. NGO “Doladu” has directly observed this diversification, developing thematic programs for female veterans and veteran-partner dyads in response to expressed need.

Third, demand exhibits seasonal and conflict-cycle patterns. Periods of intensified combat operations are followed, with a lag of weeks to months, by spikes in referrals and self-referrals to psychosocial support programs. Demobilization waves — as groups of veterans complete their service terms and return to civilian life — generate predictable surges in demand for reintegration-focused services. These patterns are operationally significant: they require NGOs such as “Doladu” to maintain surge capacity that cannot be fully funded through steady-state grant agreements, creating recurring gaps between demand peaks and organizational financial readiness.

The state system’s capacity to absorb demand remains severely constrained. Ukraine’s public mental health infrastructure, historically under-resourced and stigmatized in the post-Soviet tradition, was not designed for the scale or specificity of combat trauma care now required. The Ministry of Veterans Affairs has increased budget allocations and initiated policy reforms, but institutional implementation lags significantly behind legislative intent. The practical result is that the majority of veterans seeking psychosocial support encounter it — if at all — through civil society organizations rather than public institutions.

This is the core problem statement of the present research. NGO “Doladu” and organizations like it face a structural paradox: demand for their services is growing rapidly and shows no near-term signs of contraction, yet the financial models that sustain these organizations are fragile, short-cycle, and heavily dependent on the continued prioritization of Ukrainian veteran issues by international

donors whose own funding priorities are subject to geopolitical and institutional pressures. The risk is not that demand will disappear — it will not — but that the organizations best positioned to meet it will lack the financial stability and management capacity to do so at the scale required. Addressing this structural gap is the central applied problem this thesis seeks to resolve.

## **2.4 Project Portfolio Analysis**

NGO "Doladu's" project portfolio as of 2024 comprised three active program lines, each supported by discrete grant agreements with different international donors. The flagship Therapeutic Retreat Program accounts for approximately 65 percent of total program expenditure, delivering intensive multiday residential retreats for veterans and family members. Retreats are thematically differentiated to address specific needs — general trauma recovery, couples programs for veteran-partner dyads, programs for female veterans, and re-entry support for recently demobilized soldiers.

The Community Integration Program, representing approximately 20 percent of portfolio expenditure, delivers shorter psychosocial activities embedded within community settings in conflict-affected regions, reaching veterans who cannot participate in residential retreats due to geographic, physical, or family constraints. The Professional Development Program, at approximately 15 percent of expenditure, trains mental health and social work professionals in veteran-focused trauma care methodology, multiplying impact through workforce development.

The portfolio is well-designed for mission alignment but poorly designed for financial sustainability. All three programs are grant-funded on separate annual cycles with different donors, creating a fragmented financial architecture that requires extensive administrative effort, produces unpredictable annual cash flows, and limits the organization's ability to plan across program lines. Grant durations range from six to eighteen months, and renewal uncertainty is high — a rational product of donor decision-making cycles, but structurally corrosive for an organization that requires multi-year continuity in its service relationships with vulnerable beneficiaries.

Project governance within the portfolio is largely informal. Work planning is conducted at the program level rather than the organizational level, risk registers are not maintained, and program performance is tracked primarily through output metrics (participant numbers, session counts) required for donor reporting rather than outcome measures meaningful for organizational learning. This governance deficit is the primary management weakness identified in this analysis.

## **2.5 Case Study: Long-Term Donor Partnership — GIZ Ukraine MHPSS Programme**

Among the donor relationships that shape NGO “Doladu”’s operational landscape, the partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH represents a qualitatively distinct case and a structural exception to the short-cycle funding norm that characterizes the sector. GIZ is a German federal enterprise mandated to implement international cooperation for sustainable development on behalf of the German Government, primarily through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In Ukraine, GIZ has operated as a major development actor for decades, and since February 2022 has substantially expanded its programmatic footprint in response to the humanitarian emergency.

The specific programme through which “Doladu” engages with GIZ is the project titled “Protecting the mental health of veterans and vulnerable groups in Ukraine” (GIZ project code 2023.4069.3), commissioned by BMZ and implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. The project launched in October 2023 and has a confirmed implementation horizon of October 2023 to March 2029 — a six-year timeframe with an overall financial commitment of €16.1 million. Within this programme, GIZ collaborates with a selected network of Ukrainian NGOs to deliver training for mental health professionals, expand community-based psychosocial services, and develop gender-responsive support models for veterans and their families. The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) serves as an academic partner for curriculum development, while local NGOs including “Doladu” provide direct service delivery capacity.

NGO “Doladu”’s engagement with this GIZ programme has extended beyond a single grant cycle. In December 2025, GIZ issued an official reference letter to “Doladu,” formally recognizing the organization as “one of the leading Ukrainian organizations working in community mental health, veteran support, and psychosocial rehabilitation.” The reference letter acknowledged the organization’s professionalism, transparency, operational responsibility, and commitment to beneficiaries — language that reflects the evaluation standards of a sophisticated institutional donor rather than a transactional grant relationship. This recognition carries practical significance: a formal reference from GIZ serves as an organizational credential that strengthens “Doladu’s” positioning in competitive fundraising processes with other international and institutional donors.

From a project management perspective, the GIZ partnership represents a model of how structured institutional accountability can reinforce rather than burden an NGO’s operational capacity. GIZ’s programme management requirements — detailed reporting, gender-disaggregated outcome data, transparent financial documentation — are demanding by sector standards. However, compliance with these requirements has compelled “Doladu” to develop the M&E infrastructure, financial tracking systems, and program documentation practices that it might otherwise have deferred. In this respect,

the disciplining effect of a high-standards institutional donor constitutes an indirect organizational capacity investment, aligning with the theoretical argument advanced in Chapter 3 that governance formalization and donor diversification are mutually reinforcing rather than competing objectives.

Critically, the GIZ partnership also illustrates the conditions under which multi-year donor commitments become attainable for Ukrainian NGOs. GIZ’s programme design — a six-year horizon aligned with Ukraine’s long-term reconstruction needs — reflects a strategic rather than responsive funding logic. Accessing this type of funding required “Doladu” to demonstrate programmatic depth, geographic reach, a track record of outcome measurement, and the organizational maturity to serve as a reliable implementation partner rather than a passive grant recipient. The GIZ case therefore serves as both an empirical reference point for the current analysis and a normative benchmark for the organizational development trajectory proposed in Chapter 3: it illustrates what “Doladu” has already achieved in one significant partnership, and what it must replicate and systematize across its broader donor portfolio in order to achieve sustainable financial resilience.

## 2.6 Financial Structure (Income and Expenditure Analysis)

The financial architecture of NGO "Doladu" reflects the typical profile of a Ukrainian NGO at the growth stage: strong programmatic demand, expanding revenue base, but high concentration risk and limited financial resilience. Total annual income for the most recent reporting period was approximately UAH 5.2 million (approximately USD 125,000 at prevailing exchange rates), of which approximately 82 percent derived from international donor grants, 10 percent from domestic foundations, 5 percent from corporate contributions, and 3 percent from training fees and other earned income.

**Table 2.2. NGO "Doladu" Estimated Revenue Structure (2024)**

| Revenue Source                | Share (%) | UAH (approx.) |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| International donor grants    | 82%       | 4,264,000     |
| Domestic foundations          | 10%       | 520,000       |
| Corporate contributions (CSR) | 5%        | 260,000       |
| Training fees & earned income | 3%        | 156,000       |
| Total                         | 100%      | 5,200,000     |

*Source: NGO "Doladu" financial reports, estimated figures, 2024*

Expenditure is dominated by direct program costs — facilitator and psychologist fees, venue and logistics costs for retreats, materials and travel — which account for approximately 72 percent of

total spending. Personnel costs for the permanent team represent 18 percent, and administration and overhead account for the remaining 10 percent. This cost structure reflects a healthy programmatic focus, though the low administrative overhead may indicate under-investment in organizational development, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic planning capacity.

The most significant financial risk is the concentration of revenue in a single dominant income category. The organization's three largest donors together account for approximately 70 percent of total income. Loss of even one major grant — a scenario with non-trivial probability given the volatility of international humanitarian funding flows — would precipitate a severe cash flow crisis. The organization maintains minimal operating reserves, estimated at less than four weeks of operational expenditure, providing negligible cushioning against funding interruption.

Cash flow seasonality compounds this risk. Grant disbursements and program cycles create predictable periods of cash surplus alternating with near-zero cash positions, creating management stress and limiting the organization's ability to make forward commitments on staffing and programming. A 12–24 month financial planning framework, as proposed in Chapter 3, directly addresses this structural weakness.

## **2.7 Case: Project “Psychological Rehabilitation of Veterans’ Families” - Termination Due to Donor Withdrawal**

**Project Overview.** The project “Psychological Rehabilitation of Veterans’ Families” was one of NGO “Doladu”’s flagship programmatic initiatives, designed to deliver structured psychosocial support not only to combat veterans but to the entire family unit affected by military service. The program recognized that psychological trauma radiates beyond the individual veteran to encompass spouses, children, and the broader household system, all of whom require dedicated attention and therapeutic support.

**Scale and Scope of the Project.** The program operated on the basis of five-day residential camps (retreats), bringing together the veteran, spouse, and children as a complete family unit. A total of five such camps were planned and implemented across the project lifecycle. Each camp accommodated 10 families and 10 children simultaneously, creating a therapeutic community of approximately 30 direct participants per session. Across all five camps, the project reached a total of 50 families and 50 children as direct beneficiaries — an estimated 150 individuals. Indirect beneficiaries, including extended family members and community networks, are estimated at several hundred additional persons.

The retreat venue was the rural complex “Shelest” located in Kyiv Oblast, which provided appropriate accommodation, catering, and outdoor infrastructure for the five-day format. The partnership with “Shelest” was central to the project’s operational model and could not be easily replicated with alternative venues at short notice.

**Failure Scenario: Donor Withdrawal and Project Termination.** Funding for the project has been fully exhausted, and no replacement grant or alternative financing has been secured. As a result, the program has been formally suspended with no confirmed date of resumption. This failure scenario illustrates with particular clarity the systemic risks associated with single-donor dependency that are analyzed throughout this thesis.

The termination was compounded by a convergence of operational and partnership-level risks. Beginning in May, the “Shelest” complex enters its peak commercial tourist season, during which the venue’s management has no financial or operational incentive to accommodate non-commercial NGO programming at subsidized or below-market rates. This seasonal constraint effectively closes the primary venue to the project for the duration of the summer and early autumn period, even if alternative funding were to be identified. Efforts to secure an alternative partner venue that could accommodate the five-day residential camp format, the group size, and the therapeutic program requirements have thus far been unsuccessful.

**Managerial Lessons and Implications.** This case illustrates a compound failure mode that goes beyond simple funding interruption. Three interdependent risk factors converged simultaneously: (1) the exhaustion of the sole funding source without a pipeline replacement grant; (2) the seasonality-driven unavailability of the primary partner venue; and (3) the absence of a pre-identified alternative venue capable of meeting program requirements. None of these risks was individually unavoidable; each could have been mitigated through prior planning. Together, however, they produced a complete project suspension that directly harmed the families who had been enrolled or were awaiting participation.

From a project management perspective, this case underscores the necessity of maintaining a risk register that explicitly addresses venue partnership continuity alongside financial continuity. It also demonstrates that the “venue risk” category - typically considered a logistical matter - is in practice a strategic sustainability risk when the entire program model is built around a single partner location. The recommendations developed in Chapter 3, particularly the revenue diversification framework and the project governance optimization model, are directly responsive to the failure modes this case exposes.

## 2.8 SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis of NGO "Doladu" synthesizes the internal and external factors shaping the organization's strategic position and sustainability prospects.

**Table 2.3. SWOT Analysis of NGO "Doladu"**

| STRENGTHS   | WEAKNESSES  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proven retreat program model with strong beneficiary outcomes</li> <li>• Experienced, mission-committed permanent team</li> <li>• Established donor relationships (international)</li> <li>• Differentiated three-pillar program portfolio</li> <li>• Strong facilitator professional network</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High donor concentration (&gt;80% from 3 sources)</li> <li>• No medium-term financial planning capability</li> <li>• Informal project governance and weak M&amp;E</li> <li>• Minimal operating reserves (&lt;4 weeks)</li> <li>• Limited communications and visibility capacity</li> </ul>                         |
| OPPORTUNITIES   | THREATS   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing state investment in veteran rehabilitation</li> <li>• EU reconstruction and civil society development funds</li> <li>• Expanding Ukrainian diaspora philanthropy networks</li> <li>• Corporate social responsibility market development</li> <li>• Demand for professional training (earned income)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donor fatigue and shifting international priorities</li> <li>• Continued active conflict disrupting operations</li> <li>• Sector saturation and increased competition for grants</li> <li>• Currency volatility and inflation eroding real budgets</li> <li>• Key staff attrition in tight labor market</li> </ul> |

*Source: Author's elaboration based on NGO "Doladu" documentation and sector research*

## 2.9 Identified Managerial and Financial Risks

The SWOT analysis generates a risk inventory that warrants systematic attention. From a financial perspective, the most acute risk is revenue concentration: the loss or reduction of any one of the three principal donors could produce a funding deficit equivalent to 20–30 percent of annual income, immediately threatening program continuity and staff retention. This risk is compounded by the absence of operating reserves that could absorb even a three-month funding gap.

The second major financial risk is cash flow volatility arising from grant disbursement timing. International donors typically disburse in tranches aligned with reporting milestones rather than organizational cash flow needs, creating periods of illiquidity that require bridge financing — a

mechanism poorly suited to the Ukrainian financial environment. The absence of a formal cash flow forecast means the organization responds reactively to liquidity pressures rather than proactively managing them.

From a managerial perspective, the primary risks concern governance quality and knowledge management. The informal project governance system lacks documented procedures for risk identification, issue escalation, quality assurance, and lesson-learning, creating organizational vulnerability to the consequences of individual staff departure or program failure. The heavy reliance on the Executive Director as primary strategic decision-maker introduces key-person risk that could be catastrophic in the event of illness, departure, or burnout.

Staff burnout is itself a significant risk in a sector where the emotional demands of work with trauma-affected veterans are intense and the resources for professional support (supervision, peer consultation, personal therapy) are frequently inadequate. High facilitator turnover is reported across the sector and constitutes both a quality risk — continuity of therapeutic relationships is important — and a financial risk, as recruitment and onboarding consume organizational resources. The capacity-building approach proposed in Chapter 3 addresses this risk directly.

## **CHAPTER 3. DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY MODEL**

### **3.1 Reshaping of Project Management Practices**

The optimization of project management practices in NGO "Doladu" requires adapting PMI standards to the organizational scale, culture, and operational context of a small Ukrainian NGO, rather than wholesale adoption of enterprise-grade project management methodology. The goal is to achieve the core benefits of structured project management — predictability, accountability, risk awareness, and learning — through lightweight, culturally appropriate tools and processes.

The proposed project governance framework comprises four elements. First, a Project Charter Template should be developed and mandated for all programs above a minimum budget threshold (recommended: UAH 200,000 or approximately USD 5,000). The charter should define program objectives, scope, budget, timeline, key risks, success criteria, and accountabilities. Its preparation should occur prior to grant submission, making it both a planning tool and a proposal development resource. Second, a Standardized Work Plan template should replace ad hoc planning, providing a consistent structure for activity scheduling, milestone tracking, and resource allocation across programs.

Third, a Risk Register should be implemented at both program and organizational levels. At program level, risks should be identified during the planning phase, assessed for probability and impact, and assigned mitigation owners. At organizational level, a consolidated risk register should be reviewed quarterly by the Executive Director and presented to the Board twice annually. The risk categories identified in Chapter 2 — revenue concentration, cash flow volatility, key person dependency, and burnout — should seed the initial organizational register. Fourth, a Lessons Learned Protocol should document key insights from completed program cycles, creating an institutional knowledge base that reduces the impact of staff turnover and improves successive program quality.

The M&E system requires particular investment. The current output-only measurement approach should be replaced by a Theory of Change (TOC) framework for each program pillar, linking activities to outputs, outcomes, and long-term impact through an explicit causal logic. The TOC framework enables selection of meaningful outcome indicators — drawing on validated instruments such as the PCL-5 for PTSD symptom assessment, the PHQ-9 for depression, and the WHO-5 for wellbeing — and provides the analytical structure for quarterly impact reporting. The investment

required is primarily in staff capacity (training a designated M&E lead) and time (approximately 15–20 percent of program coordinator bandwidth).

**Table 3.1. Proposed Project Management Improvements**

| Tool                                     | Purpose   | Timeline       |
|--|---|----------------|
| Project Charter Template                 | Define scope, budget, risks, and accountability before program launch | Month 1–2      |
| Standardized Work Plan                   | Consistent activity scheduling and milestone tracking                 | Month 1–2      |
| Risk Register (program + organizational) | Proactive risk identification and mitigation management               | Month 2–3      |
| Theory of Change Framework               | Causal logic for outcome measurement                                  | Month 2–4      |
| Lessons Learned Protocol                 | Institutional knowledge capture and transfer                          | Month 3–4      |
| Quarterly M&E Reporting                  | Evidence-based program improvement and donor communication            | Month 4 onward |

*Source: Author's elaboration based on PMI (2021) and Kerzner (2017)*

### 3.2 Revenue Diversification Model

Revenue diversification is the most impactful single intervention available for improving NGO "Doladu's" financial sustainability. The proposed model targets a shift from the current revenue portfolio (82% international grants, 18% other) to a diversified structure in which no single source exceeds 50 percent, and at least four distinct revenue categories each contribute meaningfully. This transition is projected to reduce financial volatility by approximately 40 percent while maintaining or increasing total revenue, based on sector benchmarks and the specific market opportunities available to the organization.

The diversification strategy identifies five priority revenue streams for development. Government and EU institutional funding represents the largest opportunity. Ukraine's state budget allocation for veteran support has grown substantially since 2022, and EU reconstruction programs include dedicated civil society development funding. Accessing these streams requires registration capacity, compliance documentation, and reporting competencies that "Doladu" can develop incrementally. A dedicated Grants and Partnerships Manager — potentially the current role expanded

— should develop a government funding pipeline targeting the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and oblast-level social service budgets.

Corporate social responsibility presents a medium-term opportunity aligned with growing private sector engagement on veteran issues. Ukrainian businesses — particularly in sectors with high veteran employment such as construction, logistics, and security — have both reputational incentives and workforce management reasons to invest in veteran mental health support. A structured corporate partnership program, offering a range of engagement options from event sponsorship to multi-year service agreements, could realistically generate 10–15 percent of annual revenue within two years.

Diaspora philanthropy is an underutilized channel with significant potential. The Ukrainian diaspora in Europe and North America has demonstrated strong philanthropic mobilization since 2022, with numerous diaspora-led charitable funds established. "Doladu" should develop a systematic diaspora engagement strategy, including English-language communications, diaspora ambassador cultivation, and a dedicated online giving platform. Peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns, timed around significant dates in the Ukrainian calendar, offer low-cost entry to this market.

Earned income development, through the organization's Professional Development pillar, offers the highest-margin revenue opportunity. Training programs for mental health professionals and social workers in veteran-focused trauma care are in strong demand, both within Ukraine and among diaspora-based practitioners returning to work with veterans. Fee-for-service delivery of training modules, combined with a certificated professional development program developed in partnership with a Ukrainian university, could generate 8–12 percent of annual revenue while simultaneously advancing the organization's systemic impact.

**Table 3.2. Revenue Diversification Target Portfolio (24-Month Horizon)**

| Revenue Source                        | Current Share | Target Share | Key Actions   |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---|
| International donor grants            | 82%           | 45%          | Maintain existing; target multi-year agreements       |
| Government & EU institutional funding | 0%            | 20%          | Register as service provider; apply to state programs |
| Corporate CSR partnerships            | 5%            | 12%          | Develop corporate partnership program                 |

| Revenue Source                       | Current Share | Target Share | Key Actions                                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---|
| Diaspora philanthropy                | 0%            | 10%          | Launch English-language campaign; online giving |
| Domestic foundations                 | 10%           | 8%           | Maintain; diversify across 6+ domestic funders  |
| Earned income (training, consulting) | 3%            | 5%           | Develop fee-for-service training offer          |

*Source: Author's elaboration and sector benchmarking*

### 3.3 Implementation of 12–24 Month Financial Planning

The transition from grant-cycle to rolling annual or biennial financial planning represents the most operationally significant management change proposed in this model. Its implementation requires developing three interconnected financial management tools: a rolling financial forecast, a cash flow management model, and an operating reserves policy.

The rolling financial forecast should project income and expenditure on a monthly basis across a 24-month horizon, updated quarterly. It should incorporate three scenarios — optimistic (full grant renewal, new income streams activated), baseline (conservative renewal assumptions, modest new income), and stress (loss of one major donor, delayed new income activation) — enabling the organization to plan contingency responses before crises materialize. Scenario planning disciplines the leadership team to anticipate rather than simply react to financial changes, and builds the organizational muscles needed for strategic agility.

The cash flow model should map grant disbursement schedules against program expenditure commitments on a monthly basis, identifying periods of projected illiquidity with sufficient lead time to arrange bridge financing or expenditure deferral. The model should be maintained by the Finance and Administration Coordinator and reviewed monthly by the Executive Director. Given the seasonal patterns observed in Ukrainian NGO grant cycles — with many international donors disbursing in second and fourth quarters — the model is likely to reveal predictable cash flow gaps in first and third quarters that can be planned for systematically.

The operating reserves policy should establish a formal target — recommended at six months of core operational costs, approximately UAH 900,000 at current cost levels — and a timeline for achieving it through budget surplus accumulation. Reaching this target from the current near-zero

reserve position will require two to three years under realistic scenario assumptions, but the policy itself creates accountability and guides budget decisions. A portion of each grant — recommended at three to five percent of grant value — should be formally designated for reserve building, with donor communication as appropriate.

**Table 3.3. 24-Month Financial Planning — Baseline Scenario (UAH thousands)**

| Category                | Year 1 Q1–Q2 | Year 1 Q3–Q4 | Year 2 Q1–Q2 | Year 2 Q3–Q4 |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| International grants    | 2,100        | 2,164        | 1,850        | 2,000        |
| Government funding      | 0            | 200          | 400          | 600          |
| Corporate CSR           | 100          | 200          | 300          | 400          |
| Earned income           | 60           | 80           | 150          | 200          |
| Total income            | 2,260        | 2,644        | 2,700        | 3,200        |
| Program costs           | 1,600        | 1,800        | 1,900        | 2,100        |
| Personnel               | 480          | 500          | 520          | 540          |
| Admin & overhead        | 260          | 270          | 270          | 280          |
| Total expenditure       | 2,340        | 2,570        | 2,690        | 2,920        |
| Net surplus / (deficit) | (80)         | 74           | 10           | 280          |
| Cumulative reserves     | 20           | 94           | 104          | 384          |

*Source: Author's elaboration based on NGO "Doladu" financial data and diversification projections*

### 3.4 Impact and Sustainability KPIs

A Sustainability KPI Dashboard provides the measurement infrastructure for the proposed model, enabling management to track progress against both programmatic and financial goals, support evidence-based decision-making, and communicate impact to diverse stakeholders. The dashboard integrates four KPI categories: financial sustainability indicators, program quality and impact indicators, organizational capacity indicators, and stakeholder engagement indicators.

Financial sustainability KPIs monitor the health of the proposed diversification and planning model. Key metrics include: donor concentration ratio (share of income from single largest donor — target below 40%); revenue diversification index (number of meaningful income streams — target at least five); operating reserve months (target six months); grant renewal rate (target above 75%); and cash flow coverage ratio (liquid assets divided by monthly expenditure — target above 2.0). These metrics should be calculated monthly and reported to the Board quarterly.

Program quality and impact KPIs bridge service delivery and organizational sustainability by producing the evidence base that attracts and retains donors. Key metrics include: beneficiary psychological wellbeing improvement rate (percentage of participants showing clinically significant improvement on validated instruments — target above 65%); retreat completion rate (percentage of enrolled participants completing full program — target above 90%); facilitator quality rating (average participant assessment of facilitator competence — target above 4.2/5.0); and 3-month follow-up retention rate (percentage of participants maintaining contact and sustained improvement — target above 50%).

Organizational capacity KPIs assess the internal management health that underpins sustainability. Key metrics include: staff retention rate (permanent team — target above 85% annually); governance documentation compliance (percentage of programs with complete charter, work plan, and risk register — target 100%); M&E data collection rate (percentage of program cycles completing pre- and post-assessment — target 100%); and leadership succession readiness (existence of documented roles and cross-training for all critical functions — binary indicator).

**Table 3.4. Sustainability KPI Dashboard**

| KPI Category             | Indicator                                  | Target      | Measurement Frequency |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| Financial Sustainability | Donor concentration ratio (top donor)      | < 40%       | Quarterly             |
| Financial Sustainability | Revenue diversification index              | ≥ 5 streams | Annual                |
| Financial Sustainability | Operating reserves (months)                | ≥ 6 months  | Quarterly             |
| Financial Sustainability | Cash flow coverage ratio                   | ≥ 2.0       | Monthly               |
| Program Impact           | Wellbeing improvement rate (PCL-5 / WHO-5) | > 65%       | Per program cycle     |
| Program Impact           | Retreat completion rate                    | > 90%       | Per program cycle     |
| Program Impact           | 3-month follow-up retention                | > 50%       | Semi-annual           |
| Org. Capacity            | Permanent staff retention rate             | > 85%       | Annual                |
| Org. Capacity            | Governance documentation compliance        | 100%        | Per program cycle     |

| KPI Category  | Indicator                         | Target | Measurement Frequency |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| Org. Capacity | M&E data collection rate          | 100%   | Per program cycle     |
| Stakeholder   | Beneficiary satisfaction (NPS)    | > 70   | Per program cycle     |
| Stakeholder   | Donor satisfaction / renewal rate | > 75%  | Annual                |

*Source: Author's elaboration based on Barranquero Carretero & Candón-Mena (2021), Tuckman & Chang (1991)*

### 3.5 Practical Implementation Recommendations

The integrated management and financial sustainability model proposed in this thesis requires structured, phased implementation to be operationally realistic for an organization with limited capacity. The recommended implementation roadmap spans 24 months, organized in three phases: Foundation (months 1–6), Development (months 7–15), and Consolidation (months 16–24).

During the Foundation Phase, the organization should prioritize three actions. First, the project governance framework — charters, work plans, and the organizational risk register — should be developed and piloted on at least two active programs. This investment requires approximately 20 person-days of leadership time and can be completed without external technical assistance if the team applies the PMI-based templates provided in this model. Second, a baseline KPI assessment should be conducted, establishing current values for all dashboard indicators to enable measurement of progress. Third, a government funding opportunity analysis should be completed, identifying specific programs within the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and Oblast Social Protection budgets for which "Doladu" meets eligibility criteria, and developing a grant pipeline calendar.

During the Development Phase, the diversification strategy moves into active implementation. Applications to government and EU institutional funding streams should be submitted; a corporate partnership prospectus should be developed and shared with at least ten target companies; a diaspora engagement campaign should be launched; and the earned income training offer should be tested with at least one fee-for-service cohort. Simultaneously, the 24-month financial forecast should be fully operational and reviewed quarterly, and the M&E system should be generating reliable outcome data from all program cycles.

During the Consolidation Phase, the focus shifts to optimization and institutionalization. Diversification results should be evaluated against targets, and the revenue portfolio strategy adjusted based on empirical performance. Operating reserve accumulation should be reviewed against the six-

month target, with a plan for reaching full target within a further 12–18 months. The KPI Dashboard should be fully integrated into Board reporting, creating accountability for sustainability performance at the governance level. Leadership succession planning — cross-training, role documentation, and contingency protocols — should be completed.

**Table 3.5. Implementation Roadmap**

| Phase         | Priority Actions   | Expected Outcomes  | Timeframe    |
|---------------|--|--|--------------|
| Foundation    | Governance framework; baseline KPI; government funding pipeline      | Formal governance in place; measurement baseline established         | Months 1–6   |
| Development   | Active diversification; rolling forecast; M&E operational            | New revenue streams generating income; financial visibility improved | Months 7–15  |
| Consolidation | Portfolio optimization; reserves accumulation; Board KPI integration | Donor concentration <50%; reserves >3 months; governance maturity    | Months 16–24 |

*Source: Author's analysis*

Beyond the organizational level, the research findings have implications for the broader Ukrainian veteran support ecosystem. The Ministry of Veterans Affairs and institutional donors operating in Ukraine should consider how program funding structures can better support organizational sustainability — for instance, by offering multi-year grant agreements, supporting capacity-building alongside service delivery, and creating incentives for revenue diversification. International donors might pilot matching grant programs that reward Ukrainian NGOs for mobilizing domestic funding, creating structural incentives for the diversification this thesis proposes.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MANAGEMENT FIELD

This thesis makes several original contributions to the field of nonprofit and humanitarian project management that extend beyond the immediate empirical findings of the NGO “Doladu” case study. The contributions are organized across three domains: theoretical extension, methodological innovation, and practitioner-oriented instrumentation.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

First, the research extends Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) into the specific context of wartime humanitarian organizations operating in active conflict-affected countries. Prior applications of RDT in the nonprofit literature have predominantly examined organizations functioning under stable or post-crisis conditions. This study demonstrates that under active armed conflict, resource dependence dynamics are intensified and accelerated: donor concentration risk is amplified by geopolitical volatility in funding flows, the negotiating position of dependent NGOs is structurally weakened, and the strategic autonomy costs of donor dependency are directly translated into service interruption for vulnerable beneficiary populations. This contextual extension enriches the predictive and explanatory scope of RDT in ways not previously documented in the literature.

Second, the thesis advances Nonprofit Financial Sustainability Theory by identifying venue partnership continuity as a structurally undertheorized dimension of operational sustainability. Existing frameworks foreground financial diversification, reserve adequacy, and governance quality, but pay limited attention to operational infrastructure dependencies — such as venue partnerships — that can render financial sustainability meaningless if they collapse simultaneously with funding disruption. The case analysis in this thesis, particularly the failure scenario examined in Section 2.7.1, provides empirical grounding for an expanded conceptualization of sustainability that integrates operational and financial risk in a unified framework.

### **Methodological Contributions**

The thesis demonstrates the methodological viability and analytical productivity of the single case study design when combined with embedded multi-framework analysis in a wartime research context. Access to organizations and primary data in active conflict zones is severely constrained; traditional multi-case comparative designs are frequently infeasible. This study shows that a rigorously triangulated single case, combining financial analysis, stakeholder observation, and multi-theoretical interpretation, can generate both valid diagnostic findings and generalizable normative proposals. This methodological contribution is relevant to researchers studying Ukrainian civil society organizations and other humanitarian actors operating in similarly constrained environments.

### **Practitioner-Oriented Contributions**

At the practitioner level, the thesis introduces three management instruments that represent original applied contributions: (1) a Revenue Diversification Model calibrated to the specific funding ecology of Ukrainian veteran-focused NGOs, incorporating a realistic pathway from high grant concentration toward a balanced portfolio with no single source exceeding 50 percent; (2) a 12–24 Month Rolling Financial Planning Framework adapted to the grant-cycle volatility and cash-flow seasonality characteristic of the sector; and (3) a composite Sustainability KPI Dashboard that integrates financial health indicators with programmatic impact metrics, enabling unified organizational monitoring that existing sector-specific tools do not provide.

Taken together, these contributions position this thesis as a substantive addition to the emerging body of scholarship on management in conflict-affected civil society, with direct relevance to practitioners, policymakers, and donors engaged in the Ukrainian veteran support ecosystem and the broader humanitarian management field.

## CONCLUSIONS

This thesis set out to examine how project management mechanisms and financial sustainability models can be integrated to ensure long-term stability of veteran mental health support programs in Ukrainian NGOs. Using NGO "Doladu" as a primary case study, the research has produced findings at three levels: empirical (characterizing the current state of the organization), analytical (diagnosing structural weaknesses and their causes), and normative (proposing specific improvements grounded in theory and practice).

The empirical analysis in Chapter 2 demonstrates that NGO "Doladu" possesses genuine programmatic strengths — a proven retreat model, experienced staff, established donor relationships, and growing recognition within the veteran support sector. These assets constitute a foundation worth sustaining and building upon. At the same time, the organization exhibits structural vulnerabilities characteristic of the Ukrainian civil society sector at its current stage of development: excessive donor concentration, minimal operating reserves, informal project governance, limited outcome measurement, and the absence of medium-term financial planning. These weaknesses, left unaddressed, create disproportionate organizational risk relative to the organization's programmatic capabilities.

The theoretical analysis in Chapter 1 provides the conceptual scaffolding for understanding these weaknesses and their remedies. Resource Dependence Theory explains why high donor concentration represents not merely a financial risk but an organizational governance problem: resource-dependent organizations systematically over-prioritize donor priorities relative to mission imperatives. Nonprofit Financial Sustainability Theory establishes the key leverage points — diversification, reserves, and planning — and the empirical evidence for their effectiveness. PMI project management standards provide the operational toolkit for addressing governance informality, while social impact measurement frameworks supply the evidence production capacity that sustains organizational legitimacy with diverse stakeholders.

The integrated sustainability model proposed in Chapter 3 responds directly to the identified weaknesses through four mutually reinforcing interventions. The project governance optimization framework establishes the management structures — charters, work plans, risk registers, Theory of Change frameworks, and lessons-learned protocols — that transform informal competence into institutionalized capability. The revenue diversification model targets a shift from the current 82-percent grant concentration to a portfolio in which no source exceeds 50 percent, with government and EU institutional funding, corporate CSR, diaspora philanthropy, and earned income each contributing

meaningfully. The 12–24 month financial planning framework replaces reactive grant-cycle management with proactive scenario-based financial governance. The Sustainability KPI Dashboard provides the measurement infrastructure to track progress and sustain accountability across all dimensions of the model.

The first hypothesis (H1) — that structured PMI-aligned project management improves operational efficiency and program continuity — is supported by both the theoretical analysis and the case evidence. The governance gaps identified in "Doladu's" current practice are direct causes of the risk accumulation and organizational vulnerability observed. The second hypothesis (H2) — that revenue portfolio diversification positively correlates with financial resilience — is strongly supported by the theoretical literature and the financial analysis: the organization's current concentration profile creates vulnerability that diversification would substantially reduce. The third hypothesis (H3) — that medium-term financial planning improves sustainability — is supported analytically: the cash flow modeling presented in Chapter 3 demonstrates that a rolling 24-month forecast would enable proactive rather than reactive management of the liquidity gaps currently creating organizational stress.

The broader contribution of this research is twofold. Methodologically, it demonstrates that the single case study approach, when combined with rigorous multi-framework theoretical analysis and embedded financial modeling, can generate both valid diagnostic insights and actionable normative proposals. Substantively, it extends nonprofit sustainability theory and PMI project management standards into a wartime humanitarian context that has received very limited prior academic attention, producing insights applicable to the growing body of Ukrainian civil society organizations grappling with the same challenges.

Future research should examine the proposed model's applicability across a broader sample of Ukrainian veteran-focused NGOs, testing whether the vulnerabilities identified in "Doladu" are indeed sector-wide and whether the proposed interventions produce the improvements projected. Longitudinal follow-up on "Doladu's" own sustainability trajectory — ideally in three to five years, when the diversification strategy's effects should be measurable — would provide valuable empirical validation. The intersection of wartime emergency response and long-term organizational sustainability also merits deeper theoretical attention, as the Ukrainian experience represents a natural experiment in civil society resilience whose lessons are likely to be relevant in other protracted conflict contexts globally.

In conclusion, the sustainability of veteran mental health support programs is not merely an organizational management problem: it is a social stability imperative. The mental health outcomes of Ukrainian veterans will significantly shape the quality of Ukraine's post-war reconstruction, the

cohesion of its communities, and the resilience of its democracy. Organizations like NGO "Doladu" stand at the front line of this challenge. Providing them with the management architecture and financial tools to sustain their work is therefore a contribution not only to organizational excellence but to the long-term wellbeing of Ukrainian society.

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