



World Vision®

# Ukraine Crisis Response

Two Years On: An urgent call for  
peace to protect the future of  
Ukraine's children

## The Ukraine crisis is a child crisis.

Two years of unrelenting war in Ukraine has brought unimaginable suffering and pain to tens of millions of Ukrainians, including the country's 7.5 million children. To date, the conflict has sent over 3.7 million Ukrainians into displacement within Ukraine and more than 6 million seeking refuge in neighboring European countries.<sup>1</sup> Those who have remained or returned live with the daily dangers of air strikes, escalations and the emotional distress of waking daily to witness the horrors of an active war.

“Ukrainian children have not only lost their homes and schools, they’ve lost their sense of safety and security. They’ve lost their fathers and family members to the frontlines. Two years on, as children continue to cope with trauma upon trauma, we continue to call for peace, believing it is possible. War has shattered the lives of the Ukrainian people, but it has not broken their hope.”

- Chris Palusky, Response Director

Since the onset of the conflict, World Vision has supported Ukraine’s most vulnerable to meet their immediate needs of lifesaving aid, shelter and child protection—bringing our global expertise in humanitarian response to the reach the children and their families who need it most. Now, two years in, with still no end in sight, we shift our response to address the longer-term needs of children and their families as war drags on.

We remain driven by the belief that in life in all its fullness for all children of Ukraine is a possibility, and we continue to call on all sides to promote the peace required to make it so.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, February 2024.



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A child-friendly setting is more than a place for arts and crafts. It is a transformative environment where children find friendships, practice languages and feel secure.

World Vision has prioritized the following strategic areas in response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine:



### CHILD PROTECTION AND EDUCATION



### PSYCHOSOCIAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



### CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



### LIVELIHOODS SUPPORT

## Strategic Response Plan

Over the past two-years, World Vision has scaled its operations in Ukraine, Romania, Moldova and Georgia to meet the growing needs of the most vulnerable children and their families affected by the war. While our interventions have shifted from the early days of the war to today to meet the changing needs of people, four pillars remain our priority:

- **Child focused:** The well-being of children is our primary purpose. We are here to help ensure a better future for all children—particularly the most vulnerable children and those whose lives have been disrupted by conflict.
- **Psychosocial support:** We recognize the unseen effects of war are critical to address to ensure the long-term well-being of children. With our partners, we carry out mental and psychosocial support to help children and their families cope and recover from shocks.
- **Cash assistance:** Providing for immediate physical needs via cash vouchers is a direct, effective and dignified way to deliver support to those who need it. Cash assistance empowers both people and markets.
- **Winterization:** We coordinate with partners to support and implement programs to ensure people have warm, safe and dignified living conditions to survive Ukraine's harsh winter season.

As the conflict has shifted, we've shifted to meet the need of the most vulnerable, adding livelihoods support for families into our longer-term response, and helping children access education and psychosocial services, so there are not gaps in their learning and so they are supported with their mental health.



“

War is the reality of Ukrainian children, but they keep going with their education. They keep hoping. They keep dreaming about a Ukraine free of air raid sirens and bombs.

“I want to be an astrologist, but **my greatest wish is for my father to return from war,**” says nine-year-old Eva from Lviv Oblast, western Ukraine.

## The Need

According to the UN, war in Ukraine has left over **17.6 million** people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

And the ones who remain the most vulnerable and at the greatest risk in this conflict are the children.



As of January 2024, **3.7 million internally displaced** people in Ukraine, and another **6.3 million refugees** from Ukraine recorded globally.



The current population of Ukraine is 36.7 million, a **7.45% decline** from 2022.



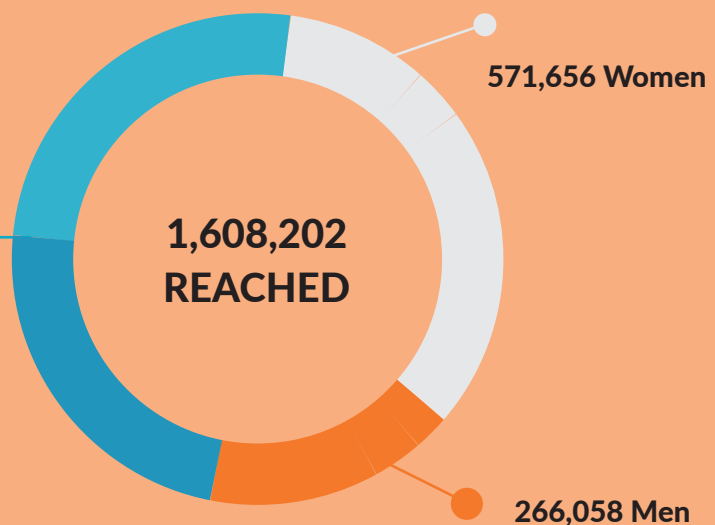
**Women and children make up 90%** of people who have fled the crisis.

Source: UNHCR, Data. January 2024.  
Photos: ©2023 Brianna Piazza/World Vision, ©2022 Paul Wu/World Vision

## WORLD VISION'S RESPONSE

Feb 24, 2022 – Dec 31, 2023

- 770,488 Children
- 394,845 Girls reached
- 375,643 Boys reached





## Ukraine Crisis Response Goal

Deliver inclusive, need driven humanitarian assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons and the most vulnerable children and their families in Ukraine, Romania, Moldova and Georgia.

### Strategic Objectives

- 1 Deliver life-saving in-kind and cash assistance to meet basic needs.
- 2 Nurture a protective environment for Children and their families to promote good psychosocial well-being and learning.
- 3 Improve access to livelihood opportunities through skills development and provision of targeted support.
- 4 Support equitable, dignified and empowering local partnerships to respond effectively and efficiently to needs.

**78** Partner organizations engaged



**UKRAINE**  
33 partners

**MOLDOVA**  
9 partners

**ROMANIA**  
36 partners



**380,257**  
people reached with cash assistance



**541,552**  
people reached with food assistance



**97,653**  
people reached with temporary shelter assistance



**318,307**  
people supported with hygiene items



**89,096**  
children supported with child protection programming



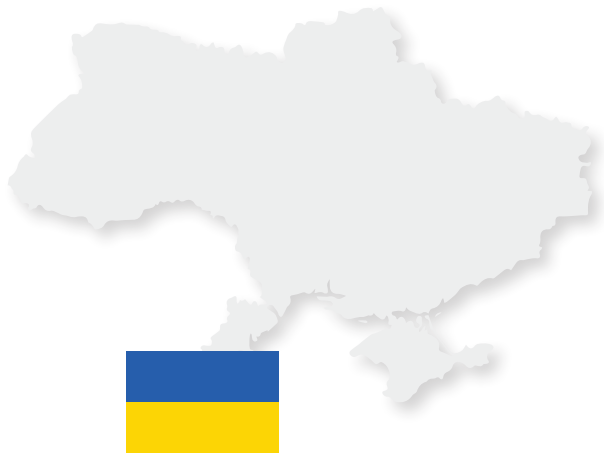
**253,469**  
children supported with educational programming



**107,796**  
people benefitting from psychosocial and mental health support



**10,187**  
people provided with livelihoods support services



# UKRAINE



World Vision started working in Ukraine in March 2022 and currently operates six offices in Chernivtsi, Kyiv, Dnipro, Lviv, Mykolaiv and Kharkiv. World Vision currently supports aid efforts reaching conflict-affected people in 24 oblasts (municipalities across Ukraine that have been heavily affected by crisis).

In collaboration with 33 national and international partners over the past two years (currently 17 partners, World Vision delivered life-saving assistance to people living near the frontlines while programs in safer areas have supported longer-term needs of displaced children and families as well as local humanitarian actors. The main priority in Ukraine is to continue to scale up our work to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and their families.

## Protecting war's youngest survivors

When little Eldar turned one, he was living in a single room with his mother Tatiana, one sibling and three other displaced families in Chernivtsi. Though his circumstances were far from ideal, like many other babies born into war, he was lucky to be alive to see his first birthday.

Under the severe stress of having been displaced inside Ukraine two times with one small child and one on the way, Tatiana went into premature labour in Sumy, giving birth three months early.

Weighing just 1 KG, Eldar remained in the neonatal unit of the hospital for three months among dozens of other small, premature babies whose mothers' pregnancies had succumbed to the stressors of war.

As the mothers waited, air alarms went off loudly in the streets and nearby blasts shook the windows of the rooms. "During the air alarms, we didn't leave the room where our infants were kept even once," recalls Tatiana. "We just prayed we wouldn't be a target."

Shortly after Eldar was able to leave the hospital, fighting escalated and Tatiana faced her third displacement, now with two children. "The most difficult thing as a mother was to act in front of my children like everything was fine, and we are safe," she said.

**“In the midst of war, I cradled my child, whispering lullabies. Motherhood kept me going.”**

Upon arriving in Chernivtsi, Tatiana was able to register for World Vision's multipurpose cash assistance programme to help her support her small family. "Cash aid allows us to buy winter clothing, food and diapers for the small one," she said.

[Read Tatiana's story.](#)





## MOLDOVA



**263,631**  
PEOPLE REACHED

**120,695**  
CHILDREN REACHED

World Vision has been operating in Moldova since March 2022 to address the needs of Ukrainian refugees and vulnerable host communities. World Vision's nine partners in Moldova currently support programs in 33 rayons (districts) and one Autonomous Territorial Unit. Moldova's capital of Chişinău also hosts World Vision's Ukraine Crisis Response operations office.

Since the onset of the war, over 713,000 Ukrainian refugees have entered Moldova, with approximately 427,000 returning to Ukraine by the end of 2023. This influx, coupled with the economic impacts of the conflict on the Moldovan government and society during an ongoing cost-of-living crisis has meant that vulnerable host communities require more support than other countries impacted.

Key interventions in Moldova include child protection and education programs for refugee children, cash and voucher programs helping refugee families cover their living expenses and initiatives to support vulnerable communities hosting refugee populations.

### Cash assistance for vulnerable host families encourages community support for refugees

Eleven-year-old Ksenia has seen tragedy beyond her years. After losing her father, she witnessed the destruction of her hometown, was separated from her mother and siblings and spent two months hidden away in a basement for safety from the bombs and military siege before fleeing to Moldova.

Today, Ksenia is hosted by a Moldovan family and has a safe place to live, but her hope is to be reunited with her family back in Ukraine.

“I dream of peace and the day I will be able to return to Ukraine and celebrate my birthday with my entire family like before,” she shares.

As the World Food Programme's primary implementing partner, World Vision supports Moldovan households that are hosting Ukrainian refugees like Ksenia benefit from emergency cash assistance, which helps them cope with the rising prices of utilities and living costs.

The cash assistance project encourages community support for Ukrainian refugees, ensuring that their fundamental needs are satisfied. This approach empowers local hosts, promotes the integration of Ukrainians and responds to urgent financial needs, resulting in a more inclusive and responsive society.

[Read Ksenia's story.](#)





## ROMANIA



**301,114**  
PEOPLE REACHED

**138,431**  
CHILDREN REACHED

World Vision has been working in Romania for more than 30 years and currently supports refugees from Ukraine host communities and institutions, with five partners in 18 districts and at least six government institutions.

From the first days of the war, World Vision has delivered direct assistance to respond to the immediate needs of refugee families and children displaced without their families. As the conflict has continued, we've delivered programs to facilitate the integration of displaced families into host communities and provide access to fundamental rights as basic needs—food and non-food, cash assistance, education, psychosocial support, participation and livelihoods.

While over 3 million Ukrainian refugees have entered Romania since 24 February 2022, over 1.7 million have since returned to Ukraine. Beginning in 2024, Romania will become a secondary implementation office and World Vision Romania Foundation will implement Ukraine response programs.

### Psychosocial support at safe spaces supports children's mental health

Nataliia and her seven-year-old daughter Sofia visit World Vision's Happy Bubble in Constanta, Romania—a child-friendly space made possible through the support of Global Affairs Canada.

At the Happy Bubble, Nataliia attends weekly language courses to learn Romanian and English, while her daughter plays psychosocial games to support her mental health.

“The activities of the project have had a major impact on helping Ukrainian families to overcome the trauma of the war and fight the toxic stress caused by these difficult times,” shared Iozefina Teodorescu, World Vision's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency field officer.

Nataliia and her children arrived to Romania in February 2023, after spending one month in a cellar, two months escaping to western Ukraine and five months in Bulgaria. Now, working tirelessly to rebuild a life for her family 1,200 kilometers away from home, she shares her motivation: “I did it for my children.”

Safe spaces, like Happy Bubble are critical for the well-being of children during times of conflict. Over 21,000 children in Romania, and more than 96,000 children across all four response countries, have been supported by child protection activities integrated into all our programs. Stepping up these efforts, and continuously enhancing our psychosocial support activities, will hopefully make life much better for the children.

[Read Nataliia's story.](#)

*Ukrainian women don't put their lives on hold. They gather to learn the languages of the countries they seek refuge in. In Romania, World Vision provides English and Romanian language classes for Ukrainian children and adults.*







## GEORGIA



23,419

PEOPLE REACHED

13,896

CHILDREN REACHED

With a presence in Georgia for more than 20 years, World Vision is one of the country's leading non-governmental children's rights organizations. As a result of this long-term presence, World Vision has helped strengthen Georgia's child welfare system and create a healthy and active society for children that is inclusive, tolerant and provides equal opportunities for all.

From the very first days of the Ukraine war, World Vision in Georgia has been providing support and assistance to Ukrainian refugees based on their needs through urgent relief, assistance, education, protection and cash programming implemented in the capital of Tbilisi and in the regions of Adjara, Imereti and Kartli.

### Amidst war children find a passion and hope for the future

Six-year-old Yehor and his pregnant mother Marina sought refuge from the war in neighbouring Georgia in 2022. Weeks later Yehor's grandmother Svitlana joined them for the birth of his little sister.

After arriving in Georgia, Svitlana quickly noticed her grandson Yehor had become quiet and reserved since fleeing Ukraine and dedicated herself to support his education and development. After learning of music and inclusive dance sessions organized locally by World Vision to support refugee children in Georgia, Svitlana arranged for Yehor to attend.

Through music and dance sessions, World Vision's offers psychosocial support for refugees that aim to alleviate the stress of war and enhance children's mental well-being. "Children have fun and feel happy during the music and dance activities, said Tamar, a World Vision music therapist. "These sessions assist children who are sad, stressed and scared to advance their capabilities and help solve their problems gradually without extra pressure."

"I like the music session because it makes me happy," Yehor said. "When I play on different instruments, I feel the rhythm. I especially like playing with the drums...I also want to learn to play the violin—this is my dream..."

**"...but my main dream is to live in a world where no one fights and there is no evil but only kindness."**

Yehor has found healing in music and interacting with other children who have now become his friends.

After attending the World Vision sessions, Svitlana has noticed positive changes in Yehor. "He became more open, started communicating and playing with other children. Now he is kinder, more sociable and cheerful," his grandmother said.

[Read Yehor's story.](#)





## WINTERIZATION

World Vision's winterization programme aims to make a difference in the lives of those facing crises, offering essential assistance during the cold season. The project includes both cash assistance for people to meet their basic needs and the distribution of winter kits containing cold weather necessities including a hat, scarf, warm socks, warm underwear, thermos and power bank.



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## Looking Forward

As the war enters year three, World Vision is committed in its efforts to stand with the Ukrainian people and to help ensure the best possible future for the children of Ukraine.

The multi-country Ukraine Crisis Response will continue to operate across the four countries of Ukraine, Romania, Moldova and Georgia, with 70% of programming focused within Ukraine to align where needs are greatest.

Our main priority in Ukraine will be to continue to scale up our work to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and their families. We will continue our efforts to protect children and improve access to education and psychosocial support for Ukrainian children by identifying gaps in education and collaborating with partners to roll out a catch-up program inside the country. And as our operations scale up and as the war continues, we will further address the critical need of communities to improve their livelihoods.

“World Vision aims to enhance learning and skills, enabling children to return to or enroll in schools at a suitable level. World Vision’s programs incorporate social and emotional development, aiming to provide critical assistance to the most vulnerable children in Ukraine.”

- Chris Palusky, Response Director





Our appreciation to all our local and international partners who support the humanitarian work of the Ukraine Crisis Response work.