

Standing with the people of Ukraine

STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO IMMEDIATE NEED



For change. For better. For all.

Equality for all in thriving communities

Mission of Community Foundation Ireland



Introduction

A renewed community focus with locally based services as well as emergency supports for vulnerable groups such as victims of trafficking must be central to our future response to the impact of the war in Ukraine.

Community Foundation Ireland and its partners have identified key needs as the conflict enters its second year.

The Foundation with the support of donors, the Government of Ireland as well as the public 'Ireland for Ukraine Fund' are responding to the needs of the 80,000 men, women and children seeking shelter and safety in our communities while also contributing to the international aid mission.

We are proud of the €7.5 Million support we have been able to provide in the first year. The evidence, research and expertise of our partners confirms that not only does the need for help remain great – but that those needs continue to evolve.

It is appropriate as we reach the grim one-year milestone of conflict and crisis to reflect on where future support can be strategic and ensure that the services and supports being provided for those sheltering in Ireland are appropriate, accessible and effective.

Drawing on our 23-years as a philanthropic hub we remain committed to working with donors, advocates, our community partners as well as policymakers to ensure services are best placed to meet the immediate needs of men, women and children.

This report sets out our work to date and priority areas which have been identified by Ukrainians and those working with them.

Denise Charlton,
Chief Executive

Minister of State Joe O'Brien TD with Denise Charlton, Chief Executive, Community Foundation Ireland at the announcement of grants for communities and groups responding to the impact of war in Ukraine.

Summary

As a philanthropic hub with an equality mission Community Foundation Ireland and its donors immediately responded to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the early hours of 24th February 2022.

In addition to responding to the crisis in Ukraine itself The Foundation also engaged with well-established Irish partners providing services, supports and advocacy on immigration and asylum.

Community Foundation Ireland has been a trusted partner to charities working with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants for the last 20 years. We have ensured asylum seekers have access to legal advice as required, and we work regularly with local charities who are leading integration programmes for inclusive communities.

Together we began identifying expected areas of need. First arrivals through our ports and airports had links with the country through family or friends. However, as conflict unfolded that profile quickly changed to people arriving with little or no possessions, without a network of support and with no English language skills.

Priority was given to meeting immediate needs such as clothing, food, language classes, access to education, training and work and importantly trauma support for vulnerable groups. These early supports were activated with the help of our private donors.

It was already clear this would be an evolving crisis. In order to remain alert to emerging challenges, to inform wider public policy and to contribute to public discussion the Foundation's donors made a strategic investment to establish the *Ukraine Civil Society Response Forum* in April 2022. The Forum has been engaged by Government, regularly contributes to media and has become a powerful unified voice.

In the wake of the invasion, representatives of media organisations formed a coalition to increase awareness and generate support for needs both in Ukraine and in communities here. As a result, the *Ireland for Ukraine* Fund was launched just six weeks after Russia invaded.

The proposition of a 50:50 split in all funding between international agencies and the community response at home gave assurances to supporters that their contribution would go towards both areas of need.

Media partners increased awareness through their outlets while national sporting and artistic events as well as local community fund-raisers provided vital support. As part of its response to the crisis the Government of Ireland became a partner providing €5 Million.

International Response

Our donors and those providing support through the Ireland for Ukraine Fund are assisting the humanitarian mission in the war-zone. Four international partners each received €700,000 from Ireland for Ukraine.

UNICEF is working providing clean water, food, medicine and mental health support. It has been supporting schools by providing laptops and tablets and educational supplies.

Concern is providing food, hygiene supplies, and bedding through humanitarian hubs across Eastern and Western Ukraine, supporting internally displaced people to access food and hygiene items.

The Irish Red Cross is channelling vital supplies through local partners on the ground. Aid is being delivered where it is needed most.

Trócaire is using the international Caritas to reach those internally displaced people right on the frontlines with an ability to get aid into besieged cities and towns.

Community Response

In addition to supporting four partner international agencies the fund provided grants to over 100 Irish projects with a focus on specialised supports such as trauma care as well as day to day services.

Self-advocacy and story-telling projects have given Ukrainians in Ireland a voice to keep the focus on the families which are at the very centre of the crisis. Whilst many education and language projects are ensuring that children from Ukraine have the best chance of thriving at school. Through channelling funding into local communities, Community Foundation Ireland's grant-making has been direct, responsive and impactful.

Now as the conflict enters its second year. Community Foundation Ireland, its donors and its partners are recommitting to providing strategic support and have identified priority areas where action is required.

Tackling Emerging Challenges

As the war enters its second year. We have with our partners now identified key areas where support is needed.

Throughout this crisis Community Foundation Ireland has taken a strategic response. Using our well-established role as a philanthropic hub we have gathered the research and the evidence to inform grant-making which makes a difference. This has led to emergency responses, supports for access to school, training and work as well as awareness raising and advocacy which informs not only our own grant-making but also the development of policy at both a national and local level.

This is an evolving crisis throughout. Challenges change. Needs change. Being conscious of this and given our connectivity to community groups and national human rights and migrant organisations we have adapted our response.

Accommodation

Insufficient accommodation remains a key issue for refugees from Ukraine. The over-reliance on the hospitality sector leaves refugees in congregated settings that don't have sufficient services in place to provide adequate information and support. Depending on seasonal tourism demand refugees are often moved from one location to another. Uprooting so regularly prevents families from building a community and settling into schools and jobs.

Local area initiatives on housing. The Foundation and its partners are working to progress local authority initiatives to source further accommodation, including devolved budget and decision making.

Barriers to Work

English language is a barrier to almost 70% of those seeking employment and income supports. An estimated 60% of Ukrainians are unemployed and seeking a job, compared with only 20% employed on full-time or part-time basis. Additionally, more than 80% of Ukrainians who are employed, are working in jobs outside of their specialty. Those with qualifications are facing barriers in getting their Ukrainian qualifications recognised. Community Foundation Ireland is continuing to work with long-term partners such as Business in the Community on programmes which support Ukrainian people to get jobs with their skills and qualifications.

Community based English language classes to supplement those provided through State services and schools. We will invest in programmes which provide upskilling and reskilling opportunities for Ukrainians to enable them to enter the workforce to plug existing skills gaps in Ireland including in retrofitting and the regeneration of accommodation-suitable buildings.

Need for local supports

As people arrive into communities local charities are facing increased demands for supports, such as accessing local services like healthcare, education and income support, but in particular mental health and trauma services.

Engagement with local communities and social interactions with people in accommodation centres is important to ensure greater understanding. Efforts by those with an extreme political ideology to create division need to be combatted with commitments on integration which involve established local community organisations and groups are led at a local level.

Increase support for Family Resource Centres, community groups and social clubs to bring together Irish people and Ukrainians in community activities. Those counties welcoming larger numbers of refugees will be prioritised for future support.

Vulnerable Groups

People who were already vulnerable prior to the war are being more severely impacted by the humanitarian crisis. Children torn apart from parents, victims of gender-based violence, minorities such as the LGBTQ community as well as victims of human trafficking all have specific needs which must be addressed.

Further investment will be channelled to Rape Crisis Centres, local gender-based violence support groups and services, as well as refuges to increase supports for refugees who are victims of abuse, trafficking and violence.

Trauma Support

People of all ages have been traumatised by their experience. It is suspected that many of those trauma's have yet to surface and will become more evident as the war and its impact continues.

We will support local and national organisations with expertise across the mental health spectrum, in particularly conflict-specific and post-traumatic supports and youth mental health.

“I didn’t want to leave my home and my family, however as the bombs were reaching nearer in our community, I came to the realization that if I didn’t get out with my children we may not have survived.”

A mother's story

Upon arrival in Limerick, the Northside Family Resource Centre provided this mother with an opportunity to enrol her children in a Community Foundation Ireland supported summer camp. -Northside Family Resource Centre

We are proud to stand with the people of Ukraine and the Irish people who are welcoming families, women, men and children into our communities, schools, clubs, and workplaces.

Conclusion

Community Foundation Ireland has with the support of donors with national and community-based partners have put in place an infrastructure to identify emerging challenges and need which continue to be the hallmark of the impact of the war in Ukraine.

From getting badly needed supplies into Ukraine and placed along its borders in the early days of war, to supporting international partners as part of the ongoing humanitarian response to addressing need in communities at home the Foundation has used its role as a philanthropic hub to deliver strategic support.

As the war enters its second year we have identified new priorities. Help and support is needed now in those communities which have welcomed refugees. This support needs to be channelled through existing community groups, Family Resource Centres, health and trauma services as well as those which are combatting gender-based violence.

In addition, organisations from arts, sport and many others which form the lifeblood of Irish society need support to continue to engage with Ukrainians. After identifying our priorities the Foundation will continue to engage with donors and supporters, including Government, to build on the €7.5 Million which is supporting men, women and children during a time of huge turbulence in their lives.

If you want to be part of this continuing response then please contact John Sansome, Community Foundation Ireland's Senior Philanthropy & Development Advisor at JSansome@Foundation.ie

“I have made so many friends here in Claremorris in such a short space of time, been to parts of Ireland I never dreamed of especially day trips to the seaside which are so great as living in the hotel can be very stressful and crowded.

I have really enjoyed all the art and creative workshop during the summer which has helped me cope as I miss my family so much back in Ukraine. Claremorris is my second home and I am very grateful for all that the Family Resource Centre and the community of Claremorris has done for me”

17 Year Old Girl from Ukraine who benefitting from support to Claremorris Family Resource Centre, Co Mayo.

