

EMERGENCY ●
ACTION ●
ALLIANCE

Program Report

Ukraine Emergency Appeal
Final report

14/4/22 - 24/9/2023



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ACT FOR PEACE

ChildFund
Australia

Caritas
AUSTRALIA

ADRA

OXFAM

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency
Australia for UNHCR

act:onaid

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OVERSEAS AID**
ANGLICORD

BAPTIST WORLD AID

cbm

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**Australian
Lutheran
World Service**

**PLAN
INTERNATIONAL**

Save the Children

CARE

Cover image: A year after fleeing her country, Daria has returned to Ukraine – as a humanitarian worker for CARE – to see what remains of her home town Kyiv. Image © CARE.



Summary

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, over 5.8 million Ukrainians have fled into neighbouring countries in Europe, seeking safety, protection and assistance. Another 5.1 million were internally displaced within Ukraine, while others were trapped, unable to escape as the war raged around them.

The invasion caused mass civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The scale of displacement, along with the escalating deaths and injuries as a result of the conflict, represented a humanitarian catastrophe that shocked the world.

Leading aid organisations responded quickly with the provision of food, shelter, water and safety. With a majority of the refugees being women and children, safety and security were paramount considerations. This large scale emergency took place against the backdrop of a severe winter, adding urgency to the need for warmth and safety.

Many of those who fled believed the war would be over quickly so they could return to their homes and communities. But as the war raged their hopes faded. Many returned back to Ukraine to check on family and property, and subsequently returned to their temporary accommodations. This ebb and flow of people movements created additional complexity around case management and reporting.

Today as the war continues, its effects are driving significant humanitarian impacts around the world, disrupting food chains, spiking inflation and putting geopolitical tensions on edge.

Emergency Action Alliance launched an appeal for the emergency in late March 2022 including a large televised Concert for Ukraine which drove over half a million dollars in donations on the first night. Along with a contribution from the Australian Government of \$2 million, a total of \$4.35 million was raised for the emergency, distributed to members in three tranches.

This report is a summary of how those funds were used by EAA members, and the impact they had on the individuals and communities affected.

Natalia's family in a temporary shelter in Lviv. Image Halyna Bilak



Distribution of funds to members

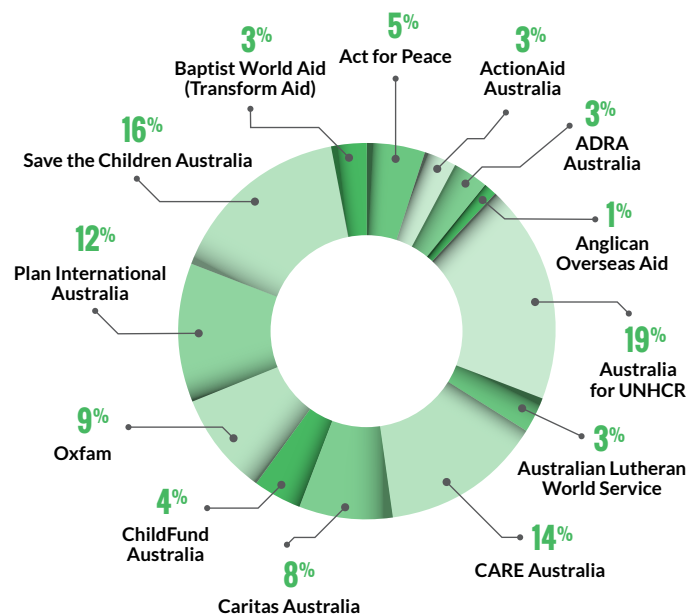
EAA members applied to receive funds from EAA's Ukraine Emergency Appeal by submitting a Statement of Capacity outlining their response to the emergency. These statements were peer-reviewed by a panel of humanitarian field experts, each of whom were staff of EAA members.

To avoid conflict of interest, a peer review panel member did not participate in the review of that member's own organisation's Statement of Capacity. The final determination of the peer review panel was reviewed by a humanitarian field expert that was not responding to the Ukraine emergency.

Finally the conclusions of the peer review panel were presented to the EAA Board, which then approved the responding members to be a recipient of a distribution from the EAA appeal funds.

The funds were distributed to members using a pre-agreed allocation formula that is based on each member's historical expenditure in humanitarian emergencies. This historical expenditure is taken as an indication of each member's capacity to respond.

Distribution of EAA funds



A year after fleeing her country, Daria has returned to Ukraine - as a humanitarian worker for CARE - to see what remains of her home town Kyiv. Image © CARE.

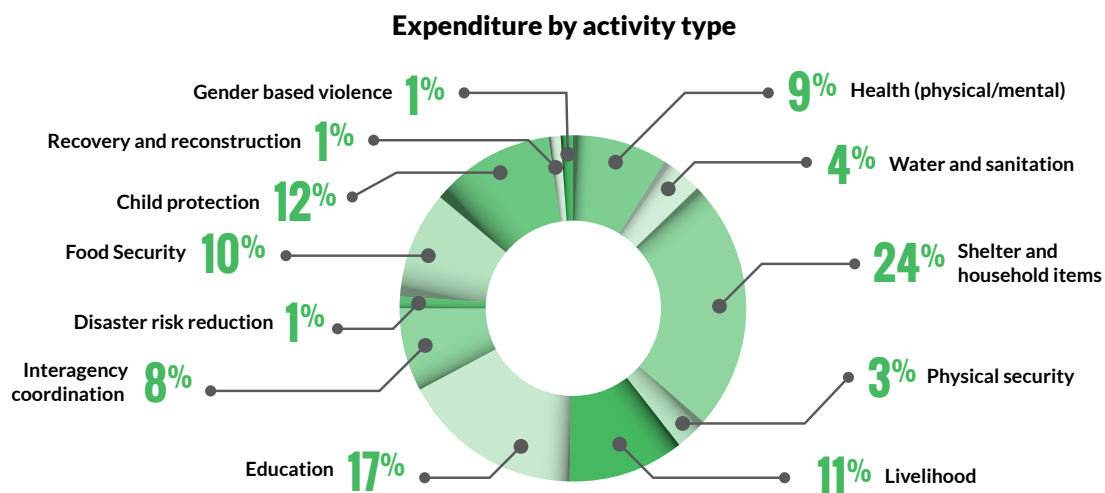


Property Assessments. Image: Caritas Australia



Expenditure by project category

The information in this chart has been consolidated from the final reports of responding EAA members, all of whom have now concluded their activities using the EAA Appeal funds.



Before distributing allocations to members, EAA retained 7% of the EAA Appeal funds grant to cover its costs of running the appeal and administering and reporting on the use of the funds.



Ivanna* (left), is homeless after her house was damaged in the conflict. Appeal funds are ensuring hundreds of vulnerable people in Kharkiv receive regular food baskets. Image: Dmytro Minyailo/DEC



In Pictures: One year on, Ukrainian women recount stories of life's milestones amidst war

By Halyna Bilak

It's been 18 months since the dramatic escalation of the war in Ukraine. As the world's attention turns once more to questions about the way forward, politically and militarily, it's important not to forget the huge toll the war is taking on everyday people.

More than 13 million people — almost one in every three members of Ukraine's pre-2022 population — have fled their homes due to the violence. Many have uprooted their lives to cross borders, while others have found relative safehaven in other parts of the country.

For them, life is full of anxiety, uncertainty and loss. They have learned to live one day at a time, realising that the most valuable things are those they grabbed by the hand when running away from danger. One year later, they have managed to rely only on their own strength.

The humanitarian crisis sparked by the war has a strong gender dynamic, with women making up the

majority of refugees and displaced people. They are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, exploitation and abuse, and as is the case all around the world, they take on a disproportionate amount of unpaid caring work.

Many displaced women have risen up to support one another by volunteering as translators, teachers, psychologists and more. For others, life in shelters and temporary accommodation is a daily struggle to create normalcy for themselves and their families amidst the trauma of war.

These are some of their stories.

Oksana's story

(Extract from a report by Halyna Bilak, CARE Ukraine)

Some of the first sounds Oksana's youngest child Nazar ever hears are sirens, warning of an air raid, followed by explosions. It's 24 February 2022. He is five days old and on the way back from hospital with his mother. He spends his first moments at home in the cold, damp basement of the apartment building where his family live. "The spring was cold," Oksana recalls, "there was no heating in the basement. I wrapped the baby in my jacket, gave blankets to the other children and that is how we survived the anxiety."

After feeling the basement for a healthier place for her children, they find temporary shelter at the Lviv football stadium. It is here that Oksana hears about the CARE's Centre for Women's Perspectives while looking for a more permanent shelter. The Centre provides housing, psychological and legal assistance, and basic food and hygiene needs. Oksana and her family are able to move into a separate room. A safe space for her and her children. "I owe everything I have now to the kind people around me. They gave

me clothes for my children, bought shampoos, bring potatoes and cereals, organize entertainment for the children," says Oksana.



Oksana raises her children alone. Image: Halyna Bilak

Vira's story

The stress and anxiety of living through a war has been doubled for Vira, who had to care for her husband Eduard when he contracted tuberculosis. In their home town, rockets flew through the air and the ground shook from explosions. Eduard began to suffer coughing fits and found it painful to breathe. There were no doctors or pharmacies open and all Vira had was some cough syrup, given to her by medical staff she encountered when she went out one day to get water.

Eventually, the couple were evacuated to a safer region, where Eduard was diagnosed and spent seven months in hospital. The couple now live in a shelter run by the Ukrainian charitable organisation IRF, with support from CARE. "If not for Vira, her care and support, I do not know whether I would still be alive," Eduard says. "The doctors said that with my health complications only one out of a hundred survive."



Eduard, 49, and Vira, 63, in a shelter in Lviv.

Natalia's story

Natalia's three-year-old daughter, Daria, has stopped speaking due to the trauma of gunfights around their home in a previously occupied area of Southern Ukraine. "When we heard the whistle of bullets, we immediately dressed our sleeping daughter warmly and took her to the basement," Natalia recalls. "We always tried not to wake her up in order not to frighten her even more. Children should laugh, not scream and cry."

Despite her parents' best efforts, Daria would usually wake to the sound of the fighting. The family have now been evacuated to a safer region, however Daria still wakes in the night screaming. She is receiving treatment to help her speak again. "The doctors believe that it is because of stress," Natalia says.



Natalia, 35 and her 3-year-old daughter in a shelter in Odesa.
Image: Halyna Bilak

Tetyana's story

Dr Tetyana Butko has herself fled her home because of the war, and every day she treats patients who have been through the same. She says it's hard for her emotionally to speak with so many people who have lost everything, especially children. "They need medical and psychological help. They need access to education and entertainment. Because such a daily routine is the best doctor for them."



Ms. Tetyana Butko, a mobile team doctor, provides humanitarian, socio-psychological and medical assistance to families in need daily.
Image: Halyna Bilak



Geographical areas of intervention

Emergency Action Alliance members are on the ground in Ukraine, neighbouring countries and beyond, providing lifesaving humanitarian aid. The geographical areas covered by EAA responding members include:

- Ukraine
- Poland
- Hungary
- Romania
- Moldova
- Slovakia



Evacuation of people with limited mobility from Bakhmut. Image: Halyna Bilak



Changes in **operating context**

Situation Update as of 24th September 2023

As of 24th September 2023, the situation in Ukraine remains extremely volatile, with airstrikes targeting civilian locations including a hospital in Kherson, a blood transfusion centre in Kharkivska and a hotel in Zaporizhzhia frequently used by UN and NGO staff.

Since 24 February 2022, over 27,449 civilian casualties have been recorded, including 9,701 deaths and 17,748 injuries – with the actual toll estimated to be higher.*

While EAA members have concluded their emergency activities using the funds from the EAA Appeal, many are continuing to provide humanitarian assistance, and continue to rely on public contributions to support their work.

*Source: OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) Ukraine: civilian casualty update 26th September 2023

HIA worker providing multi-purpose cash assistance.
Image: Alexandra Longstaff/ACT for Peace

People forced to flee

5,830,500*

refugees from Ukraine recorded
in Europe (as of 15 August)

369,200

refugees from Ukraine recorded
beyond Europe (as of 5 August)

6,199,700

refugees from Ukraine recorded
global (as of 15 August)

5,088,000

estimated number of internally
displaced people (IDPs) in Ukraine
(as of May) (Source: IOM)

More details: UNHCR Operational Data Portal Ukraine
Refugee Situation



* Source: UNHCR Ukraine Situation Flash Update 17th August 2023.



UNHCR case study: Restoring hope in Ukraine



When war broke out, 10-year-old Bohdana and her parents fled their home and sought safety in Poland.

While there, they received word that a neighbour's house had burned down during the intense fighting in the Kyiv region. They feared the worst for their own home. But when Bohdana's father, Andrii, returned home, he was relieved to find the house damaged but still standing.

"At least there was hope for living here in the future," says Andrii. "But everything was riddled with bullet holes and shrapnel. The wind was blowing through the house. The walls were shot through."

UNHCR helped the family replace the doors and windows and fix up the damaged roof and walls. Now

Bohdana, a promising young musician, can practise piano safely at home – something that brings her peace.

"I am very happy that I can play," she says. "When I hear some sad news on the TV, I play the piano and it calms me down."

Thanks to our generous donors, including those who donated to the Emergency Action Alliance appeal, UNHCR has helped to repair 13,000 houses across Ukraine.

Andrii, 51, watches his daughter, Bohdana, 10, play the piano in their repaired home. © UNHCR/Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi



Workers lift a section of roof onto the home of Andrii, Olena and Bohdana. © UNHCR/Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi





Evidence of activity

All members conducted their own measurement and evaluation activities during and at the conclusion of the response utilising EAA funds. Members had agreements with their downstream partners that included regular reports and meetings to discuss the progress of activities against the activity plans, and to discuss changes in approach based on changing contexts and needs.

Measurement and evaluation activities included post distribution monitoring that included feedback from participants and beneficiaries.

Realtime evaluation activities enabled members and their partners to adjust their responses based on the feedback received. This ensured that the humanitarian efforts met the needs of beneficiaries.

Some major reports have been compiled and examples of publicly available reports are listed below including links to access those reports. Please note that these are general reports and do not specifically report on the activities using EAA appeal funds.

UNHCR

- [Lives on Hold Intentions and Perspectives of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine, February 2023](#)
- [Ukraine Situation Mid Year Report June 2023](#)



Liliana and Diana, 3, sit on bench at the Amici di Bambini centre.
Copyright: Plan International / Tatiana Sultanova

General

- [2022 Ukraine - Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance Post-Distribution Monitoring](#)

Caritas

- [CRS Emergency Response Strategy for Ukraine Crisis](#)

Oxfam

- [Six months after the Russian invasion: Oxfam's humanitarian response to the war in Ukraine](#)

Save the Children

Catalogue and research report:

- [libraryforall.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/CatalogueUkraine.pdf](#)

A safe space for Ukrainian children to learn

- [www.savethechildren.org.au/our-stories/in-365-dark-days-a-rack-of-light](#)



A Ukrainian family receives aid. Image: ADRA Australia



EAA member feedback on benefits of EAA funding

How the EAA funds assisted members

Examples of direct quotes from members on how the EAA funds were useful in the overall humanitarian response of members:

ADRA: Overall, scale of the emergency and very large numbers of refugees meant that the EAA funds were very suitable in scaling up the response in line with the overwhelming need.

AOAS: The EAA funds helped provide LWF with resources to quickly implement activities with local member churches to support the many Ukrainian refugees seeking shelter in neighbouring countries.

Baptist World Aid: EAA funds enabled scale up of the response. More containers of food and NFIs were able to be distributed than would have been possible without the EAA funding

CARE: The funds were used to directly support at-risk women and men including cash distribution, assistive products, hygiene kits and provision of safe spaces.

Caritas: EAA funds provided the program the ability to leverage different funding sources and reach a higher number of participants. Also allowed the program to remain flexible and adapt to the evolving needs of refugees.

Oxfam: EAA funds have supported the design and implementation of advocacy activities including research and campaigns that have contributed to the overall program success.

Save the Children: EAA funds were used to fund all activities involved in the creation of educational books. Access to these Ukrainian digital books for children to read on Tablets in DLC's has been a key aspect of the EdTech response.

UNHCR: Flexible funding allowed UNHCR to respond to shifting needs. The EAA funds enabled UNHCR to scale up its response and provide humanitarian assistance in a very difficult operating environment.



Nelly (71) and Viktor (71) from Lysychansk in a temporary shelter in Lviv. Image: Halyna Bilak



Natalia, 41, makes cookies in a shelter in Lviv. Image: Halyna Bilak



Meeting the Core Humanitarian Standard

As part of Emergency Action Alliance's commitment to accountable and effective humanitarian responses, we evaluate member responses against a set of impact benchmarks. These benchmarks are derived primarily from a common sectoral standard called the Core Humanitarian Standard. This is essentially a set of principles that put the crisis-affected people at the centre of designing the humanitarian response, ensuring it is locally led.

We asked our members to outline how they demonstrate alignment with these standards and those indications are outlined below:

The response is appropriate and relevant

- EAA members responded through local partners and communities to ensure that the response met the needs of the local communities. This is an ongoing process with ongoing needs assessments and communications with local organisations and community leaders both within Ukraine and in border countries.
- Our members partnered with local NGOs with long term work in the countries of implementation.
- Some of EAA's members specialised in women-led responses that were focused on help for women, while others focused specifically on people with disabilities and the elderly. This focus on the most vulnerable ensured that the response was appropriate to their significant individual needs as a result of the conflict.
- Response was informed by a needs analysis conducted for Ukraine demonstrating a lack of available titles for children displaced from formal education settings with school closures
- For those members who provided cash voucher assistance, surveys from recipients indicated this form of assistance was fast, flexible and appropriate because it allowed families to address their own specific needs at that point in time.

The response is effective and timely

- To ensure the response was effective and timely, initial scoping activities informed the initial strategy which was later reviewed and adapted based on the changing context.
- Post implementation monitoring including feedback from participants found that the programs were effective and timely. The unrestricted nature of the EAA funds meant they could quickly be used to fill gaps and to address the most urgent needs at that point in time.

Core Humanitarian Standard Commitments that members abide by:

As part of their response to the crisis, members have committed to observing the nine commitments of the Core Humanitarian Standard. These are commitments made to people affected by crises that members will deliver quality, effective and accountable support and assistance. These nine commitments provide a coherent and integrated accountability framework to help organisations assess and measure and continuously improve their performance accountability towards the people and communities they support. You can read more about the Core Humanitarian Standard [here](#).

We have summarised the relevant commitments into statements, and we asked our members to outline how they have worked to meet those commitments. The responses below have been summarised from our members' reports.

- With ongoing disruption to schools and education in Ukraine, rapid creation of these books in less than 12 months was critical to support continuity of learning for Ukrainian children
- There were some timing challenges due to the changing focus of the application of funds due to the changing situational context.

- In addition, due to the large volume of funds already flowing into the humanitarian response in some instances there were delays in identifying the best use of the funds. However, as the situation was more protracted than anticipated, this meant that additional funds were available further along in the humanitarian response.
- Delivery of aid via local church networks and use of existing facilities allowed a fast response, via local systems that already had capacity and connections into the local support services and communities.

Response Strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects

- The response helped strengthen local capacities through a variety of ways. For example in some instances, refugees (both volunteers and later as paid staff) were involved in delivery support and in design revisions both in Ukraine and the surrounding countries.
- The skills training was often led by the Ukrainian refugees themselves following a strengths based approach, leading to resilience.
- In Ukraine over 200 local staff have been trained in child protection, protection from gender-based violence, psychosocial support and psychosocial first aid. This will enable local staff and volunteers to continue to deliver these services beyond the life of the EAA support
- In Romania Plan supported the training of over 40 local partner staff on topics like child protection, gender based violence, safeguarding, PSEAH and trafficking
- The first approach for creating freely accessible books was to engage with local publishers and authors to license their titles, supporting the Ukrainian publishing industry
- During one of the projects the partner focused on strengthening the capacity of community volunteers and outreach teams, with training sessions on case management emphasising home based care. This included sessions on the safeguarding code of conduct and “Do No Harm”.

Response was based on consultation, participation and feedback

- Project design was based on local needs assessment as well as the capacity and existing projects of the implementing partners. Response was closely coordinated with local authorities and priorities agreed with local actors including national NGOs and affected communities
- The partner led response involved consultation with local communities and civil society organisation to ensure the response is appropriate and relevant.
- Feedback from beneficiaries has been solicited to ensure the response meets their needs. For example consultation with Romanian partners determined that training on European law on Asylum was needed, and following that, training was conducted.
- At all stages of the project activities, project participants were engaged to provide feedback, which was used to strengthen the response.

Response is co-ordinated and complementary

- Many of our members and their implementing partners are active participants in a number of working groups. These groups, including those that are UN-led, ensured that co-ordination was maximised and duplication minimised throughout the response.
- There was close co-ordination with a number of local actors including local governmental institutions, local well-established institutions, local migration NGOs
- UNHCR led the Protection, Shelter/Non Food Items and Camp Coordination and Camp Management Clusters and co-chaired the Durable Solutions Steering Committee. The clusters were expanded and worked closely with authorities to avoid duplication and identify critical gaps.
- Partner employees regularly attended cluster and OCHA meetings to engage with the broader humanitarian response, ensuring a more co-ordinated and efficient approach.

Additional areas of focus during the humanitarian response

Gender equality

EAA members and their partners worked to ensure that gender and protection considerations were incorporated into all activities. Here are some examples:

- Oxfam co-ordinated with other women-led or minority-led organisations to coordinate advocacy, training and education initiatives aimed at strengthening the principles of equal opportunities for women, children, people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics, and IDPs.
- ActionAid partnered with a range of women rights organisations and women led movements to ensure an intersectional approach. Feminist principles and intersectionality have played a key role in this response.
- UNHCR worked with LGBTIQ+ and women-led organisations to implement gender equality and gender based violence programming that promoted localisation, inclusion and access to targeted services for persons in need.
- CARE Australia's partner, HelpAge International, is committed to gender inclusion and gender sensitive interventions in its responses in Ukraine. For this project 70% of participants are women. All HelpAge International volunteers have received training on gender and human rights.
- Anglican Overseas Aid's project activities have a significant focus on providing safe child friendly spaces for refugees with the majority of participants being women/female headed households
- Caritas Australia's partner CRS, incorporated program design, gender and protection considerations into the project design and project activities through a risk assessment and risk mitigation plan.

Protection and prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

Protection measures and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) is built into the programming of all responding EAA measures and is a requirement within the agreement that members sign before receiving their funds.

Outlined below are two examples that illustrate the work of our members in this space:

- Oxfam's overall response is protection focused, in that all activities include a mainstreaming protection component. An example is the Roma population who have had particular challenges in accessing protection and assistance that are available to other refugees from Ukraine, along with their distinct needs that were not being met. Through research Oxfam identified the gaps and ensured partners have tools to advocate for non discrimination of Roma people fleeing Ukraine
- In UNHCR's response, protection vulnerabilities are included in eligibility criteria for cash assistance programs. UNHCR expanded existing protection partnerships that address the needs for psychosocial support particularly amongst forcibly displaced women, boys and girls. UNHCR also undertook a participatory assessment with people of concern in Ukraine to help with a review of its program and inform the planning and design of activities in 2023.

Challenges in the overall response

During this emergency response, the work of our members took place in very challenging circumstances. Noted below are examples of some of the challenges that were experienced:

- The security situation in Ukraine continues to pose a significant challenge, with the entire country within reach of missile strikes.
- High pressure on project teams causing difficulty in maintaining personnel in Ukraine (especially as project office is in Kharkiv, within direct artillery range) This resulted in project administration delays.
- The war caused several safety and logistical challenges including suspended air travel, damaged infrastructure, and hostilities
- In October 2022 attacks on energy infrastructure intensified disrupting public services including water, electricity, health care, education and social protection.
- High level of movement with project participants moving to other regions in Ukraine and other displaced people moving into the project region. This made continuity of support difficult.
- Extreme weather especially in May 2023 which disrupted and slowed home visit and distribution activities. To address these challenges, additional social workers were hired.



Stories of impact

In an emergency of this scale it can be hard to remember that behind the statistics are real people who have lived through incredibly traumatic experiences. Here are just a few stories that demonstrate the direct way in which EAA funds have helped women and families to find safety away from the ravages of war.

Olga's story

Olga lives in Moldova, which has one of the highest poverty rates in Europe. It is estimated that 26 per cent of its population are living below the national poverty line.



Olga opened her home to welcome refugees from Ukraine.
Photo: Caritas Moldova.

Despite this, many families like Olga's have opened their hearts and homes to refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, more than 890,000 people have crossed the border into Moldova, the majority of them women, children and the elderly. This massive influx of displaced people from Ukraine has put an enormous strain on existing resources.

When Olga saw the footage of Russian forces invading Ukraine on her television screen, she knew she had to do something to help those fleeing the war.

"I was watching TV, and I started to cry, seeing what destruction there is in Ukraine," Olga said.

"When I was asked on the phone if I agreed to receive some people with this trouble from Ukraine, I agreed at once."

So far, Olga has hosted more than eight refugees in her home. She recalls one family who felt immense gratitude and relief after arriving at her home.



Olga and many other families in border countries have opened their homes to families like Viktoria, pictured with her child after crossing the border to Poland. Photo: Philip Spalek/Caritas Germany.

"When they got to my house, those kids, they started crying and got on their knees," Olga said.

"And they say, 'Mum, it is so good here.' Warm floor. They were frozen, hungry."

Caritas Australia has partnered with CRS Moldova to help people like Olga to keep their doors open. The program provides financial support for host families like Olga's, who are housing Ukrainian refugees in their homes as well as incentivising homeowners with vacant apartments and houses to rent to refugees.



Olga and many other families in border countries have opened their homes to families like Illyena, who fled Ukraine with her baby to seek refuge in neighbouring Poland. Photo: Philipp Spalek/Caritas Germany

Julia's story

My journey here was challenging. We lived in the suburbs of Zgierz, in a small town hostel. It wasn't a good place for us because there were people from other countries, mostly men, and I wasn't comfortable with my children in that environment.

I was there with my small children, and the whole situation wasn't good for us. So we decided to leave.

Today, we are moving to a new flat, but we haven't been there yet. Leaving the hostel was necessary for our well-being.

I can't leave my children alone as they are not very strong and fall sick quite frequently, making it hard to live here for them.

We came here with my kids through Ukraine, then Russia, and finally the Baltic countries. The journey took us five days, and it was tough. We had no food and couldn't sleep properly, making it very hard to get here.

Life was great before we had to leave our home. It had been nine months since we left due to the war. A bomb hit my parents' apartment, but thankfully, they were okay. I used to have my own apartment and beauty salon, and my children were going to school. Everything was going well until we had to leave.

We have been coming to this center for four months now. I attend all classes and training sessions I can. The psychologist provides me with psychological support, which I really like. They warmly welcomed me when I first arrived at the center.



Julia near the LWF centre. Image: ALWS



Julia with her two children at the LWF Centre. Image: ALWS

Being in the center makes me feel good. We don't skip any classes and actively participate in Polish language classes, art therapy, and psychological meetings. It's a great place with classes for both adults and children, including a children's summer camp.

We have decided to stay here in Poland. Going back to live under the occupation is not an option as it's dangerous and uncertain. I believe this center is great, and I hope it continues to operate. Otherwise, I don't know where I would send my children for support and learning. This center is incredibly important to us, and I am very happy that we have this facility. Thank you.

Olena's story

I came (to the LWF centre) with my son. I lived almost 1.5 years under Russian occupation in Ukraine. And then after half a year, I decided to leave.

More and more Russian soldiers were coming to the territory (where I lived with my son) and they were pushing on us, the Ukrainian citizens who lived on this territory, forcing us to accept Russian passport and citizenship, and they were threatening to deport us (to Russia). So I decided it's a high time to leave.

My partner is in Germany working. I came here to Poland through Russia and traveled four days on the bus. I had to change the transport four times. It was too dangerous to leave the region through Ukraine, so I went North to Russia and bypassed the whole territory. I went to the Baltic countries and then I came to Poland. Ukraine is considered by Russians as a Russian territory, so I could freely go into Russia.

The hardest part was the Russian and Lithuanian border. They took away our documents. We had to wait almost a day to be allowed to leave Russia. Russia didn't want to let us go out of Russia. It was very difficult and very scary.

I was welcomed very warmly here. And they took care of me and my son. My son is so eager to come here every time. He's just running every time here – he is so excited to come here. And he has also already made friends here as well. So, yeah, we are very happy about being here. The welcome was very warm, very nice.

I also attend English and Polish classes at the LWF center and art therapy and received psychological support from the LWF counselor. My son is very, very happy about coming here – he has friends.

Under the Russian occupation, of course, everything was closed, kids couldn't go to school. In many cases in Ukraine, classes are being held online. But my son is now only 6, so it's like kindergarten age, so there's no school for him yet.



Olena with her son at the LWF (Lutheran World Federation) Centre. Image: ALWS

Shortly before we left for Poland, Russian occupation authorities opened a school. But if you wanted to attend this school, you had to have a Russian passport. So you need to give up your Ukrainian passport and accept your Russian passport. And the guards and the military said, if you send your children to school, and in case of a Ukrainian offensive, they will not let the children out of the school and they will use them as a shield. Under Russian occupation territory, Ukrainians are using laptops or iPads, etc., to access Ukrainian school.

If your neighbors/pro-Russian associates find out that you use this to attend Ukrainian school, then the military will come and take away your computers so you can't attend Ukrainian school.

The first service that I received was psychological support from their psychologists, and I had a conversation with the psychologists. We are feeling very well here, but sometimes, when we hear the helicopter's over in the sky, it is really scary for us.



About Emergency Action Alliance

Emergency Action Alliance (EAA) brings together the expertise and impact of 15 leading Australian aid organisations, enabling a swift and targeted response when major emergencies take place overseas.

EAA's 15 member charities are: ActionAid Australia, Act for Peace, ADRA, Anglican Overseas Aid, Australia for UNHCR, Australian Lutheran World Service, Baptist World Aid Australia, CARE Australia, Caritas Australia, CBM Australia, ChildFund Australia, Oxfam Australia, Plan International Australia, Save the Children Australia and Tearfund Australia.

EAA can rapidly launch a coordinated, targeted fundraising appeal under the Emergency Action Alliance banner in order to streamline efforts and help more people in their moment of need. This makes it easy for Australians to know how to help. The money raised will be used quickly and efficiently to help those affected through the EAA's network of member organisations.

Emergency Action Alliance has a unique process for allocating funds to the charities best able to deliver aid in that particular emergency, allowing them to rapidly scale up operations on the ground and help more people. EAA's members fund the organisation's running costs, and in turn, only EAA members responding to the emergency will receive funds to carry out their vital work.

Not only is this an extremely efficient and effective way to raise and distribute funds in international emergencies, it also makes it easier for donors to know how to help. Instead of feeling confused about which charity to donate to, Australian donors wanting to help can have a single, trustworthy way to make an impact.

Yulia,* aged seven, at a hotel providing temporary accommodation to refugees from Ukraine in Bucharest, Romania. Image: George Calin/DEC



Thank you to each and every one of you for your donations.

We hope this report helps you know that your donation has made a real difference to people in their greatest moment of need.

Email: info@emergencyaction.org.au

Visit our website: emergencyaction.org.au

Contact us via mail: Emergency Action Alliance
Donor Services
Level 8, 162 Goulburn St
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