



Ukraine Update – Sept 22

The Russian invasion of Ukraine changed the reality for most Ukrainians. The military invasion that started in late February 2022 was a response to an ongoing and protracted conflict which may well continue into the foreseeable future. Most countries around the world condemned Russia for its actions in Ukraine, accusing it of breaking international law and violating Ukrainian sovereignty. The result was, and continues to be human suffering, economic shock and a geopolitical crisis in the region.

The target are mostly traumatised, tired, needy IDP's and refugees on the road seeking shelter and a safe haven from the violence. This will mostly include the vulnerable population such as the elderly, children, sick and the poor.

The Response

As in every war, the innocent and civilians were caught in the middle, and many started to leave almost immediately with more to follow in a series of waves. There was a mass exodus of mostly women and children as they moved to Western Ukraine and beyond through the bordering countries and left the men folk behind to fight the incursion.

OM Europe was strategically placed through its offices, networks and partners to organise help at the border areas of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. From the very start they involved themselves in a variety of ways.

OM in Moldova was the leading pioneer organisation working at the main border and helping up to 80% of the entire refugee flow. They set up a large circus tent for those standing in long immigration lines, where people could rest, eat and drink something, as well as recharge their phones while waiting to cross over to safety. Poland has taken the most refugees of any other nation and OM Poland have worked around the clock above the call of duty to care, keep safe, love and provide for tens of thousands. They set up two trailers at the borders to provide warm shelter, essential needs and rest for women with children and babies. OM in Hungary focused on transport and accommodation. OM in Ukraine helped people on the move and internally displaced in each of their four locations. Food, safety, shelter, family care was the priority. OM Romania increased its capacity by partnering with the entire Romania Baptist Union, moving food, medicine and generators into Ukraine, while also providing shelter and care at four border point crossings. OM Russia has cared for refugees moving east into Russia and also provided relief especially in Eastern cities in worse scenarios.

The teams are also engaged in conversations with those hurting – offering comfort and hope to those who were mourning and in shock. Some people had nowhere to go, needing help with food as well as housing. Others were travelling through to reach other destinations with their own transport. Whatever their situation and need, there was help available.

OM values the role of the church in such situations and has been working with them to help them to respond and mobilise. In many places, this crisis has brought different churches and denominations closer together in unity in their efforts to help.



Volunteers with OM Poland and OM Singapore

“One woman told us that it was the actions of the churches in Ukraine – delivering aid, evacuating people at the risk of their own lives, coordinating help and serving the people – that made her change her mind about Christians. She decided to become a Christian and asked us for a Bible. Her face was alight with joy as she sat on the bus seat, eagerly opening it on her lap.”

OM worker from Singapore

Working on the Borders – Poland

The team offered weary travellers tea, coffee, snacks, chocolates and little travel packs for children, after which they were taken to evacuation centres or train stations in the city. They warmed them, encouraged them, gave them information and sometimes prayed for them.



OM worker from Singapore

The mothers, in particular, would give them looks of gratitude and relief although they did not share the same language. They were often in a state of extreme tension, anxiety and exhaustion holding everything together physically, emotionally and mentally, and needing to be strong for their children. It made a huge difference to them if someone simply knelt down and looked into their child's eyes, giving them a snack or a juice. It seemed to unlock the heavy burden that they were carrying alone.

"I had the privilege of receiving people into Poland, giving what help I could, standing in solidarity with them as the body of Christ. Even though I couldn't speak Ukrainian, the emotions communicated powerfully"

Romania: The day before Putin invaded there had been a three-day church meeting in Romania to discuss ways to mobilise and to share Christ's love with others. Local believers who had attended quickly responded, seeing the opportunity to put into practise what they had just learnt.

The OM team has been busy at the border, driving people to hotels, handing out hot cups of tea or providing a safe place for people to rest. Local believers were ready to help new arrivals and there to serve them. With funds donated from believers worldwide, supplies such as food, clothing, generators and more have been distributed both at the border and in Ukraine.

The offer of aid was met with varying reactions, as most people from Ukraine were amazed to see people from Romania being so open and loving them in their time of need, and this has been truly appreciated.

"We try to see what the greatest needs are especially where other organisations are not working"
OM Field Leader in Romania

Going from Poland to small villages on the other side of the border

OM volunteers spent time visiting small villages in the Chernihiv area of Ukraine, delivering much needed humanitarian aid to those in need, mainly widows and families with many children. Many of the villages near the front line did not receive aid and they need food and tools and materials to rebuild their badly damaged homes. In this village the team handed out food parcels with the help of one of the local women, and they were very happy.

Many people wanted the bibles, and the team also offered prayers for healing. One old lady who had trouble walking, wanted prayer. Afterwards she felt a very significant improvement and started jumping around in front of everyone there. Despite hardships, there is an opportunity to preach the Gospel and the people listen very attentively. These food parcel deliveries are ongoing.

Traumatised Children

As the number of people crossing from Ukraine into Poland decreased local authorities closed the foot crossing at one border location, and the OM team in Poland felt led to shift their ministry efforts to other urgent needs. The team remains present at the border town of Dorohusk, but they have begun implementing a longer-term plan to address the critical needs of traumatised children. In partnership with OpSafe, an organisation that trains communities in child trauma psychological first-aid intervention, the team in Poland and several partners were trained to run debrief programmes for children from Ukraine who have experienced trauma. This had previously been implemented by OM after other natural disasters in the Philippines and in Nepal.



Operation Safe camps are being run with local churches under OM in Poland, Romania, and Ukraine. They take place over a week, and emphasise five themes with the children: safety, calming, hope, self and community efficacy, and connection. The content helps children recover from the trauma they experienced but also children learn they can play, laugh, and enjoy themselves again. OM team has now equipped many others to help the children, running over 30 different camps through churches across the nation. They have reached over 2,000 affected children in a comprehensive programme that provides practical help and also builds lasting relationships. By equipping local churches and their staff and volunteers to host

these camps, OM seeks to restore peace, hope and a sense of security to young children who have experienced losses and trauma.

Travelling cinema project



OM celebrated International Children's Day- on June 1st with the first movie showing at the largest refugee centre in Europe - PTAK Expo and has gone to 50 refugee centres to reach at least 10 000 children. Apart from a fun movie night, each child received a lot of safety/trafficking-prevention information (from the big screen, on popcorn cup, flyers and banners), and a bag with a Bible verse and some great Christian resources. The refugee centres take vulnerable children who couldn't find their parents or were unaccompanied by adults.

Teen Street

In early August, a group of 33 Ukrainian teenagers, some of whom had re-settled in various countries outside of Ukraine, travelled to attend OM's international youth camp event called TeenStreet (TS). Almost 1,000 teens and adults gathered together for several days of fellowship, worship, Bible study and experiencing God's presence. The camp was especially meaningful for the Ukrainian teens who travelled from Ukraine, Romania, Poland, Germany and Norway— and whose lives and faith have all been impacted by the ongoing war.

One girl shared in an interview with TS staff that for the first time she realised it was not enough just to go to church—it was important to have a personal relationship with Jesus! And another TS coach told about the transformation she saw in one of her small group teens, who didn't want to participate in activities or discussions until she experienced a breakthrough moment during a worship and prayer evening. This girl "blossomed, a smile appeared, her stiffness went away, and a desire appeared to participate in activities at TeenStreet" after she came forward and asked her coach to pray for her. OM also organised and sponsored a professional psychologist to travel from Ukraine to support Ukrainian teens at TS. This counsellor was available for teens to meet with during the event, to share and process their recent experiences, and a connection was established for teens that needed more ongoing support as well. Through the community and care provided at TS, God was at work in many of the teens' lives, and the incredible experience for these Ukrainians came at a time when they needed fellowship, encouragement and God's presence.

Thank you for helping us to respond to this crisis by sharing God's love and the Gospel

OM has raised over £4 million to date for a response across the region with the UK giving one fifth of that. Expenses to date that follow are rounded up

	120,000 hot meals, emergency Food packages	£192,000		
Border Reception Points - Initial Care	60,000 Blankets, sleeping bags, covers	£144,000		
	72,000 Hygiene, Women products, tissues	£115,200		
	1,000 emergency shelter host families	£200,000		
	8,000 emergency kits/help for Special needs people	£128,000		
	240,000 cups of Tea/coffee, croissants	£144,000		
	20,000 Kids kits games, stuffed animals, loli pops	£40,000		
	60,000 Scriptures, kid's Bibles, mp3 players	£128,000		
	24,000 baby kits wipes, diapers, baby food	£64,000		
	24,000 health products cough drops, ibuprofen	£28,800		
	64,000 water bottles or yogurt drinks	£40,000		
	6,000 Thermal mugs plus other specialty items	£9,600		
	6,000 emergency shelter guest houses	£240,000		
	5,000 baby strollers, baby prams	£80,000		
	30,000 packages of emergency medicine & antibiotics	£64,000		
	Food Aid loaded on Trucks from Poland into Ukraine	£80,000		
	Food Aid loaded on Trucks from Romania into Ukraine	£80,000		
	Additional summer costs Refugee Transport	£16,000		
	Additional summer accommodation for Displaced	£16,000	£1,809,600	
	Reception, Care, Emergency points,	Ukraine - Equipment/Logistics/Coordination	£24,000	
Poland - 4 Mom/kid Trailer shelters/Equip/Logistics		£19,200		
Romania - Equip/Delivery Logistics/Coordination		£16,000		
Moldova - Equip/Logistics/Coordination		£16,000		
Slovakia - Equip/Logistics/Coordination		£4,000		
Hungary warehouse space for Ukr transports		£8,000		
Trauma debriefing/ Possible Evacuation costs		£4,800		
Crises Training and support		£6,400		
Longer Term displaced or settlement in UA or elsewhere		£24,000		
Legal fees, professional help for Rights and Trauma		£3,200		
Debriefing/shelter/care for UA Team and friends		£4,800		
Poland warehouse space for Ukr transports		£9,600		
Shelter and Housing websites create/maintain		£4,800		
Anti-Trafficking Network resources/travel		£4,800		
Moldova warehouse space of Ukraine aid		£9,600		
Poland safe child play zones in reception centres		£14,400		
20 key Slavic/Ukrainian Christian staff for 6 months		£48,000		
6 summer day camps for children inside Ukraine		£9,600		
4 summer teen camps for Teens inside Ukraine		£9,600		
Trauma counselling for soldiers		£2,400		
Multiple Kids Club programs in Poland		£8,000		
Gospel Cinema Tour in Poland 36 showings in 17 towns		£19,200		
30 Ukraine Teens to TeenStreet Netherlands		£7,200		
Russia Equip/Resources/Coordination		£24,000	£301,600	
Special Equipment		Satellite phones	£4,000	
		40 Generators	£8,000	
	Starlink satellite equip	£4,000		
	2 Vans for Ukraine	£36,000		
	2 Vans for Poland	£20,000		
	2 Vans for Moldova	£16,000		
	2 Vans for Romania	£16,000		
	1 Vans for Hungary	£20,000		
	6 Enclosed Canopy Tents for Border shelter	£19,200		
	4 Container Units fully equipped	£4,800	£148,000	
	Total Direct costs		£2,259,200	