



# Ukraine Emergency Response

| 12 Months Impact Report

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# | Introduction



On Friday 18th February 2022 I convened an online meeting with our Ukrainian partner agencies to discuss all possible eventualities. With 190,000 Russian troops amassed on Russian and Belarussian borders, we were hoping for the best and preparing for the worst. We triple checked contact details, bank accounts and partner addresses as partners checked client lists and contingency stocks, and we gave words of reassurance.

Despite warnings that week from the British Embassy (which had moved to Lviv), we and our partners were perhaps in partial denial that an invasion was imminent. Nevertheless, that day my remarkable Director of International Programmes and Partnerships, with her team, arranged an urgent transfer of flexible funding grants to almost all our Ukrainian partners, just in case. We also sought to help partners in Poland and Moldova to be ready in anticipation of population movement. Six days later Russia launched its land, sea and air attack on major cities across Ukraine, and terror ensued.

Unlike so many international organisations, World Jewish Relief was uniquely placed to respond, concentrating our efforts inside Ukraine rather than in neighbouring countries where access was easier but needs less acute. We knew the geography, had a network of 29 partners across almost the whole of Ukraine, had Russian and Ukrainian speakers in the office and partners in Poland and Moldova. These advantages enabled us to evacuate 7,300 people to safe locations or across borders, and to provide food, shelter and medical assistance to the bulk of our elderly Jewish client group whom we anticipated would stay where they were.

## As the conflict intensified, we focused on six critical issues:

- The provision of emergency assistance to our existing Jewish client group, and those beyond the Jewish community.
- Securing a logistics pipeline to urgently get supplies into the country, whilst simultaneously purchasing as much as we could within Ukraine.
- Assisting our trusted partners through flexible funding,

so they could make rapid decisions and act swiftly without seeking constant approval from London.

- Focusing our emergency efforts on regions of high humanitarian need and low humanitarian access, including areas behind Russian lines.
- Continuing our employment programme in Ukraine, targeting internally displaced people in need of financial security and independence from handouts.
- The expansion of our UK-based refugee resettlement work to assist Ukrainian refugees finding hosts through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and with English language and employment support.

My team and I have visited Ukraine on numerous occasions this past year. It is impossible not to be deeply disturbed by Russia's indiscriminate targeting of civilian infrastructure and the scale of physical and psychological trauma, displacement, horror and need.

I am immensely proud of the courage and bravery of our Ukrainian partners and the scale of impact they have achieved, enabling us to reach 188,000 people. We provided some of the earliest aid consignments into newly liberated areas around Kyiv, Kherson and Kharkiv, demonstrating the reach and capability of the World Jewish Relief family.

My trustees and team have worked tirelessly to ensure we do all that we can at every stage of this emergency. Jewish communal bodies across the country have shown outstanding support. I would like to pay particular thanks to Jewish Care and ORT UK who urged their own supporters to give directly to World Jewish Relief – a wonderfully magnanimous gesture in today's competitive charity world.

But my real thanks is to our wonderful supporters. Your concern, engagement, interest, kindness and generosity has enabled us to mount a response arguably only second in scale to our action in the 1930s and 40s. Many of you offered your homes to Ukrainians and have supported them in the most remarkable way.

Sadly, all indications are that this conflict will continue and even intensify throughout 2023 and beyond. Further displacement, injury, economic misery and destruction will endure. We are committed to assisting Ukrainians in Ukraine, neighbouring countries and in the UK in the most practical way possible for as long as it takes.

**Paul Anticoni**  
**Chief Executive**

## | Our Response at a Glance

SUPPORTED  
**188,000**  
VULNERABLE  
PEOPLE IN  
UKRAINE

SUPPORTED  
MORE THAN  
**16,000**  
UKRAINIAN  
REFUGEES IN  
MOLDOVA  
AND POLAND



REACHED  
**15,000**  
INTERNALLY  
DISPLACED PEOPLE  
WITH ASSISTANCE



PROVIDED FOOD  
PACKAGES TO  
**168,000**  
PEOPLE



PROVIDED  
**28,000**  
PEOPLE WITH  
MEDICAL AID



REACHED  
**5,400**  
PEOPLE WITH  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
SUPPORT

### HELPED 300 UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

IN THE UK WITH ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT INTO  
EMPLOYMENT, THROUGH HOMES FOR UKRAINE AND OUR  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME



HELPED  
**7,300 PEOPLE**  
EVACUATE TO SAFE PLACES



REACHED  
**2,100**  
PEOPLE WITH  
EMPLOYMENT  
SUPPORT

# | Map



**215 CITIES AND TOWNS  
REACHED OVER THE LAST  
12 MONTHS THROUGH  
29 LOCAL UKRAINIAN  
PARTNERS**



**WHERE WE HELP**

**RUSSIAN-OCCUPIED UKRAINE**

Without the bravery, expertise and commitment of our local partners working tirelessly across Ukraine, we wouldn't have the reach and capacity we need to save lives. Behind every statistic is a story of courage and compassion.

## Local Humanitarian Heroes

### | Untold Stories



Our life radically changed on 24th February. People living under relentless shelling suffered from shock, fear and a complete lack of power. But the worst things were the lack of water and the lack of mobile connection when we needed to call their loved ones.

Just three of us work in our Kyiv office. Our lives are entirely dependent on the rhythms of our power grid. When there's electricity, we must work, even if it's the middle of the night.

**Galina, Director of our local partner Turbota Pro Litnykh v Ukraini.**

We set up a telephone hotline. At the beginning, it was a simple no-frills operation. Our volunteers were responsible for 5-6 older people each week to establish their needs. But when the shelling intensified, our volunteers started receiving hundreds of calls.

Our Kyiv office coordinated the work of all 9 regional offices and at the same time, we were supporting over 40 geriatric and neuropsychological institutions in the regions which suffered most from the war. World Jewish Relief's support enabled us to help several thousand vulnerable older people who would have otherwise been without help.



As long as I have the energy, the ability and the support of partners and donors, I will keep doing this work. Only once the war is over, everything is rebuilt, and life returns to normal will I let myself relax.

When the invasion began, my world was confusion and anger. But then I asked myself - what should I do? I decided that I would do the same thing I have done for the last 20 years - help people in need.

**Alexander, Director of our local partner the Vinnitsya Regional Association of Jewish Language and Culture**

My day-to-day life consists of working with the Jewish community, looking for new donors and partners, taking deliveries of humanitarian aid, assessing needs in various cities, preparing and sending shipments, travelling with aid consignments.

I want to highlight World Jewish Relief's support - they bought us a cargo vehicle and allowed us to support any Ukrainian citizens who had suffered from the war. They were flexible in decision making and grants and showed incredible loyalty to our staff.





# | The War on Energy



Devastating blackouts are plunging millions of Ukrainians into energy poverty. With bitter winter temperatures, the situation is desperate.

Over the past 12 months, Russia has increasingly targeted Ukrainian energy infrastructure. The UN estimates over 50% has been destroyed so far, leaving millions with gas, electricity, and water shortages. This statistic rises every day. The Ukrainian government has introduced rolling blackouts to take pressure off their limited supplies, but unplanned blackouts lasting for hours are still rippling across the country.

We are supplying the most vulnerable communities with solid fuel for heating, generators and electric heaters, warm clothing, bedding and repairing homes.



**The relentless bombardment of Ukraine's energy infrastructure will continue, and the situation for millions of families in Ukraine is perilous.**



We have also funded the creation of five “Warm Hubs” in different cities across Ukraine. These community centres are equipped with heaters, food and water, as well as bomb-proof shelters and backup generators to counteract blackouts. There are beds available for those who need to stay overnight, when the temperatures drop well below zero.

Our local partners are working tirelessly to deliver aid to the hardest to reach places on the frontline, which are completely cut off from the energy grid. But the relentless bombardment of Ukraine's energy infrastructure will continue, and the situation for millions of families in Ukraine is perilous. We expect this crisis to worsen, and we will continue to work with our partners to meet the growing need.

# | How War is Changing Lives

## Children

One year into war, children in Ukraine continue to be killed, injured and deeply traumatised by the violence all around them. 5.7 million school-aged children have been impacted. Over 2,500 educational institutions have been damaged, of which almost 300 are completely destroyed. Following two years of interrupted schooling due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Ukrainian children's development continues to be disrupted by school closures, forced displacement, family ruptures and parental distress.



**World Jewish Relief has supported more than 1,200 Ukrainian children and young people through our projects.**



Depending on their needs, our partners provide children aged 6-13 with a comprehensive package of support including small group lessons, individual tutoring, psychological support, speech therapy and extracurricular activities. As much as possible, these are offered in safe spaces with heating. Children we support tend to display less anxiety, perform better academically and improve their behaviour.

For teenagers aged 14-17, our projects focus on soft skills development, psychological wellbeing and career readiness and aspirations. Teenagers take part in group workshops, Q&As with career professionals and work experience opportunities and are mentored in creative problem solving. Participants now have better understanding of the labour market and, in incredibly unstable circumstances have gained some clarity and control over their futures.



## Older People

Older people, who make up a quarter of Ukraine's population, faced difficulties in pre-war Ukraine and since 1991 World Jewish Relief's partners have been a lifeline for this group. Sadly, over 60s account for 34% of civilian deaths in Ukraine, and older people are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the war. They are less able to evacuate to safe places, and often unwilling to uproot their lives, despite the dangers of staying. An estimated 90% of our older Jewish clients have remained in their homes. One partner told us that for their older clients "staying home is a remedy in itself, even under shelling". And as their family members flee to safety, older people are left with diminished support systems.

We have helped older people who have fallen while racing to bomb shelters, become malnourished while stuck at home avoiding missile attacks, and those unable to access critical medication. As prices have risen by 24.8%, with medicine and healthcare especially costly, we are providing essentials to those whose already meagre pensions are now impossible to live on. And as power outages leave older people without means of cooking, cut off from loved ones, and often stranded in high-rise apartment blocks without a functioning lift, our partners are ensuring older people have companionship, as well as food, water and winter essentials such as blankets and heaters.

Above all, the psychological impacts of war on older people are severe; one partner told us "Everyone is tired of uncertainty, many are scared and their chronic diseases are worsening". Yet thankfully, the devices World Jewish Relief provided during the Covid-19 lockdowns are helping older people stay connected with loved ones.

# | How War is Changing Lives



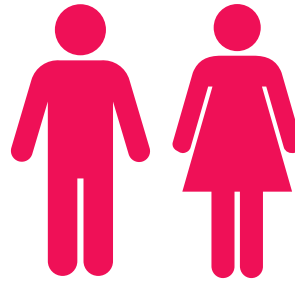
## People with Disabilities

The 2.7 million Ukrainians living with a disability already experienced challenges including high unemployment, out-of-pocket medical costs and inaccessible public infrastructure. The war has exacerbated their vulnerabilities. Evacuation and accessing bomb shelters, which are normally down several flights of stairs, is challenging for those with mobility impairments. Outages are particularly dangerous for those reliant on electric medical, health monitoring or accessibility devices.

Many of our clients with learning disabilities have found it difficult to understand why they cannot live their lives, see their friends, and take part in activities as normal. Some who have fled are finding it especially difficult to adapt to their new lives.

There is a growing cohort of Ukrainians who are newly disabled due to injuries received during the war. These people require complex assistance, including mental health support to cope with trauma, physical rehabilitation, access to prostheses or mobility aids and help understanding the disability benefits system.

At the start of the war we prioritised accessible evacuation routes for people with disabilities. Now, our focus is on psychological support, physical rehabilitation and medical care, and providing chargeable power stations and tablets or smartphones to those confined to their homes.



## Women and Men

War has affected the lives of all Ukrainians, but both women and men have experienced its consequences in specific ways. While men's lives are deeply impacted by conscription, women are experiencing a greater financial loss, and dependency on social payments among female-headed households has increased. And with social services including medical care and education disrupted, and male family members involved in defense activities, women are under increased pressure to care and provide for their families. This is why World Jewish Relief's employment programmes are targeted and tailored to supporting women.

Ukraine's domestic violence hotlines are receiving an increased number of calls from women reporting domestic violence, including sexual violence. The reasons for this are complex, but experts believe increased gender-based violence in wartime is caused partly by the trauma men face in battle and by the uncertainty and stress placed on all Ukrainians. It also indicates the absence or inaccessibility of rehabilitation services and psychological support for military personnel trying to return to normal life. International agencies tend to focus on immediate humanitarian needs such as food and shelter, meaning support for survivors of gender-based violence is not prioritised.

World Jewish Relief is funding training to ensure psychologists are able to respond to a number of psychosocial issues, including supporting survivors of gender-based violence.

Meanwhile, martial law prohibits men aged 18-60 from leaving Ukraine, so those fleeing their homes become internally displaced. Large numbers of internally displaced men in the west of Ukraine face discrimination and stigma due to the perception that men belong on the frontlines. Many men avoid registering as internally displaced, for fear of discrimination or conscription, so are unable to access support services.





*Vladlena Ozhydriano, World Jewish Relief's Ukraine Programme Manager, is from Donetsk Oblast. Before the war she lived in Kyiv. She joined us in September 2022 after having worked for international humanitarian organizations in Ukraine since the Russian invasion of Crimea and the Donbas in 2014. These include the UN International Organization for Migration and the East Europe Foundation. She tells us about her role, and what it's like as a Ukrainian refugee traveling between her native country and the UK for work.*

## | Vladlena Ozhydriano

### Ukraine Programme Manager

#### **What does your work at World Jewish Relief mean to you?**

Being in the same position as many Ukrainians, fleeing war and hostilities, my work at World Jewish Relief is a kind of salvation for me. It gives me a sense of purpose and is consistent with my personal desire to help people in Ukraine who are experiencing humanitarian crisis. This is a job that connects me with Ukraine, even being far from my homeland.

#### **What are your reflections on World Jewish Relief's approach in Ukraine?**

World Jewish Relief and our partners in Ukraine are doing an incredible job, being the first responders near multiple frontlines where security regulations are slowing down or suspending major international humanitarian organisations. Our greatest asset is our ability to act quickly and without bureaucratic hurdles, jumping in to provide immediate assistance – food, personal hygiene products, winter support and whatever else vulnerable Ukrainians need. Such effective and immediate support often outpaces the response of well-established agencies. I am proud to be a part of World Jewish Relief's response.

#### **You have travelled back to Ukraine to support our partners. What were your thoughts and feelings upon visiting your home country?**

On my return to Ukraine in December, I distinctly felt that my country is fighting for survival. It's such an existential struggle that Ukrainians just see no place for retreat. With regular Russian missile and drone attacks destroying energy infrastructure the humanitarian situation has become terrifying. As I travelled from the western border to central Ukraine, I felt the country gradually plunge into darkness.

As I walked along the main street in Khmelnytsky, I was filled with gloom. It was completely dark, the night lit only by passing cars and a few people walking around with torches. The entire city was in darkness, and the sullen roar of generators added to this post-apocalyptic feeling.

But in Kyiv the situation was the worst. Residents were stuck inside the city's skyscrapers, with lifts only running a few hours each day due to energy outages. Announcements said "If you are stuck in this lift, do not call emergency services, they will not come". A bag in each lift contained a warm shawl, lamp and a bottle of water for those trapped inside when the electricity is suddenly turned off.

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**I have never been so proud to be a Ukrainian as I was then, staying in a dark, suffering city that is full of hope.**

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I kept thinking: if this is difficult for a healthy adult, what is it like for older people, families with small children and disabled people? You cannot call an ambulance when all means of communication are disrupted, and if you are lucky enough to reach them it is unlikely that they will be able to climb up to the 20th or 25th floor.

Over time you get used to the conditions – I became used to always taking the stairs, constantly carrying a torch and a power bank with me, learned where and which cafes had WiFi even after a power outage. I started to understand how people survive in such circumstances. Ukrainians have had to recalibrate their idea of what normal is monthly, weekly, daily – even hourly. But life goes on in Kyiv, and it is amazing to see how residents are resuming normal activities amid the ongoing threat of missile attacks. Ukrainians are not scared. They are not going to give up. I have never been so proud to be a Ukrainian as I was then, staying in a dark, suffering city that is full of hope.

# | Our Learnings One Year On

Stacey Swimer, Director of International Programmes and Partnerships, shares our learnings from the last 12 months



## Ukrainians are exceptionally resilient and determined

Ukrainians continue to prove themselves to be incredibly determined, hopeful for a positive outcome to the war and absolutely committed to getting aid to where it is needed most. Staff and volunteers have cowered in bomb shelters to escape incoming fire and are constantly balancing the risk with a desire to help fellow Ukrainians in need.

## Partnership

Partnership is at the heart of all we do, and never has this been more important than in Ukraine. Good partnerships between international and local agencies are based on trust. The partnerships, and subsequent trust we have built, are rooted in long-term personal relationships. In the early stages of the conflict, it was this trust between our staff and partners that enabled rapid decision making, information flow, and financial flexibility. Flexible funding enabled partners to act incredibly fast, which undoubtedly saved lives.

## No one size fits all

Ukraine is a large country, and the need varies based on location. In areas close to active conflict, the most urgent needs are food, medicine, hygiene items and winter support. In locations with high numbers of internally

displaced people, there is demand for integration and employment support.

Psychological trauma needs addressing across Ukraine. From children whose schooling has been disrupted, to families who are separated or displaced, to those who are now refugees or combatants adjusting to their new reality, psychological trauma is deep and complex and affects everyone. And for those older and vulnerable people who have not fled, our priority is helping them survive blackouts, price hikes, fear and loneliness.

## Winter and Blackouts

Russian attacks on critical infrastructure have created new frontlines in Ukraine. Months of power outages have affected every aspect of life, and our efforts to provide families with torches, power banks, blankets and stoves have been well received. And where the need is greater, our Warm Hubs provide a space for people to come together and have some warmth. This has become a critical part of an effective humanitarian response.

## More than a Host and a Home

The UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, for which we are a recognised partner, was designed and implemented quickly. The outpouring of offers from our supporters to open their homes to Ukrainians was immense and humbling. However, the scheme is under-resourced and too much responsibility falls on hosts, who struggle to access the necessary support and guidance. There is a future for such community sponsorship schemes, but important lessons must be learned. Through STEP Ukraine we are helping refugees who arrived on the scheme to find sustainable employment and establish independent lives here.

## There is no end in sight

The war continues and it is unclear how or when it will end. Continued shelling across the country means the situation is unpredictable and uncertain. This makes it hard to plan, and we must continue to be flexible in our approach.

Once the war does end, Ukraine will take years to recover and rebuild. From the economy, to infrastructure, to supporting those returning to their homes, we are committed to supporting our partners for as long as it takes.





## | Our Priorities

**As the war in Ukraine enters its second year, we will continue to adapt to changing needs, focusing on these key priorities:**

- The provision of humanitarian aid in areas of high need and low humanitarian access in the east, southeast and northeast of Ukraine.
- Targeted assistance to Ukrainians in the more stable areas of central and western Ukraine, to meet their individual needs.
- Support to older people in their everyday lives, including home repairs so they have one warm room, activities to promote active ageing and meeting their basic food and hygiene needs.
- Continued employment and livelihoods support to rapidly help internally displaced people into work, offering dignity and independence.
- Programmes helping the most vulnerable families and children to deal with their trauma, supporting education and promoting positive family environments.
- Psychological support to Ukrainians across all our programmes.
- Scaling up and strengthening our support to Ukrainians in the UK through Homes for Ukraine, and our employment programme STEP Ukraine.

➤ **Needs in Ukraine remain overwhelmingly complex and multifaceted. We anticipate needing to spend at least £10 million over the next 12 months to meet Ukrainians' urgent needs.**





With thanks to communal partners who have promoted and supported our response

Office of The  
CHIEF RABBI



liberal judaism



Masorti  
Judaism



The movement for  
REFORM JUDAISM



THE BOARD  
OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS  
PROUD TO REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY



the  
S&PHARDI  
community קהילת ספרד והספרדים

Oscar Joseph House  
54 Crewys Road  
London  
NW2 2AD

E: [info@worldjewishrelief.org](mailto:info@worldjewishrelief.org)  
T: 020 8736 1250  
W: [worldjewishrelief.org](http://worldjewishrelief.org)



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