

## ISOLATED BUT RESILIENT: PEOPLE LIVING NEAR THE CONTACT LINE BRACE FOR EIGHTH WINTER OF CONFLICT



*Maryna was among the first beneficiaries who received coal from IOM and will be able to keep warm during winter months / IOM Ukraine*

Thousands of people in eastern Ukraine are set to face another winter of conflict with ever more limited resources. The direct and indirect impact of the conflict, in combination with the effects of COVID-19, severely affects many people’s opportunity to appropriately prepare for winter. This has particularly impacted the elderly, many of whom struggle to cover the most essential needs and have to make tough choices about how to pri-

oritize their resources. This problem is especially acute during the harsh winter season when paying for heating becomes an additional burden.

To help the most vulnerable people in eastern Ukraine to prepare for the winter months ahead, IOM, the UN Migration Agency, will provide coal to approximately 17,500 beneficiaries in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts through

## HIGHLIGHTS

- IOM has assisted 652,257 vulnerable internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people in need in 24 regions of Ukraine since 2014.
- The total number of IDPs from Crimea and eastern Ukraine is 1,473,650 as of 6 July 2021, according to the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine.
- In January–September 2021, OHCHR recorded 84 civilian casualties (18 killed and 66 injured) in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, or a 34 per cent decrease compared with the same period of 2020. Of those, 33 casualties were caused by active hostilities.
- In August, the Government of Ukraine re-introduced the COVID-19-related movement restrictions, requiring unvaccinated people from non-Government-controlled areas (NGCA) to self-quarantine using a smartphone tracking app when entering Government-controlled areas (GCA). In September, the number of crossings fell to 69,970 (a 23 per cent decrease, compared to August).

it’s multi-donor coal response. With funding from the EU and the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), each household will receive up to three tons of solid fuel, transported directly to their homes, to help the most vulnerable address their heating needs and save money for other essential items, such as food and medicine.

Maryna<sup>1</sup> benefitted from the IOM coal response and received enough heating material for the upcoming winter. At more than 70 years of age, she lives alone in an isolated community far from shops and social facilities that is only accessible through a narrow road which is in desperate need of repairs.

With the coal provided by IOM, Maryna will be able to prioritize other essential needs without being concerned about keeping her house warm. During the post-distribution monitoring conducted for a previous EU-funded project, 95 per cent of the assisted people indicated that they rely on humanitarian aid in the form of coal.

In addition to the provision of coal to households in need, IOM will also deliver coal and carry out rehabilitation works at more than 20 social institutions in the conflict-affected area of Eastern Ukraine, helping them to ensure safer and healthier conditions for their residents – something that is even more important now during the

ongoing pandemic. Often social and medical institutions struggle to ensure adequate heating and temperatures at their facilities during the cold season due to old infrastructure. “We will be able to support numerous people living in or seeking the support of these social and medical institutions, including geriatric centres, hospitals, clinics and homes providing specialized care for persons with disabilities,” said Elizabeth Warn, Deputy Chief of Mission – Senior Programme Coordinator at IOM Ukraine. “As the COVID-19 pandemic keeps exacerbating the needs of people residing in the areas deeply affected by the conflict, the most vulnerable should not be forgotten.”

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR IDPs: IOM INAUGURATES NEW BODY TO SUPPORT FUTURE RESIDENTS



*IOM Housing Programme Coordinator Konrad Clos and the Head of the Civil-Military Administration in Sievierodonetsk Oleksandr Striuk opening the Municipal Management Body / Artem Hetman*

On 20 September, IOM and the Sievierodonetsk (Luhansk Oblast) Administration opened the renovated offices of the “Sievierodonetsk Investment and Development Agency”. This Agency will serve as the Municipal Management Body (MMB) in the city and will play an important role in the implementation of the large and innovative IOM project “Improving the Living Conditions for Internally Displaced Persons in Eastern Ukraine”.

The project – implemented in coordination with Ukraine’s Ministry of Reintegration of Temporary Occupied Territories and funded by the

<sup>1</sup> Name has been changed for protection reasons

Government of Germany, through the KfW Development Bank – will provide affordable housing options to IDPs and local community members through the construction of an estimated 500-600 apartments in Sievierodonetsk and Kramatorsk. These two cities in eastern Ukraine were substantially affected by the ongoing conflict and the ensuing displacement. IOM will also introduce the “council estate” concept of property management to Ukraine. This concept foresees that municipally constructed houses remain in municipal ownership and are rented out at prices below the average market rate. The collected rent is used to maintain the buildings and feeds into a

fund for future construction projects. “We are working hard to open our first construction site in Sievierodonetsk soon. This project will help provide durable solutions to protracted displacement in Ukraine. By 2025, at least 500 families in Sievierodonetsk and Kramatorsk will be able to get affordable apartments,” said Konrad Clos, IOM Housing Programme Coordinator in Ukraine.

The opening of the MMB offices is an important step towards the sustainable implementation of the entire project. “This new MMB will work directly with potential residents, and I am grateful to IOM for implementing this project,”

said Oleksandr Striuk, the Head of the Sievierodonetsk Civil-Military Administration emphasizing the project’s importance for the city and its people.

In line with these efforts to make the project as inclusive as possible, an extensive profiling exercise was conducted in 2021 that enabled IOM to learn about the preferences and current living situation of IDP and non-IDP residents of the two cities. The future apartments will be developed taking into considerations the key aspects highlighted in the study, therefore fully reflecting the actual needs of displaced persons and members of their host communities.

## **IOM SUPPORTS YOUTH IN EASTERN UKRAINE FULFILL THEIR CAREER GOALS AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES**

With the arrival of autumn, students all over the world are opening new learning horizons. In addition to their regular obligations, active youth in eastern Ukraine are also participating in vocational trainings organized by IOM through a project funded by the Government of Japan.

With the overall aim of minimizing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market in areas that are affected by the conflict, the project encourages young people to play a more active role in their communities’ life.

A total of 60 youth, selected through a rigorous competitive process among

the numerous applicants, received an in-kind grant to enroll in vocational trainings of their choice. In line with a sustainable approach in times of the COVID-19 pandemic and complementing the provision of a laptop as part of the support package, the most requested courses are related to digital technology, including graphic design, social media marketing (SMM) or 3D modelling.

“There were many qualified applicants and we are happy to have identified such motivated young people for these grants,” said Etsuko Inoue, Project Officer for Protection at IOM Ukraine. “Considering the impor-

tance and growth of the ICT sector, in particular since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, I hope that our support will help them obtain innovative skills in the digital sphere and as such contribute to secure livelihoods and employment.”

Once their training is completed, grantees will use the newly acquired knowledge, equipment and skills to expand their current businesses or explore new career opportunities. The young beneficiaries will also use their skills to implement volunteer initiatives focusing on the development of their communities, fostering social cohesion and building resilience.

“I want to stay in Kurakhove where I was born, where my family lives. I plan to invest time in developing the town. I do not want to see how it declines, as it happened with other towns after the mines were closed. I want to try changing it for the better,” says Dmytro, one of the grantees and training participants, who has already participated in a previous IOM project in 2020 and is now working to expand his successful business.

Back then, Dmytro was able to boost his business as a shop owner. After receiving a new good coffee machine, a microwave and a refrigerator, and using the knowledge he gained through the training, Dmytro was able to grow his revenue and even hire another employee.

But he wants to do more for his town. In order to contribute to the active life of his community, Dmytro became more involved in volunteer projects in the past years and organized a long-

distance running event in Kurakhove which has been his long-cherished dream. Dmytro also supported other initiatives in his community by designing visibility items to attract more participants. Now, Dmytro is participating in the IOM vocational training to improve his design skills. Like other beneficiaries, he was provided with a laptop, which will be crucial for the enhancement of his design skills, which he wishes to apply to contribute to the social cohesion of Kurakhove.



*Motivated to be a part of positive changes in his community, Dmytro is improving his skills in design with IOM support / Artem Hetman*

## EU AND IOM FOSTER RESILIENCE IN 15 COMMUNITIES ACROSS UKRAINE BY SUPPORTING FORMER COMBATANTS' PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY LIFE

With the purpose of strengthening the resilience of Ukrainian communities, IOM has been working on multi-sectorial initiatives that support the socioeconomic reintegration of former combatants, involving veterans, their families and communities in activities that tackle various aspects of social life since 2018.

During July-September 2021, more than 200 representatives from 15 communities across Ukraine participated in 15 online trainings to learn about innovative ideas for enhancing the active participation of veterans and their families in the communities' socioeconomic life.

The trainings, led by IOM in partnership with the Ukrainian NGO "Stan", covered project development, community mapping, needs-based

strategic planning, inclusion, and communication with stakeholders. Based on the results of these trainings, each community developed concepts for projects that focus on strengthening the social fabric and overcoming issues related to diversity and stigma. These initiatives, adequately tailored to maximize their cohesion impact, will be funded by project grants and implemented with mentorship support from IOM.

"Until now, we did not have the opportunity to meet, communicate and learn together," said training participant Natalia Salimova from Kropyvnytskyi community in Kirovohrad Oblast. "This training provided me with a clear vision about the importance of involving veterans in the active social life of our city."

In addition, as part of the same project, an offline training for community leaders was held in Kherson. The participants – from Lviv, Berdychiv, Boratyn, Dnipro, Poltava, Rivne, Starobilsk, Sumy, Kropyvnytskyi, Mykolaiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Drohobych, Malyn, Chernivtsi, and Uzhhorod cities – had the opportunity to exchange best practices on how to improve social cohesion, foster community engagement and boost the inclusion of vulnerable groups, as well as on how to enhance community resilience through socioeconomic support of veterans. The community leaders presented their projects and shared their experiences, including practices of existing successful cooperation with veterans.

In parallel, IOM conducted a series of trainings for 15 mental health and psychosocial support practitioners selected through a competitive process. The focus of these trainings was on psychological recovery and stress resilience skills. These specialists will provide free individual and group counselling services in their communities, including for veterans and their family members.

The project, which stems from a long-standing partnership between the EU and IOM, entered its second phase in January 2021 and aims to strengthen resilience of Ukrainian communities by supporting the successful participation of veterans and their family members in community life.



*The offline training in Kherson was an opportunity for leaders of 15 communities to exchange best practices of successful cooperation with veterans / IOM Ukraine*

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## BACKGROUND ON THE CRISIS

The ongoing armed conflict in eastern Ukraine has taken the lives of over 3,000 civilians and injured more than 7,000 since 2014. The ceasefire that was established in late July 2020 contributed to a reduction in the number of casualties over several months; however, ongoing hostilities continue affecting the lives of the people of eastern Ukraine. The COVID-19 pandemic also has a profound effect on those already made vulnerable by the conflict. As many as 3.4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021. Although the number of people in need is similar to 2020, their needs are significantly more severe. The elderly, people with disabilities, female-headed households and children are among the most vulnerable, including approximately 340,000 internally displaced persons in poor living conditions.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Ms. Varvara Zhluktenko, IOM Ukraine's Communications Officer,  
[vzhluktenko@iom.int](mailto:vzhluktenko@iom.int) +38 044 568 50 15 +38 067 447 97 92

## IOM ASSISTANCE TO CONFLICT-AFFECTED PEOPLE IN UKRAINE IS SUPPORTED BY:



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From the People  
of Japan



U.S. Department  
of State Bureau  
of Population,  
Refugees, and Migration

***In line with IOM's global strategy, the IOM Mission in Ukraine aims at advancing the understanding of the opportunities and challenges of migration in the Ukrainian context. Maximizing those opportunities and minimizing the challenges presented by migratory movements are the guiding principles of all activities and programmes the Mission engages in.***

***IOM Ukraine fights trafficking in human beings, assists the Government in addressing the needs of internally displaced persons and dealing with irregular migration, improving its migration management system, and creating migrant-inclusive health practices and policies. At the same time, IOM Ukraine engages in harnessing the development potential of migration, disseminating migration information and managing migration movements and integration of ethnic minorities, promoting the benefits of cultural diversity, and counteracting xenophobia and intolerance.***

***During the 25 years of its presence in Ukraine, IOM has assisted over 800,000 migrants (Ukrainians and other nationalities), IDPs, victims of trafficking and other vulnerable groups, directly or through its project partners.***

*Views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the view of IOM or its member states.*