



HUNGARIAN
INTERCHURCH AID
actalliance

Hungarian Interchurch Aid's response to the crisis caused by the war in Ukraine

ONE YEAR OF
MULTISECTORAL
HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE
ON REPORT



MAIN PARTNERS

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FEBA


HUNGARY HELPS


GOVERNMENT OF HUNGARY

UHF Ukraine
Humanitarian
Fund



For one year, we have witnessed the war forced on Ukrainians. We've seen people fleeing, suffering and crying out for help. As we have been spared from the horrors of war, we are obliged to be there for those uprooted, the families torn apart, the people fearing their lives, and those who have lost everything and can barely support themselves.

As an aid organisation with its headquarters in a neighbouring country of Ukraine, with representative offices registered in Kyiv, Lviv and Berehove, and with more than 25 years of presence in the country now in peril, we hesitated not a moment in coming to aid those in need. A day after the invasion began, Hungarian Interchurch Aid was already helping the myriads of people fleeing the horrors of war. Our response was increasing on both sides of the border proportionally to the needs of those desperate times.

Deciding for a multisectoral approach, we have created a complex portfolio of assistance while at the same time extending the geographical reach of Hungarian Interchurch Aid to 20 regions of Ukraine. From Kharkiv in the east to Berehove

in the west, our colleagues support the internally displaced in their struggle to survive. We've been wherever the needs were the greatest, even in the close vicinity of the frontline – like in Kherson.

Besides our work in Ukraine, we are also making significant efforts to assist those, who had to flee their homeland. Through our Support Centre for Ukrainian Refugees located in downtown Budapest, we aim to cover all possible needs refugees can face while living in Hungary. Our cooperation with the extensive network of groups, congregations and organisations doing humanitarian work in the country enables us to support refugees country-wide.

Of course, we wouldn't be where we are now if it was not for the strength, sacrifice and goodwill of those who form the pillars of our response. Supported by an extraordinary collaboration of donors, volunteers, corporate partners, the Churches and the Hungarian Government, Hungarian Interchurch Aid plays a vital role in the international humanitarian response to Ukraine.

In a year's time, we have developed a great deal as an international aid organisation. Exchanging expertise and know-how with our local

colleagues, civil societies and our old and long-term partners in Ukraine, we evolve to provide the most proficient and effective response to the rapidly changing needs while still adhering to the highest professional and transparency standards.

On 24 February 2023, the war entered its second year with still no end in sight to the bloodshed and unnecessary suffering of millions. HIA's 25 years in Ukraine underline our commitment to Ukrainians and show that we are here to stay through thick and thin. In this report, we would like to present the first year of our efforts in this crisis caused by the war, accompanied by stories from the field. We would also like to sincerely thank you for the continued trust and support you have shown for the work of Hungarian Interchurch Aid and kindly encourage you to follow our activities on our online and offline platforms.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'László Lehel'.

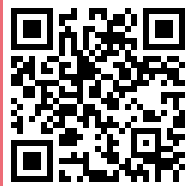
László Lehel

President-Director of Hungarian Interchurch Aid

1 year of assistance in numbers

Since February 2022 Hungarian Interchurch Aid has doubled down on its efforts to provide help to those in need – both in Hungary and Ukraine.

From tangible, in-kind food aid to cash assistance, community-based relief and psychosocial help, HIA's response to this crisis is multisectoral and flexible. In the first year of the conflict, HIA has delivered and distributed over 1600 metric tons of humanitarian aid in Ukraine, often in hard-to-reach areas. Its humanitarian operations encompass 20 regions of Ukraine, from westernmost Zakarpattia to Kharkiv in the East and Kherson in the South.



WATCH THE 1-YEAR
ANNIVERSARY VIDEO
TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT OUR
RESPONSE TO
THE CRISIS

OUR RESPONSE AT A GLANCE

18,896,942 USD

value of
aid programme
implemented
since February

1631
metric tons

worth 15,709,928 USD

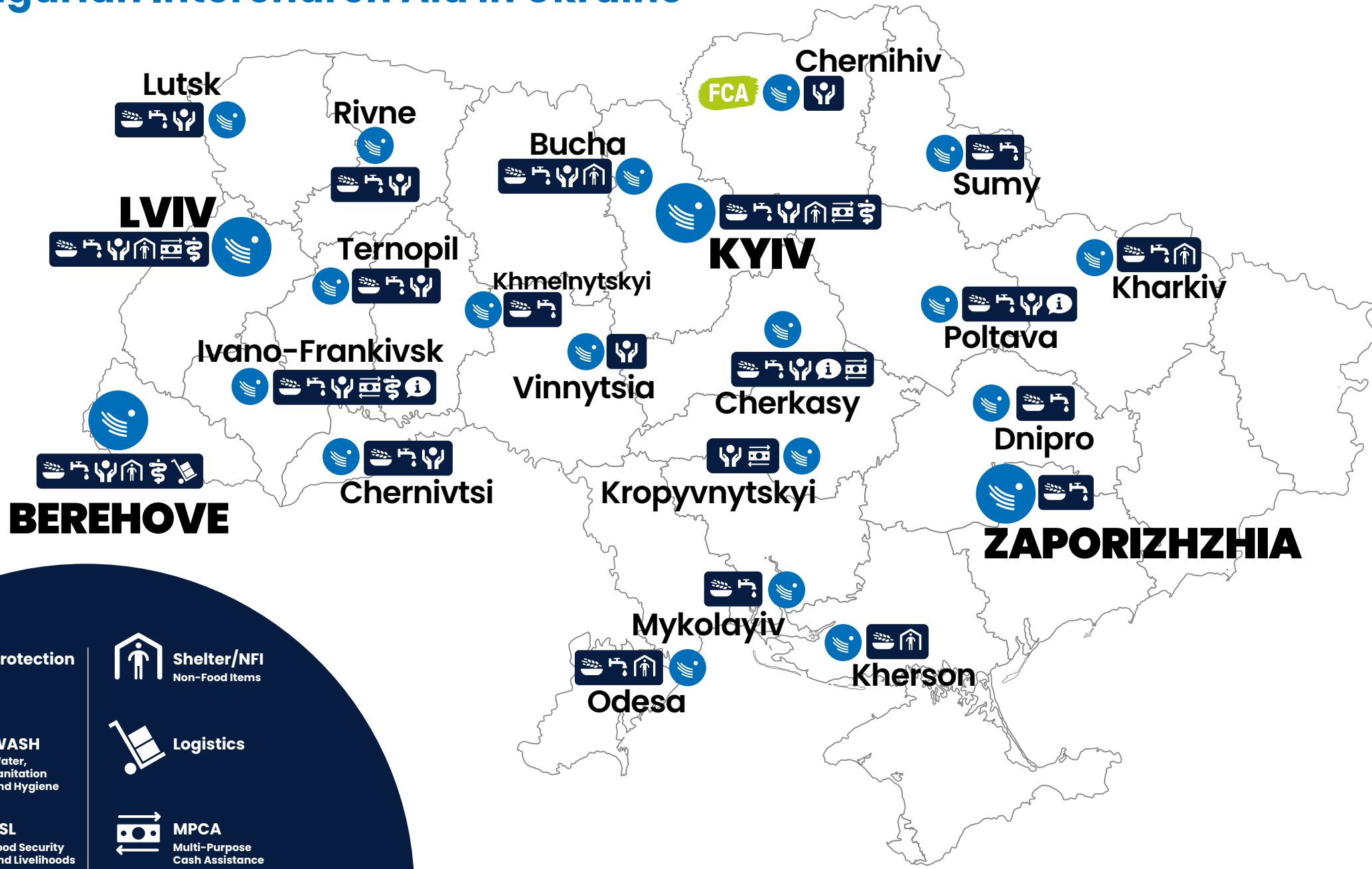
food, sanitary- and childcare
products, household items for
shelters, generators, medicine

242,361
people

ASSISTED

through our
aid programme
in Hungary and Ukraine

Hungarian Interchurch Aid in Ukraine



 Protection

 Shelter/NFI
Non-Food Items

 WASH
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

 Logistics

 FSL
Food Security and Livelihoods

 MPCA
Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance

 Health

 Information

Helping Ukraine one food package a time

HIA'S EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE IN UKRAINE

With the onset of the conflict on 24 February, Hungarian Interchurch Aid immediately started to prepare its response. The disruption of supply chains coupled with a huge displacement crisis meant that during the chaotic spring months, providing emergency access to basic food and non-food items as well as health & hygiene products was critical. However, where fighting ceased as new territories were liberated, the importance of in-kind aid remains paramount to this day.

To support humanitarian operations in Ukraine logistically, HIA set up warehouses in Budapest, Berehove and Lviv in the first days of the war. During spring, HIA delivered in-kind aid to support the tens of thousands of displaced people arriving in Western Ukraine from the war-affected regions. More than 250 community shelters received food, sanitary products, clothes and household appliances throughout the year. As time went on and Russian troops were forced into retreat from their positions in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Kherson regions, HIA reoriented its in-kind aid programme towards the liberated territories. With a focus on hard-to-reach locations - where international aid organisations rarely venture - HIA has delivered aid in places where military activity is still ongoing, such as Kherson itself.

1631
tonnes of aid delivered

In-kind assistance is a type of assistance in which contributions take the form of tangible goods rather than money – whether that be supplies, equipment or material.



WATCH OUR VIDEO FROM KHERSON, WHERE HIA WAS AMONG THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL AID ORGANISATIONS TO BRING AID



Emergency assistance under artillery barrage

Upon entering Kherson just barely a month after the withdrawal of Russian forces, the situation in the city spoke for itself. With hardly any traffic on the roads within Kherson, one would imagine the city is abandoned. Yet, in more central locations, crowds of people filled the streets.

Some were standing in line at humanitarian points to fill up plastic bottles with drinking water. Others were standing in line at food distribution, desperate to acquire something to eat. All this was under the threat of indiscriminate artillery strikes. One such drinking water supply point visited by HIA was destroyed by a missile strike just days later. The difficulties faced during the occupation and its aftermath are palpable in the empty halls of an orphanage on the outskirts of Kherson. As the Russian forces were leaving, it became obvious to the director of the institution that children across the city were being abducted into the Russian Federation. To spare the children of the orphanage of such a fate, the children were hidden in multiple locations on the outskirts of Kherson. HIA delivered food and hygiene donations to the orphanage to help the institution build up a reserve contributing to the return of the children and thus the unification of the family unrelated by blood.

In the second phase of its emergency response in Kherson, HIA delivered 46 power generators donated by the Government of Hungary to the city. Some of the engines were handed over to residential buildings on a “courtyard” basis for shared use. “We used to wait hours on the cold streets to charge our phones. Six hours in total. Three just standing in line, another three charging the phone,” remembers one of the courtyard residents. HIA considers helping small communities as important as providing assistance to local authorities in achieving greater, more effortful goals. Heeding the calls for support, HIA delivered high-performance engines to the municipal waterworks to help in restarting and maintaining the operational safety of the water systems and, consequently, return running water to countless homes in Kherson. “Look, life is happier than it was. For those who have not been here, it is hard to understand that explosions are not nearly as scary as being under occupation,” says the director of Kherson’s hospital, which also received an electric generator to guarantee operational safety. According to her, with the continuous support of international aid organisations such as HIA and its partners, despite all difficulties, life can start returning to normal.



WATCH OUR VIDEO FROM AN HIA-SUPPORTED ORPHANAGE IN KHERSON



WATCH OUR VIDEO ON THE IMPORTANCE OF GENERATORS TO KHERSON RESIDENTS!



Combatting General Winter

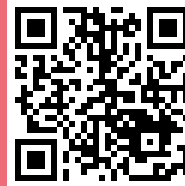
ADDRESSING CRITICAL NEEDS DURING WINTERTIME

As nights became longer and temperatures dropped, Ukrainians throughout the country experienced a drop in the availability of central heating and electricity due to the constant attacks on energy infrastructure by the Russian Federation.

The situation was particularly dire in the areas liberated by Ukraine during its Kharkiv offensive, where returning IDPs were met with destruction and no utilities – if their houses were inhabitable at all. HIA surveyed the region and prepared a winterization action plan to protect the population from the rapidly advancing cold. First, it renovated community shelters hosting displaced people in Pervomaiskyi. Cooperating with OCHA's Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF), HIA has also provided bomb shelter kits and cast-iron stoves (burzhuika) together with wooden pellets used for heating to families in need in the villages around Balakliya and Izyum.

Apart from the Kharkiv region, HIA also implemented winterization programmes in other parts of the country as well. Zakarpattia has seen a large influx of displaced people ever since the start of the war, and HIA supported the host communities with firewood and warm blankets throughout the winter. Several truckloads of warm winter clothes were also distributed amongst people fleeing Kherson in Odessa.

Due to the frequent blackouts and power cuts, procuring and distributing electric generators was also a priority for HIA. These allowed the network of HIA-supported Ukrainian NGOs to continue their humanitarian work throughout the country, and also contributed to the resumption of utilities in Kherson and its surroundings.



SEE HOW HIA HELPS
UKRAINIANS STAY
WARM DURING
THE WINTER!



What's cooking in Zmiiv?

The utility fees are rising in the wake of the attacks on the energy infrastructure, which, with an income barely enough to cover a displaced, four-member family's needs, places a heavy burden on Natalia.

The mother of three says they rely on humanitarian aid to cover what they cannot afford for their unbalanced diet. The only heat source in their new home is an old kitchen stove, which is barely suitable for cooking. "We can only heat with firewood, so I must decide how much and when I put wood on the fire. We usually start the fire for the night, and I put something on the stove, like potato, to boil slowly," says Natalia, adding that she would not be better off with gas or electric plates because that would only increase her utility bills. Hungarian Interchurch Aid emphasises helping the most vulnerable according to their specific needs. For this, HIA works with local civic organisations to identify the needs and how help can be most effectively provided. That is why HIA supports local NGOs with long-term and practical goals in helping those in need through its Flexible Small Grants programme. Within the framework of its winterisation action plan, HIA supported the NGO The Youth of Zmiiv, which uses creativity and technology to help beneficiaries save on the costs of cooking and heating.

"We wanted to provide an alternative to people to gas or electricity, knowing very well how burdensome the utility bills can be. This is how our version of an iron-cast stove was born," explains Artem, head of The Youth of Zmiiv. The stove is easy to carry, does not take up much space, and requires a small amount of firewood to provide enough energy for cooking while also radiating heat. The contraption dreamed up for this very purpose is created in a local business. Thus by empowering The Youth of Zmiiv, local economic actors are consequently supported, which has always been a trademark of HIA. With the specially designed stove, Natalia can now prepare food for herself and the children faster and with more attention. Her younger son requires a special diet, while her daughter has heart problems and has gained weight out of psychological issues she suffered from the war. Even though the stove is small, in Natalia's eyes, its value is extraordinary.



Empowering civil society in Ukraine

GRANTS FOR A COMMUNITY BASED RESPONSE TO HELP UKRAINIANS IN NEED

The Ukrainian civil society was quick to organise itself after the outbreak of war, doing tremendous and essential work – but as the war dragged on, their financial means to continue doing their part became more and more limited. Believing in the power of community, HIA introduced grants (Flexible Small Grants – FSG) for these organisations who are involved in the humanitarian work in Ukraine. The cooperation between HIA and the organisations is mutually beneficial, since the knowledge of local needs coupled with HIA's humanitarian expertise enables a grassroot-level response while strengthening the resilience of local actors

Some organisations need the FSG funding to buy food & hygiene products for the displaced people in their care, others need them for equipment or specialists for therapy. In autumn, several winterization projects – like setting up heating points in cities – were also financed through the FSG programme. Whatever the purpose of the grantees may be, HIA supports their aim with flexible-use grants up to \$10,000 each. Each project has a duration of 2 to 3 months, after which the cooperation is evaluated, and a decision is made on the renewal of the agreement.



WATCH OUR VIDEO
ON THE WORKSHOP
OF GOODNESS, AND
SEE HOW THEY HELP
DISPLACED CHILDREN
PROCESS THEIR
TRAUMAS!

Through the Flexible Small Grants programme HIA reaches 85544 people, helping them in a wide variety of ways. In total,

62
beneficiary organisations received
\$540 000



Preserving the wings of creativity

“It is important for children to know that it is good to be good. For this, the first step is security which allows one to continue on. It is as important for children as for adults,” explains Oksana, the coordinator of art therapy in Vinnytsia, Ukraine.

Tears appear in Oksana’s eyes as she remembers how children arriving from war-torn parts of Ukraine tried their best to make sure that “Mum wouldn’t cry anymore”. “I remember when a mother offered to buy a toy for her daughter, and she refused, saying that she was fine without it. You see, she just didn’t want to burden her mother. Children understand the current situation differently from adults, but they know when something is amiss,” Oksana says.

The Workshop of Goodness aims to help children to discover their talents through art activities. Dancing, drawing, crafting and musical activities are all designed to allow self-expression and ingenuity, which is meant to aid children in shifting their attention from their woes caused by war to being children.

“Some open up through drawing, some through dancing, others through playing musical instruments. Art and crafts are the wings of creativity children can use to soar. Our job is to preserve these wings”, say the volunteers of The Workshop of Goodness.

There were many internally displaced children who arrived at the first class emotionally “blank”. For a parent, knowing that his/her child is traumatized is a source of greater pain than losing their home. But after a few classes in The Workshop of Goodness, they have opened up, finding joy in activities and looking forward to the next classes. Seeing the storm in their children’s souls calming down and dispersing does the very same to parents.

Even if the flames of war have engulfed the children’s past lives and might even have scorched their feathers, within the workshop, they can heal and spread their wings again.



Protecting the mind from traumas of war

provided protection
activities to
31,730
people

PROTECTING & PROMOTING THE MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING OF THE VULNERABLE IN UKRAINE

Through several programmes, Hungarian Interchurch Aid is involved in the protection of Ukrainians throughout the country. From free legal counsel to resilience-building community workshops, from sports programmes to art- and psychotherapy, HIA and its partners in the field work together to preserve their mental wellbeing. HIA's goal remains to help those traumatised by the fighting, bombing and the uncertainty of life in Ukraine. The past year has left a large percentage of Ukrainians at least mentally scarred – and children are especially affected by the horrors of war. Apart from working directly with them, HIA also provides further trainings for psychologists in order to reach as many people as possible. Hungarian Interchurch Aid has worked with 25 partners to preserve the mental wellbeing of Ukrainians since the start of the war, reaching 31,730 people with protection activities throughout the country.

Psychosocial support is the process of facilitating and strengthening resilience within individuals, families and communities to recover from and adapt to critical adversities with potentially damaging long-term impacts. Psychosocial support thus promotes the restoration of social cohesion and mental health for those, who take part in the programme.



IN THIS VIDEO,
YOU CAN WATCH
CHILDREN FROM AN
HIA-SUPPORTED
COMMUNITY SHELTER
IN LVIV PARTICIPATE
IN MUSICAL
THERAPY

Doxa and the displaced children of Berehove

The conflict in Ukraine has been traumatic on millions of Ukrainian civilians forced to flee their homes for safer parts of Ukraine or as refugees into the surrounding countries.

The trauma is bad for adults, who have an understanding of the conflict and why it has happened. It can be much worse for children whose worlds have often been turned upside down in just a few hours. In Berehove, their traumas are tackled by a big and fluffy Bernese Mountain Dog named Doxa, who – together with her therapist owner Barbara Körözi – comes to visit the displaced children in a shelter run by HIA every week. “It is important for the children to decide what the dog will do,” she said. “They need a sense of being in control in their lives. Many of them were told by their parents to leave their homes immediately, and have not had any sense of being able to have an impact on their surroundings. Leading Doxa on the leash and asking her to do tricks increases self-confidence and allows the traumatised children to regain a sense of control. The dog, primarily as a motivator, participates in the games compiled according to psychological aspects. Her presence inspires the children: even those who are severely impacted by trauma are happy to participate. And her help is making a difference. “There was one family who arrived here from Severodonetsk,” she recalled. “They had a boy and a girl. When they arrived, the children were afraid of any noise that sounded like war. Thunder caused anxiety in them. A psychologist from Kyiv tried to help, but couldn’t get very far with them. The children wouldn’t go anywhere without their mother. But when they started to come to the programme with my dog, the children began to get more and more open. They now come to the programme without their mom. They don’t cry, but play and have fun.” Playing with the dog it is also easier for them to talk about feelings, formulate memories and desires, projecting them onto the dog. Doxa can keep secrets, doesn’t judge, doesn’t deceive and doesn’t take advantage. Doxa simply loves – and the kids love her back.



Flexible aiding mechanisms helping in a dignified way

HIA'S CASH PROGRAMMES IN UKRAINE



WATCH OUR VIDEO TO LEARN HOW CASH ASSISTANCE ENABLES A FAMILY TO RESTART THEIR LIVES AFTER LEAVING EVERYTHING BEHIND!

To help those deprived by the war, HIA employs two types of cash transfers for individuals. In the organisation's effort to empower large masses of people at once, multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) allows for a more people-centred relief, granting beneficiaries freedom of choice and returning a degree of dignity into their lives. The financial support received within the MPCA programme is a three-month instalment of 6600 UAH. Cash for protection – also called Assess & Assist – intends to benefit those, who have specific protection issues that cannot be covered by the multi-purpose cash transfers, like an upcoming medical expenditure. Hungarian Interchurch Aid has been providing internally displaced Ukrainians with cash transfers since June of 2022. Applicants are registered and reviewed whether they fit the criteria agreed by the Cash Working Group in Ukraine. In total, HIA has supported 21,478 Ukrainians with cash transfers worth over \$4 million – 16,778 participated in the MPCA programme, the remainder received financial help through Cash for Protection. HIA's efforts are helped by fellow ACT Alliance members DanChurchAid and Christian Aid as well as WorldVision International.

Cash for protection is a modality, in which beneficiaries receive cash transfers to achieve specific, pre-agreed protection outcomes. Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance is a cash transfer programme, through which beneficiaries receive regular payments. Cash transfers are, by definition, unrestricted – because cash can be spent on anything. It is a modality which offers recipients the maximum degree of choice, flexibility and dignity.

supported
21,478

Ukrainians through cash assistance projects in Ukraine worth over **4 million USD**

Building a new life from scratch

Fleeing a small mining town in Donetsk region, Olha, Dmytro and their young sons ended up in a shelter for internally displaced in Bohuslav, Kyiv region, hundreds of miles from their now lost home. As time passed, the shelter conditions became unbearable, so they took matters into their own hands. Literally.

With no one to help, they decided to establish a new life and regrow the roots the war had so cruelly cut away. After searching for a while, they found a piece of land on the outskirts of Bohuslav, what some might even call the end of the world. On it was a shanty house, damaged as if it was ravaged by fighting. Previous residents left mountains of garbage all over; the roof was leaking, the windows, if any, were damaged, and the floor had no covering. There was no toilet in the house, nor was there heating or running water. Still, the family chose it to be their new home, and with hard work and an unbreakable spirit, they started rebuilding the house and, in the process, rebuilding their very life. After agreeing with the landowner, the family pays a monthly fee for the rent and, eventually, the acquisition of their new home. Everything else is up to them.

Anyone who has engaged in construction knows that it is a challenging endeavour. As Olha and Dmytro could not afford building materials, they used what they could from the heaps of garbage around and what little help they got from their new neighbours. They used plastic wraps to cover the holes in the wall and broken slats to cover the damp, uncovered and muddy floor. Even though the circumstances were harsh, they kept going on with their gruesome task, only to recover from their daily labour by sleeping on old mattresses on the floor.

By the time winter was at the doorstep, they had run out of money to continue their efforts. That is when they approached HIA at a registration site for cash support. Their request was simple: help them prepare their new home for winter so that they can provide a safe and warm home for their children.

Thanks to the funds received through the Cash for Protection programme, Olha and Dmytro were able to repair the roof, restore the heating and electrical systems, build a sewage system and install running water in the house. From a shack to a house in about half a year – their determination serves as an example to all of us.



The humanitarian-development nexus in Ukraine

TACKLING THE MASSIVE DESTRUCTION LEFT BEHIND IN FORMER COMBAT ZONES

Following the retreat of Russian forces from Northern Ukraine, Hungarian Interchurch Aid faced a situation that necessitated a different approach to its previous work in Ukraine. The thoroughly and intentionally damaged public infrastructure reinforced the humanitarian crisis in the war-torn regions. HIA was among the first international aid organisations to bring aid to Bucha and its surroundings, and also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the municipality.

Seeing the scale destruction in Borodyanka, Irpin, Bucha and the whole area, HIA sought to cooperate with other actors, especially with its strategic partner, the Hungarian Government. HIA received funding for the renovation of a school in Zahal'tsi and the building of a healthcare facility with added post and local government functions in Synyak. Part of this same project was the installation of a kindergarten made up of mobile containers to replace the original structure in Zahal'tsi, which was completely destroyed by the fighting during last spring. The institution welcomed back sixty children, which had an immediate positive effect on the lives of the people of Zahal'tsi and the settlement's region.



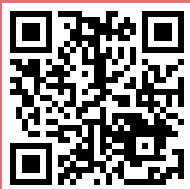
WATCH THIS VIDEO
TO SEE HOW MOBILE
SOLUTIONS ARE
ABLE TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE
IN ZAHAL'TSI!

The humanitarian-development nexus recognizes the importance of coordinating and building upon efforts of development and humanitarian actors to help create longer-term resilience and capacity, especially in protracted crises.

The plight of the Zahal'tsi school

What is common in all occupied areas in the Kyiv region is that the Russian forces established their base of operation in administrative buildings and educational institutions.

The school of Zahal'tsi village close to the devastated town of Borodyanka is no exception. Russian soldiers briefly made the institution their home, and in doing so, turned the school into a battlefield, the marks of intense shelling defacing the halls of learning hosting three hundred students before the war. Despite the damages making many premises of the building unfit for teaching, the school is adamant about opening its gates to students who have or are returning to their homes after fleeing the invasion. Their task at hand is not easy: not only did the Russians loot every electronic device of value (computers, laptops, even the washing machine from the adjacent kindergarten), but among other issues, every single window is damaged or missing, and there is virtually no electricity, not to mention the constant reminder of the war manifested in the marks left over by shelling. As the Kyiv region is under no immediate threat anymore, Hungarian Interchurch Aid is partaking in the rebuilding efforts, so that life may slowly, but surely return to the once war-torn areas. For its first project, Hungarian Interchurch Aid has pledged to renovate the regional school located in Zahal'tsi, laying the foundation for a brighter, better future to come.

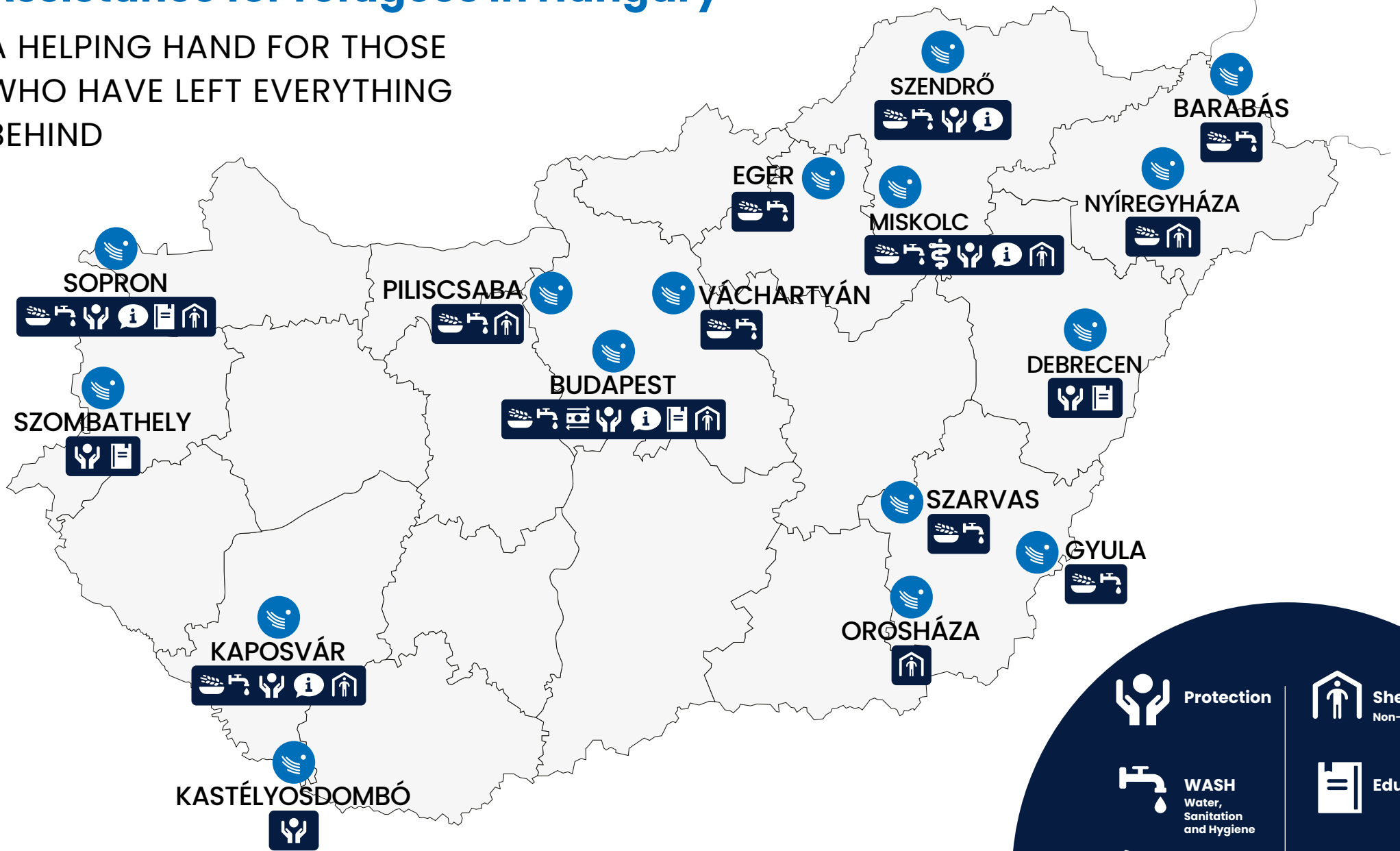


WATCH THIS VIDEO, AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF ZAHAL'TSI!



Assistance for refugees in Hungary

A HELPING HAND FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING BEHIND



- Protection** (Icon: person with hands raised)
- WASH** (Icon: water tap) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- FSL** (Icon: wheat stalks) Food Security and Livelihoods
- Health** (Icon: medical cross)
- Shelter/NFI** (Icon: house with person) Non-Food Items
- Education** (Icon: book)
- MPCA** (Icon: cash and coins) Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
- Information** (Icon: speech bubble with 'i')



Emergency response in Hungary

MEETING BASIC NEEDS
BY ACTING SWIFTLY



more than

88.000

people assisted in Hungary

With the imminent refugee crisis in mind, Hungarian Interchurch Aid decided to deliver a two-pronged approach to assist those suffering from the effects of war. Besides setting up its response in Ukraine, HIA also needed to react to the thousands of refugees arriving from Ukraine in a swift and decisive manner: on 25 February, volunteers and staff arrived to the border and set up tents and a refugee support point. Thinking about the families flying out from Budapest, a child-friendly space was put up at Liszt Ferenc International Airport. Naturally, accommodation – both short- and long-term – was also in high need. HIA rented apartments, payed for hotel rooms and freed up space in its social institutions for this end, and built up a network of partners providing for refugees staying in Hungary with food, hygiene items, shelter and psychosocial support. The next step was the establishment of a refugee transit hub in Budapest, operated in cooperation with 5 other charitable organisations. Here refugees arriving by train receive food, drinks, help in traveling further, and can also apply for accommodation, different services and register themselves with the authorities if they wish to stay longer.



WATCH HOW
OUR COLLEAGUES
AND VOLUNTEERS
WORK WITH REFUGEES
UPON THEIR ARRIVAL
IN BUDAPEST



Adjusting to life in Hungary

sheltered refugees
for

28
thousand

instances in Hungary

ASSISTING REFUGEES STAYING IN THE COUNTRY

The refugees arriving in Hungary often leave everything behind – but their challenges and their struggle doesn't stop at the border. Adjusting to a different life in a strange country is a difficult and challenging process, especially since many still carry the traumas of their past lives with them. Looking for a way to support them in this process, HIA established its Support Centre for Ukrainian Refugees in the heart of Budapest. From providing all kinds of information, organising various community events and courses to the distribution of in-kind donations, the Support Centre aims to cover all issues refugees can face while living in Hungary. The institution employs social workers, psychologists and aid workers to give refugees looking for mental support, legal counsel, accommodation, access to the labour market, healthcare and education a helping hand. Closely attached to the Centre is a community space where Ukrainian-speaking mental health professionals help children aged 1 to 6 to cope with their underlying traumas by providing various kinds of therapies (art, music) while their parents are off to work. HIA's institutions in the countryside coupled with the cooperation with an extensive network of groups, congregations and organisations doing humanitarian work in Hungary enables HIA to support refugees country-wide.

Dima from Mariupol

One year ago, everything was going according to his plans. Dima – as his friends call him – just turned 18 in January, and was preparing for a long career in football.

Today, Dima is a refugee in Hungary, some 1700 kilometres away from the city he once called home, far from his parents and relatives. His and so many others' plan was shattered by the onset of war a year ago – but as a fighter he is, he always makes new ones.

He remembers those days as if it was yesterday: „In the beginning, we tried to survive the siege in the city, we were really afraid to leave it. We took shelter in the basement for a week, then a missile hit our house, smoke filled the basement so we had to run out into the open, fearing for our lives, artillery shelling all around. It was the worst day of my life, it was then that I decided to leave no matter what. Seeing all that military action was perhaps the most terrible period of my life.“ What happened afterwards is nothing short of an Odyssey. Together with his girlfriend, he left for Donetsk and then embarked on a dangerous journey across Russia with the final destination: Budapest.

In Hungary, HIA took care of him and provided free accommodation and meals, which allowed him to start working nightshifts at a warehouse. Today, he lives in Székesfehérvár, and chases the old dream again. Dima even receives a monthly scholarship – courtesy of a long-time corporate partner of HIA. “Hungarian Interchurch Aid found a football club which was ready to take me on despite my not so good physical shape as by then I have not played football for over half a year because of the fighting. The club’s management was very understanding –they took me. This is how I ended up in MOL Fehérvár FC. When missiles flew over my head and I couldn’t go to training, or when I was working in the warehouse at night, I thought that fate wouldn’t give me another chance. Then, overnight, everything changed, and now I’m able to fight for my dream again. I cannot stress enough how grateful I am to those who have been and are still with me in the past months.”



Hungarian solidarity with Ukraine

HUNGARIAN INTERCHURCH AID, A COMMUNITY OF HELPERS

HIA's **2500** volunteers
worked **11331** hours
to help refugees in Hungary

On February 24th, the world woke up to the news of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While many just watched in horror, Hungarian civilians, charitable organisations, businesses, corporations and government bodies immediately started organising themselves. Phone lines were red hot, people were just pulling up unannounced to HIA headquarters with anything they could spare. It seemed as if everyone and every business had something to give to the Ukrainians. In the past year, HIA has received in-kind donations in the value of over \$10 million.

Since February, more than 2500 volunteers worked 11331 hours sorting and classifying donations, preparing and handing out food & hygiene kits at the transit hub for refugees, on the border or anywhere where they were needed. Without their dedication, HIA staff wouldn't have been able to provide help to those in need like they did.

Complementing the unprecedented amount of durable food, hygiene items, clothes, childcare products and lots more that the organisation has collected from businesses and common people, HIA also started a domestic fundraising campaign to finance its activities in the humanitarian crisis caused by the war. The campaign proved how the power of community is able to make a difference if a community acts together for a common cause.



Our supporting partners

CORPORATIONS SUPPORTING
OUR WORK WITH MORE
THAN €50 THOUSAND

Thank you for
helping together
with us!

Audi
Hungaria



Taipei Representative Office,
Budapest, Hungary

ukraine.hia.hu

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Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA) was founded in 1991 by Hungarian historical Protestant and Orthodox churches. The founding churches are now working together as a growing community of professionals, volunteers, donors and responsible corporate partners to help those in need. As one of the largest, internationally recognized charity organisations in Hungary, HIA has carried out humanitarian and development work in over 40 countries, providing assistance to those in need wherever they may be regardless of nationality, religion or world view, all the while meeting the highest professional and transparency requirements. HIA has its Headquarters in Budapest, Hungary, and operates Regional Offices in Ukraine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Ethiopia.