



TWELVE MONTHS INTO THE WAR: DELIVERING LIFESAVING AID TO THE MOST VULNERABLE IN UKRAINE

IT'S BEEN EXACTLY ONE YEAR SINCE THE START OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE, ONE OF THE LARGEST HUMANITARIAN CRISES IN THE WORLD. FOLLOWING WEEKS OF UNCERTAINTY IN THE LEAD UP TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION, HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS -BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL- BEGAN PREPARING A RAPID RESPONSE TO MEET THE URGENT NEEDS OF MILLIONS OF INDIVIDUALS ACROSS UKRAINE. KBFUS LAUNCHED ITS HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FUND FOR UKRAINE TO SUPPORT THEIR EFFORTS. THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF AMERICAN DONORS, WE WERE ABLE TO DISTRIBUTE OVER \$11 MILLION SO FAR.

On February 25, 2022, just one day after the country's invasion by the Russian military, the King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS) launched its Humanitarian Response Fund for Ukraine. The fund pools contributions for three local nonprofits active on the frontlines of the conflict - People in Need, Caritas Ukraine,

and the Polish Red Cross. Working in extremely difficult circumstances, they provide food, shelter, psychosocial support and medical assistance to vulnerable individuals across Ukraine and to the millions who sought refuge across borders.

These organizations have leveraged their experience and resources, including thousands of staff and hundreds of thousands of volunteers. Together, they organize a robust humanitarian effort that prioritizes responsiveness to the ever evolving needs of the now estimated eight million Ukrainian refugees and the millions who were forced to relocate within their country.

In addition, KBFUS facilitated grants to several other organizations - in Ukraine and in neighboring countries - that continue to provide emergency assistance to people affected by the war: the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, the Charity Fund "BREATHE", the WHO Health emergency appeal for Ukraine, the Polish Humanitarian Action Foundation, Nadacni Fond Amity, Save the Children Romania, Libereco, the Lisa Batiashvili Foundation, and Reporters Sans Frontieres are among those. All in all, KBFUS was able to distribute over \$11 million so far.

RAPID RESPONSE

People in Need (PIN), a nonprofit founded in 1992 by Czech war correspondents, mobilized immediately, organizing a cargo transport to deliver essential items to the frontlines. "We were able to quickly start organizing train and truck cargo directly from the Czech Republic, as



our teams in Ukraine were re-grouping in Lviv," explains Jana Toužimská, PIN's Deputy Regional Director, Eastern Partnership and Balkans.

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ŠIMON PÁNEK, PEOPLE IN NEED

"We have experience working in the east of the country, we have been there since 2014," says CEO Šimon Pánek. "We were therefore prepared, and at the same time, we pulled out all the stops and began providing massive amounts of assistance directly in Ukraine, on its borders with friendly neighbors, and also at home. This included providing essentials such as water, food, and hygiene kits. In the beginning, the needs were immediate shelter and in-kind assistance to cover the people's most basic needs," adds Toužimská.

SHIFTING STRATEGIES

By Spring 2022, with the second phase of the war approaching, PIN would shift strategy. "It is important to realize that needs have been evolving from the outset of the war," says Toužimská. One example is purchasing supplies within Ukraine rather than the Czech Republic, as part of a localization effort that includes partnering with existing local networks to increase capacity.

Another strategy includes adapting to specific regions with different contexts. In the western and central parts of the country, for example, priorities included "the



need to integrate internally displaced persons, provide mental health and psychosocial support, decent housing, improve living conditions in collective centers, and focus on education and allowing children to stay connected with learning,” says Toužimská.

FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS

Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, PIN supports refugees with housing accommodations in Georgia, amid an unprecedented boom in real estate that has caused shortages. In Moldova, Ukrainian children are able to attend school remotely with Ukrainian teachers from back home. And in the Czech Republic, where over 475,000 Ukrainians have applied for asylum, a telemedicine app helps bypass language barriers by connecting Ukrainian patients with Ukrainian doctors.

In Poland, where millions of Ukrainians have arrived after fleeing the conflict, the Polish Red Cross has been working in major cities like Kraków, Wrocław, and Warsaw. Recent reports state that close to 1.5 million Ukrainians have registered for temporary protective status in Poland—the highest number of any country.

BEYOND IMMEDIATE AID

Urszula Okoń, a press coordinator for the Polish Red Cross, cites a prior border crisis with neighboring Belarus as an important reference for the current work done at the Polish-Ukrainian border. As a result of the political standoff, hundreds of migrants were stranded in Belarus near the border with Poland while attempting to seek asylum. “We learned how to act in that kind of situation,” says Okoń.

“Of course, it’s hard to be prepared, but I think you have to get some kind of specialized staff, like rescuers and psychologists. You have to get many volunteers. It’s very needed. And especially in the first weeks, maybe months—it depends on the situation—people have to work in shifts. You have to remember that they are exhausted. They have to rest, they have to go eat something.”

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The Polish Red Cross has also adapted to the needs of migrants by continuously developing new initiatives. “Last April we launched a helpline,” says Okoń. “At that time, it was dedicated to those who needed information about where to go and where to get humanitarian support. The helpline now includes psychosocial support as well as advice for those receiving cash assistance.”

“Financial support is something new for the Polish Red Cross and it’s very popular,” says Okoń. Just last month, the organization began providing vouchers for Ukrainians to purchase basic necessities, such as clothes and food. Up until then, the voucher program was solely intended for the purchase of medicine.

WINTERIZATION

By the fall of 2022, preparing for the harsh winters of Eastern Europe became a top priority, with organizations like Caritas Ukraine and People in Need launching ‘winterization campaigns’. Both have worked to repair homes damaged by shelling, with the latter replacing roofs and windows, and giving owners the option to reinforce walls with bricks or wood.

Caritas Ukraine, for its part, has cultivated a network of more than 40 local organizations scattered throughout 20 regions of Ukraine, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable populations such as children, single parents, people living with disability, and the elderly. In a video published in late November, Tetiana Stawnychy, President of Caritas Ukraine, shared that over 3,000 homes had been repaired.

Like PIN, Caritas Ukraine provides assistance near the frontlines and in liberated areas, shifting strategies, and developing key aid initiatives. “In other parts of the country,” says Stawnychy, “we’ve mainly been working on ‘stabilizing initiatives’ - offering psychosocial support, opening crisis centers, helping children—we have over 50 child-friendly spaces throughout the country.”

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

The future remains uncertain as the fourth phase of the conflict unfolds, though reconstruction is on the horizon in some cases. “PIN continues to provide lifesaving

assistance in the line of contact and de-occupied areas, but we are also trying to support people who have relocated to the center and the western part of the country,” explains Toužimská. “So again, shifting from temporary shelters to more permanent housing, and proceeding with decent housing repairs and refurbishings.”

“Newly liberated areas will bring more destroyed towns with need for complete renewal. And for people who have relocated to other parts of the country, it will be about employment options, about integration into their new community.”

“There are challenges before us moving forward and we are preparing to respond to those challenges, to make sure that we continue to serve all those people who will continue to be in need,” concludes Stawnychy.

<https://kbfus.networkforgood.com/projects/54328-u-kbfus-funds-ukraine-s-humanitarian-emergency-fund>
<https://www.peopleinneed.net/>
<https://caritas.ua>
<https://pck.pl>

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