

UKRAINE HUMANITARIAN APPEAL

Reporting back



DISASTERS
EMERGENCY
COMMITTEE



© Depaul Ukraine

Final programme report

Ruslana (L) hugs her daughter in their home after DEC-funded repairs to their conflict-damaged windows were carried out by the local partner of DEC charity CAFOD in Ukraine, 2025.

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FOREWORD

Final programme report: March 2022 – August 2025

When the conflict in Ukraine escalated in February 2022, lives and livelihoods were upended overnight. Families were separated as millions of people fled to safety, and homes, critical infrastructure and businesses were destroyed. The refugee crisis was on a scale not seen in Europe since the Second World War. Humanitarian aid was urgently needed to support those fleeing to neighbouring countries, and the many more who stayed in Ukraine and faced an uncertain future.

The DEC launched the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal on 3 March 2022. Thirteen DEC charities were responding to the crisis and worked closely with a wide network of local partners to deliver emergency cash support, food, water, shelter and much more to newly displaced families in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. They also provided support to people living in frontline areas, many of whom were cut off from essential services and basic supplies.

I was able to see some of this incredible work first hand when I visited Ukraine in February 2023. I met displaced families in Odesa who were staying at a shelter run by a DEC local partner. They received cash vouchers, food and mental health support thanks to DEC funds. Many had been through incredibly traumatic experiences before reaching the shelter and told me that the help they were receiving was a lifeline at a time when they had nowhere else to go.

I also had the chance to visit Romania a few months after the conflict escalated, where I saw how DEC charities and their local partners were helping refugees from Ukraine to settle into their host country. I met women who were receiving support with accommodation and finding work, and their children who were taking part in psychosocial support sessions to help them process what they had been through.

As the conflict wore on, DEC charities and their partners also focussed on longer term support, restoring children's access to education, rebuilding community spaces and providing small business grants to help people regain their independence.

The UK public's response to the launch of the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal was truly extraordinary. Generous donations in the first few days won the DEC a Guinness World Record for the most money raised by an online campaign in a week, with the total surpassing over £150 million in the first seven days alone. By the time fundraising closed in January 2025, an astonishing £446.3 million had been raised, making it one of the largest appeals in the DEC's history. The total includes £25 million from the UK Government as part of its UK Aid Match scheme.

It was heartwarming to see how many communities, businesses and institutions across the UK came together to help by raising urgently needed funds. Members of the Royal Family including

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Majesty The King Charles III donated to the appeal. Many high-profile figures lent their support through the broadcast appeal films, social media and the Concert for Ukraine, which was broadcast on ITV and raised more than £13 million in just one night.

I am incredibly proud of how much DEC charities and their local partners have been able to achieve thanks to this outpouring of generosity. The DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal was one of the world's biggest charity funders of the aid response for Ukraine between 2022 and 2025*, and overall, more than ten million people have been reached with support across Ukraine, Poland, Moldova, Romania and Hungary.

Despite the incredible amount that has been achieved, the Ukraine response has of course not been without its challenges. Operating across multiple countries with such a large-scale movement of people, rapidly changing frontlines and areas under heavy bombardment made this a very difficult crisis to deal with for member charities and their local partners. Tragically, several frontline staff from DEC local partner organisations have been killed in Ukraine, highlighting the risks humanitarian workers there are continuing to face as they deliver vital aid.

This report outlines how over three and a half years DEC charities and their local partners provided support to communities impacted by the conflict and refugees settling into host countries. It also highlights how they worked towards a responsible exit and transition strategy, supporting and training local partner organisations to expand and take full ownership of ongoing projects when DEC funded aid programmes closed in August 2025. Given the scale of the crisis and the significant amount of money raised, DEC charities and their partners were able to take a new and innovative approach to this response which has been hugely impactful and is outlined in detail in this report.

As the conflict continues, sadly the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and surrounding countries remains precarious. I am immensely proud of the impact the DEC appeal has had on millions of people's lives, and that investments into national organisations mean its ongoing legacy continues to make a difference.

On behalf of the DEC, our member charities and their local partners, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your extraordinary generosity supporting the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

Thank you,

Saleh Saeed
Chief Executive

* Figures from UN OCHA's Financial Tracking Service.



Members of the Rapid Response Team of Ukrainian Red Cross (URCS) train in Odesa where DEC funds have supported their operations, January 2023.

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OVERVIEW

HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT AT APPEAL LAUNCH

The February 2022 conflict escalation in Ukraine created Europe's largest population displacement crisis since the Second World War, with almost a third of the population forced to flee their homes and 6.9 million people crossing into neighbouring countries.¹ Mandatory evacuations from frontline communities created a large-scale humanitarian crisis. Within the first year of the conflict, over 17 million people were in humanitarian need.² Shelter, healthcare, food, psychosocial support (PSS) and access to clean water were identified as urgent priority needs. Over the four years of the conflict, ongoing emergency needs, as well as growing demands for support to recover have been

met by local and national organisations and community groups, alongside international support. While newly displaced people still require immediate aid, many internally displaced persons are now seeking longer-term solutions. Over the course of the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, DEC member charities and their partners, with the generous support from the UK public, assisted communities both in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Beyond the appeal, DEC member charities have ongoing efforts with local and national partners to build resilience and capacity to respond to ongoing crises across the country.

5.9 million
people have fled Ukraine³

as of 19 February 2026

5.3 million
refugees residing in Europe⁴

as of 19 February 2026

3.3 million
people internally displaced⁵

as of January 2026

\$2.3 billion
required in Ukraine for
humanitarian interventions
in 2026⁶

\$381 million
required in neighbouring
countries for humanitarian
interventions in 2026⁷



Refugees from Ukraine arrive at a makeshift welcoming camp at a border crossing point along the Poland-Ukraine border, March 2022.

¹ Ukraine Refugee Crisis: Aid, Statistics and News | USA for UNHCR

² Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 (December 2022) [EN/UK] - Ukraine | ReliefWeb/United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2022, December)

³ Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation, UNHCR <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

⁴ Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation, UNHCR <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

⁵ Ukraine | Displacement Tracking Matrix

⁶ Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026 (January 2026) [EN/UK] - Ukraine | ReliefWeb

⁷ Ukraine Situation Revised Regional Refugee Response Plan | 2025 - 2026 | OCHA

⁸ <https://www.dec.org.uk/report/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal-reporting-back>

THE DEC RESPONSE

The DEC launched its appeal on 3 March 2022 for people affected by the conflict, including refugees and those displaced within Ukraine. The response funded programmes both in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries (Poland, Romania, Moldova, and Hungary). For the past three and a half years, 13 DEC member charities and their local partners have been delivering life-saving support and assistance for those affected by the crisis, including refugees, internally displaced people, and host communities.

Covering the last 36 months of the appeal (Phase 2), this report builds on the DEC's Phase 1 report, which details the initial six-month emergency response.⁸



A man hugs his daughter and granddaughter after crossing the border from Ukraine to Poland, February 2022

TIMELINE OF EVENTS



Disasters Emergency Committee CEO, Saleh Saeed (R), prepares food parcels alongside volunteers at a warehouse in Odesa where DEC funds support the work of Depaul Ukraine, a local partner of DEC charity CAFOD, February 2023. Depaul works with displaced families and homeless people affected by the conflict, offering them food, shelter, legal advice and access to psychological support.

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FUNDRAISING

The UK public responded to the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal with extraordinary generosity. Between March 2022 and January 2025, the appeal raised £446.3 million, making it one of the largest in the DEC's history.

The speed with which individuals, communities and businesses across the UK responded to the appeal set a new Guinness World Record for the most amount of money raised by an online campaign in one week.

The appeal was announced in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister on 2 March 2022 and launched with films on 3 March following the news on national broadcasters. Actors Adrian Lester and Kit Harrington presented appeals on the BBC and ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky respectively, while appeals on commercial radio were voiced by David Tennant.

Actors Simon Pegg and Hugh Bonneville made social media videos and many other public figures supported the appeal on social media. Members of the Royal Family including Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Majesty King Charles III made generous donations.

More than £289 million was donated directly to the DEC, including £25 million matched by the UK Government, the largest ever commitment made to a DEC appeal through UK Aid Match. The Welsh Government donated £4 million to the appeal, and the Scottish Government donated £2 million. The appeal total includes a further £131.9 million raised by DEC member charities from their own supporters using DEC co-branding.

The Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal saw an inspiring array of fundraising efforts from individuals, communities and



The DEC welcomed the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to its London offices, as it was announced that the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal has raised over £300 million.

businesses. From bake sales to choral concerts, sponsored cycle rides to art fairs, the DEC is sincerely grateful to all those who organised their friends, families and local communities to show support for those affected by this devastating conflict.

On 29 March 2022, the Concert for Ukraine featuring artists including Ed Sheeran, Camila Cabello, Paloma Faith, Gregory Porter, Emeli Sandé, Nile Rodgers and Chic and Ukrainian singer and former Eurovision winner Jamala, was broadcast live on ITV and STV. It raised more than £13 million in one night.

In May 2022, a team of 10 cyclists, including former professional footballer Sylvain Distin, started out on an epic challenge to cycle from Sandbanks, UK to St.Tropez, France in just 10 days. The challenge saw the team collectively riding over 2,000km per week in preparation for the feat and raised almost £22,000 for the appeal.

The appeal was also supported by major UK arts and sporting institutions, including the Royal Opera House, the Royal National Theatre, the Southbank Centre, Sadler's Wells, and Glyndebourne Opera, the Ambassadors Theatre Group, the Football Association and England Football team, the Premier League and a number of it's clubs, and at the Six Nations.

The Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal received significant support from a wide range of UK businesses – including from our committed Rapid Response Network of corporate partners. Activities included making donations, donating proceeds from the sale of products, employee fundraising, opening innovative new fundraising channels for customers to give to the appeal, multi-channel marketing campaigns, and significant pro bono support.

The DEC partnership with NatWest Group raised over £10 million and won a Corporate Engagement Award for the Most Effective



Top right: Picadilly Circus lights up for the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. Middle left: Teenagers Ash Johnston and Lucy Smith fundraising for the appeal. Middle right: Leicester's concert for Ukraine. Bottom: The DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal press launch: Bethan Lewis, Head of Disaster Risk Management at Plan International; Saleh Saeed, CEO of the DEC; Andrew Morley, President and CEO of World Vision International.

One-Off Campaign and a Better Society Award for Major Project of the Year. PayPal raised over £3.3 million, the Post Office collected over £2.2 million in branches and more than £3.2 million was raised through the Big Give match-giving campaign. Morrisons, the Co-op Group, The Co-operative Bank, and Barclays all launched fundraising campaigns which attracted strong support from their customers. We are extremely grateful to our Rapid Response Network and all businesses that supported this appeal.

The Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal also received significant support from trusts and foundations, both existing supporters of DEC appeals and those new to the DEC. Support from trusts and foundations totalled £13 million, including an exceptional donation from The Hadley Trust. This is an incredible outcome for a DEC appeal and we are very grateful to all trusts and foundations that supported this appeal.



HOW THE DEC HELPED

Over 10 million people supported across Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Moldova and Hungary between March 2022 – August 2025.

DEC responses are split into two phases, Phase 1 and Phase 2 (see diagram below).

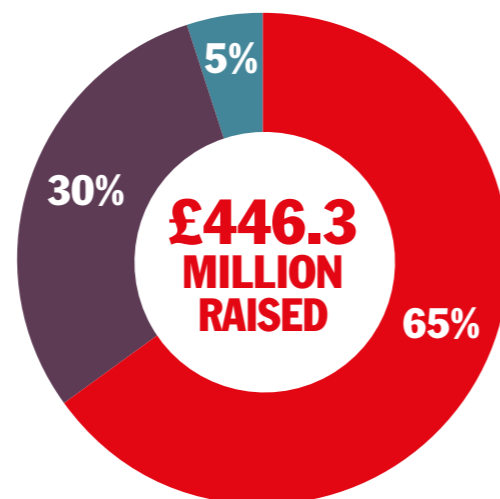


Phase 1 (first 6 months) funding is for immediate response activities and early recovery and reconstruction where appropriate.



Phase 2 (a further 36 months) funding is for recovery and reconstruction and ongoing emergency relief.

INCOME BREAKDOWN



- £289.4 million DEC direct donors
- £131.9 million Member retained income
- £25 million FCDO Aid Match

The DEC reports on funds that come directly to the DEC (£314.4 million, including £25 million UK Aid Match). Member charities report on income donated to them directly as part of the joint appeal.

Note on figures below: Double-counting in the net number of people reached overall with DEC funds has been eliminated, however some double-counting may persist across sectors; also, when two or more charities reach the same people with different types of assistance. All figures reported have been rounded down.



© Plan International

PHASE 1 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

From March to August 2022:

1.9 million people provided with clean water

392,800 people received food assistance, for example hot meals, food packages and groceries

338,000 people provided with cash assistance to meet their basic needs

127,900 people provided with support at transit centres

114,800 people received legal assistance and support

71,300 people provided with access to primary healthcare services

PHASE 2 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

From September 2022 to August 2025:

1.6 million people received improved access to drinking water

1.5 million people received protection support, including information about legal assistance and advice, gender-based violence, evacuation support and referrals to specialist services

1.2 million people reached with shelter support, accommodation and renovation works

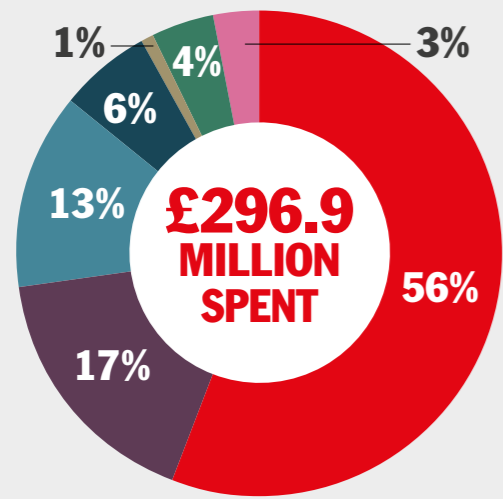
427,500 people provided with cash and voucher assistance to help them meet their basic needs

411,800 people received support via multi-purpose cash assistance distributed to community groups

167,900 people reached with mental health and psychosocial support

TOTAL APPEAL EXPENDITURE BY COUNTRY

(March 2022 – August 2025)



- Ukraine
- Poland
- Romania
- Moldova
- Hungary
- Regional initiatives
- Collective initiatives and shared services

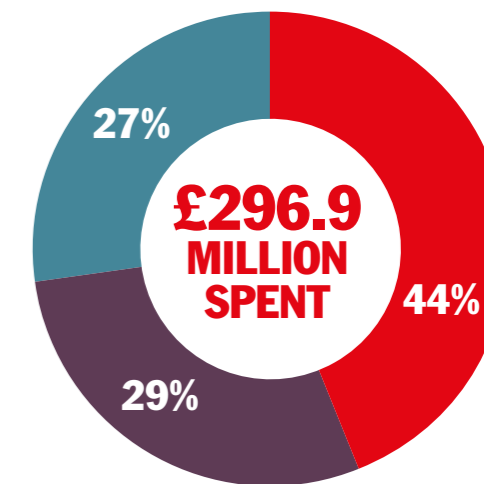


© Depaul Ukraine

Staff from DEC charity CAFOD's local partner, Depaul Ukraine, deliver essential items to help families in Ukraine prepare for the harsh winter ahead.

TOTAL EXPENDITURE – DEC MEMBERS & PARTNERS

(March 2022 – August 2025)

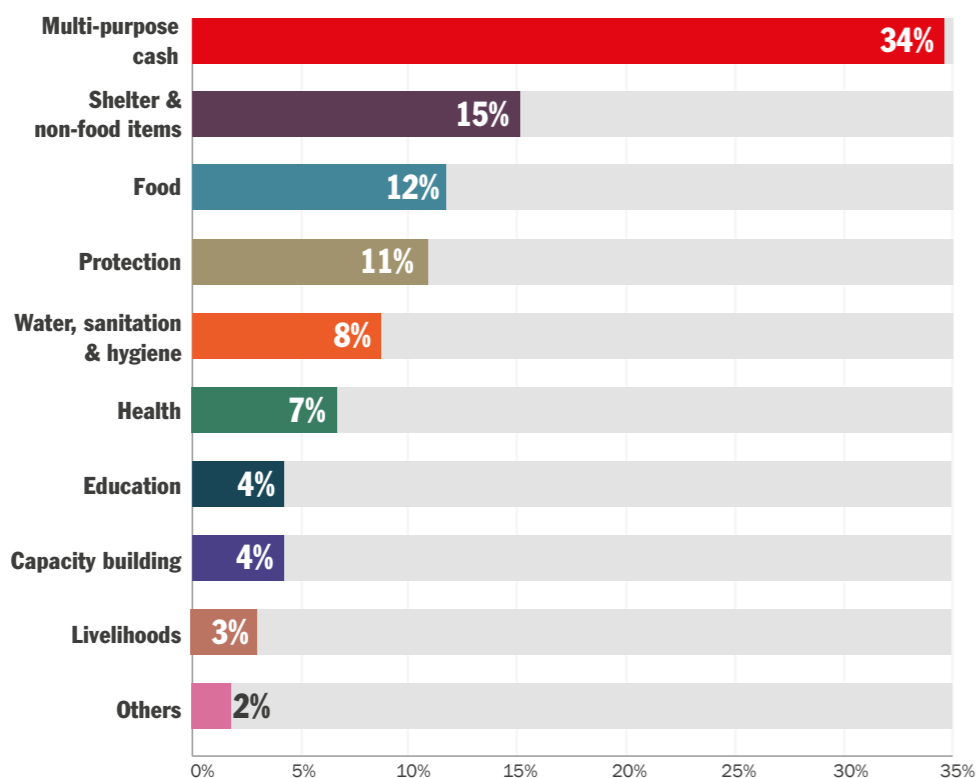


- DEC members direct spending
- Through local/national partners
- Through international or other partners*

*International or other partners include partners such as DePaul International

TOTAL EXPENDITURE BY SECTOR

(March 2022 – August 2025)



Across the 3.5-year response, DEC funds were allocated to 13 DEC member charities. These members delivered programmes both directly and in partnership with local, national and other partners.

DEC member charities

13

Total local/national partners:

208*

Ukraine local/national partners:

72

Regional response local/national:

112

*Total includes partners within Collective Initiatives and Regional Initiatives

Women keep busy with crafts in a public bomb shelter supported by DEC funds in Kharkiv, November 2022.



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HOW WE HELPED: A DUAL STRATEGY

There is growing consensus within the humanitarian sector on the need to develop more efficient and effective ways of working that ensure value for money, particularly considering the increasing complexity and protracted nature of humanitarian crises globally.

As a funder, the DEC has multiple responsibilities in this area. On the one hand, the DEC has a responsibility to disperse funds quickly to ensure the delivery of a swift and impactful emergency response for affected communities, in addition to ensuring that money is spent efficiently, and that programming is of high quality, and is relevant and effective. This means critically assessing whether standard approaches are sufficient, especially in key areas such as accountability to affected populations and strengthening locally led humanitarian action. The DEC also has the responsibility to model and facilitate better ways of working within the sector, particularly in terms of how, what, and who is funded. In addition to this, the DEC regularly convenes its member charities and the wider sector to collectively influence improvement and change.

By integrating innovation into its work, the DEC provides member charities and their partners space to experiment with new models and ways of working, driven by staff delivering the response on the ground, as well as communities' needs. Taking an innovative approach also provides the opportunity and dedicated resources for DEC member charities to invest in research and learning, and work towards systems level change.

A Dual Strategy was designed in 2022 as a new DEC approach for the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. It combined multiple funding streams and ensured programmes remained responsive to lifesaving sudden-onset humanitarian needs, as well as being innovative, piloting new and transformative approaches and improving the humanitarian ecosystem over time.



Volunteers Tatiana (L) and Janna (R) wait for refugees to collect DEC-funded food and hygiene kits at a distribution warehouse run by Plan International's local partner, Moldova for Peace in August, 2022.

New additional funding streams	Focus	Funding and initiatives
Regional initiatives	Testing new approaches, innovation, and capacity strengthening, including a Sustainable Humanitarian Innovation for Transformation (SHIFT) programme and a due diligence platform to support local and national actors.	£11.4 million, 4 initiatives
Collective initiatives	Collaboration, localisation, and system change	£8.1 million, 11 initiatives
Shared services	Addressing system-wide capacity gaps with support from external organisations	£840k, 4 initiatives

A midline and endline review of the strategy was undertaken in early 2024 and 2025 respectively, focusing on its effectiveness, main successes and any necessary changes. The strategy was found to have supported the development of new partnerships and relationships, the scale and reach of activities, capacity strengthening, uptake of research, and early indications of incremental shifts towards more inclusive humanitarian systems. This new approach has provided many lessons for DEC programming that will be taken forward to

continue improving future humanitarian responses. Projects and ways of working from the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal have inspired subsequent DEC programmes, notably in the Middle East Humanitarian Appeal and Myanmar earthquake response. Learning continues to be leveraged from Collective Initiatives in these responses, where pooled funds and community resilience models have again been implemented and adapted to new contexts.

UKRAINE

HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

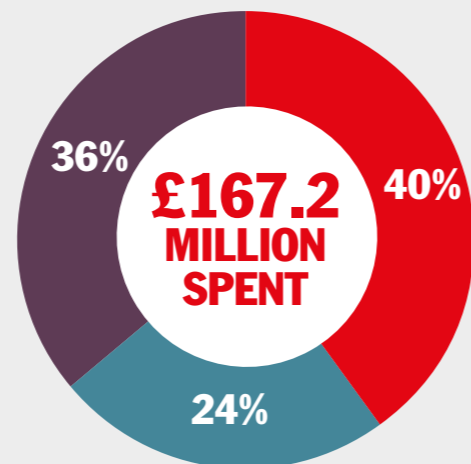
The conflict has remained volatile and rapidly evolving throughout the DEC-funded response. Over the past four years, there have been repeated attacks on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure, water, gas, housing and public services. Civilians have continued to face significant protection risks and high rates of psychological trauma. DEC members and their local partners maintained extensive geographic reach across Ukraine and continued responding to new crises throughout, including the Kakhovka dam destruction in June 2023, that left one million people without water and 140,000 without electricity.⁹ DEC members and their partners remained agile, delivering adaptive programming in response to a frequently changing context, as conflict dynamics and frontlines shifted. As displacement patterns evolved and needs varied significantly over time and across locations, DEC members and their local partners implemented tailored approaches to meet the needs of diverse groups, centring rights, diversity, protection, safety and inclusion.

DEC programmes reached households in both major urban centres and in smaller, hard-to-access municipalities, in areas affected by insecurity, displacement pressures and infrastructure strain. In east and southern oblasts, DEC member charities and their partners supported safe evacuation from frontline areas, providing transportation, emergency accommodation, mobile health services and cash-for-protection assistance. Following widespread damage of housing and critical infrastructure, lifesaving winterisation support was delivered, providing essential heating resources, food, and restoration of water sources across rural and urban areas. In the western oblasts, DEC member charities and partners worked with regional administrations, aligning project activities with local development priorities. 3.3 million people are still internally displaced and face ongoing housing shortages and insecurity.¹⁰

⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ukraine Humanitarian Response 2023 Destruction of Kakhovka Dam Flash Update #10, July 2023
¹⁰ European Union Agency for Asylum, Ad hoc Report: Situation in Ukraine and Displacement to the EU+, September 2025

UKRAINE EXPENDITURE

(March 2022 – August 2025)



- DEC members direct spending
- Through local/national partners
- Through international or other partners*

*International or other partners include partners such as DePaul International

Ukraine local/national partners: 72



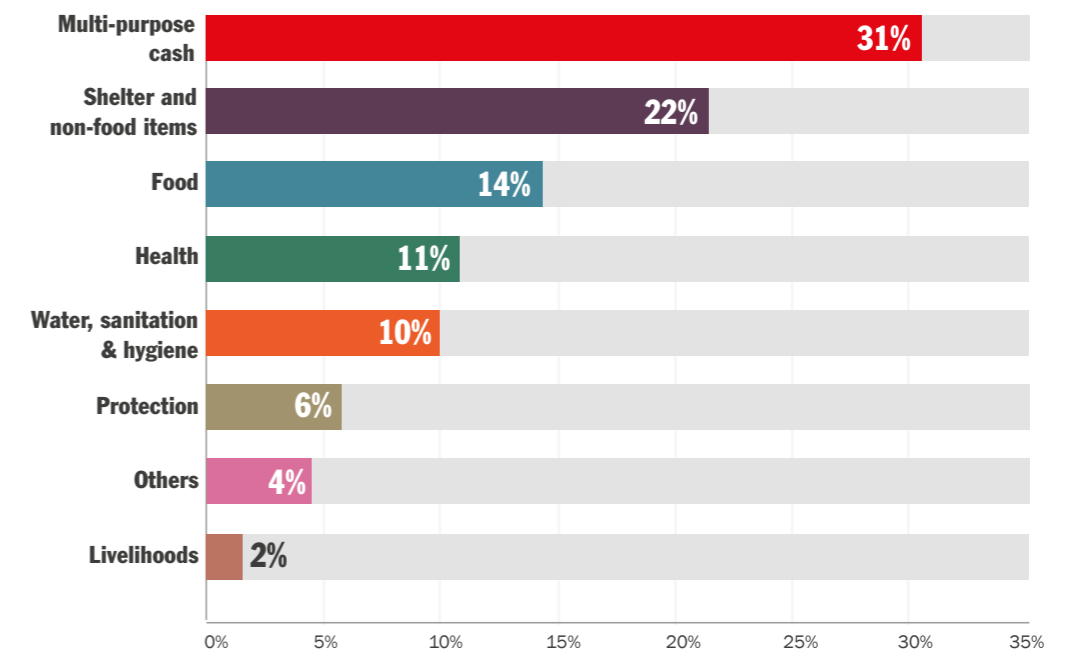
© Katya Moskaluk/Fairpicture/DEC
 Women from a village in eastern Ukraine take part in a support session at a new community centre built with funds from a Survivor and Community-led grant provided by DEC charity Christian Aid, June 2024.

DEC MEMBER PRESENCE



TOTAL UKRAINE EXPENDITURE BY SECTOR

(March 2022 to August 2025)



HOW WE HELPED: MULTI-PURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE

In Phase 1, the first six months of the response, 177,000 people received cash assistance across Ukraine as the conflict escalated and millions tried to flee the country. Many older people and those with disabilities found it impossible to escape. Community groups, churches and self-help groups in badly affected areas such as Dnipro also received cash grants so that they could initiate or continue community-led actions and responses. This approach encouraged genuine participation at a grassroots level, fostered self-reliance and helped improve these groups' ability to respond even more rapidly to crises. Cash grants were used, for example, to provide hot meals and food packages for displaced people as well as furniture, cooking appliances and heating equipment to improve temporary accommodation. With DEC funds, some of these community groups also offered legal aid consultations for people seeking advice on how to record the destruction of their home, restore lost documents, take custody of a child whose parents had died, or receive pensions and social benefits.

Cash transfers were a major part of DEC programmes throughout the remainder of the response. As communities were evacuated from frontline areas, cash support served as a lifeline, enabling families to meet their most urgent and basic needs,

such as food, housing, heating, and healthcare, providing them flexibility and agency. Coordination at this scale was key. DEC members and their partners worked with local social workers, authorities, and other humanitarian actors to ensure equitable targeting of those most in need and worked to avoid duplication and avoid overlap of activities or recipients. Support was prioritised for conflict-affected individuals, internally displaced persons, and those facing economic hardship. Feedback and accountability channels were integrated to cash delivery to ensure timely feedback that enabled programmes to adapt as needs evolved. Programmes were integrated with national social protection mechanisms, aligned with the Government of Ukraine's initiatives to support vulnerable households, and made efforts to avoid creating a parallel system.

Cash programming was an effective way to respond at the required scale and speed to meet the high humanitarian needs from the conflict. It was found to be a very cost-effective form of assistance. Cash injections also stimulated local markets, further contributing to economic stability and resilience within communities, providing lasting results. DEC members adapted programmes to meet the needs of at-risk groups, for example enabling transfers into personal bank accounts became instrumental for people with disabilities or those living in remote areas, who were often unable to travel long distances to withdraw their cash from an agent.

Vulnerable households from conflict affected areas in Ukraine register for cash assistance provided by DEC charity International Rescue Committee on the outskirts of Mykolaiv, October 2022.



© Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi/IRC



© Diana Zeyneb Alhindawi/IRC

Throughout the response, monthly transfer values were increased from UAH 2,200 (approx. £38) to UAH 3,600 (approx. £61) from October 2023, in line with the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) calculated for the response and in coordination with the Ukraine Cash Working Group. The Ukraine Cash Working Group (CWG) is a coordination platform that brings together humanitarian organisations delivering cash and voucher assistance (CVA) across Ukraine. It coordinates cash assistance across agencies by setting common standards and cash transfer values, sharing market and monitoring data, and reducing duplication to ensure a complementary response. DEC member charities and their partners engaged at the Cash Working Group national and regional levels throughout the response, and with the World Food Program's Building Block platform that coordinated assistance and prevented unintended assistance overlap.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



251,500
people provided with cash and voucher assistance to help them meet their basic needs



354,600
people provided with multi-purpose cash assistance distributed to community groups, institutions, and locally led initiatives

“**The Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) proved to be a vital intervention for the target communities, addressing immediate needs and stabilising their financial capacity. The flexibility of MPCA allowed beneficiaries to allocate funds according to their most pressing needs, such as food, medicine, and safe accommodation, which prevented some community members being forced to return to unsafe areas and reduced the risk of protection issues, thereby contributing to overall community safety and stability.**”

Independent evaluation of Concern's Ukraine cash programme. (Scruples Research)

CASE STUDY

Christian Aid provide cash grants

DEC member Christian Aid supported the development of a locally designed, needs-based cash assistance mechanism that has since been adopted and contextualised by ten local organisations in Ukraine, significantly strengthening their approach to both cash and protection. During the DEC programme, project participants were assessed through formal and informal interviews to identify their critical needs. They were then supported with a cash grant, as well as referrals to other support services to meet their medium and long-term needs.

In Ternopil, western Ukraine, Christian Aid supported charitable foundation Light of Reformation to provide assistance to particularly marginalised and at-risk groups. In one cohort of 350

people, health care made up 73% of requested support, with most of the remaining requests being for 'basic needs'. Requests for health support included medical check-ups, treatment, purchase of medicines, rehabilitation and purchase of medical devices. Almost all the requests for basic needs were for firewood to heat homes as winter approached. The average transfer value of assistance was UAH 9,838 (GBP 183), within a range between UAH 2,000 UAH (GBP 37) and UAH 20,000 (GBP 371). Light of Reformation conducted post-distribution monitoring surveys with a sample of 60 Assess and Assist participants which found:

- 100% were very satisfied or satisfied with the assistance
- 97% of recipients indicated that cash met or somewhat met their needs



© Katya Moskaliuk/Fairpicture/DEC

CASE STUDY

Ivanna's village in Mykolaiv Oblast was shelled at the start of the conflict, causing her to have to flee her home. When she returned, she found her home and local business – a village shop – nearly destroyed. Determined to rebuild her community, Ivanna initiated the creation of a new community centre for the village.

"We returned to the village after Kherson was liberated in November. To say that I cried would mean to say nothing. I just fell to my knees. It was pure pain. My garage and the car burned down, the summer kitchen burned down, half of the house was destroyed. It was a pure pain. I thought I wouldn't live through it."

"Thanks to God, thanks to people, thanks to volunteers, we survived. I've almost rebuilt half of my house. We restored the shop. It doesn't look as it used to but people living in the village can find the essentials there."

"[DEC partner] The Heritage Foundation is like a breath of fresh air for us. It's very good for us. I've been attending the classes since the beginning. I calm down. My nervous system calms down. I get distracted from today's problems, not just mine, but those in the village too. I can tell you from my experience and from others' I speak with, this is moral and psychological support, and these workshops distract and calm us down."

The village has used the Survivor and Community-led grant to rebuild their school's destroyed library building and turn it into a community centre for everyone in the village. The centre now provides a space for the community to come together, to read and take part in leisure activities, and to access psychological support.

Ivanna* outside her village's new community centre in eastern Ukraine, July 2024.

HOW WE HELPED: SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

The conflict was reported to have caused US\$135 billion in direct damage in just the first year.¹¹ As houses were destroyed and those displaced required temporary shelter, collective sites and host families supported families and individuals with critical housing support. DEC members and their partners worked on the upkeep and refurbishment of collective sites to improve safety and accessibility, particularly for women with young children, older people, and persons with disabilities. A wide range of programmes, including addiction support services and housing, helped respond to diverse needs across affected communities.

For those returning home to damaged and destroyed houses, roof repairs, insulation works, and fuel distributions helped households maintain adequate heating through severe winters. Solid fuel for heating homes was also distributed to priority areas and isolated locations to support living conditions.

DEC members also worked in partnership with the Government of Ukraine to provide cash-for-shelter assistance to host households accommodating internally displaced persons (IDPs) across 23 oblasts. This support helped offset increased utility and shelter-related costs and helped IDPs access safe, warm and dignified accommodation.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



1,191,400
people in Ukraine reached with shelter support, accommodation and renovation works

¹¹ Ukraine: Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, World Bank, Government of Ukraine, European Commission, United Nations, March 2023.



Cash transfers enabled nationwide coverage, traceability and remote delivery, while offering flexibility, dignity and choice... The programme achieved impressive geographic reach, speed and continuity during a protracted crisis. It also provided sustained monthly support to a very large caseload, including in conflict-affected and hard-to-reach areas."

Independent evaluation of British Red Cross Ukraine cash-for-shelter programme. (Humanitarian Impact Institute)



Staff from a partner organisation of DEC charity Concern Worldwide, register local residents for DEC funded shelter support in the Kharkiv region of Ukraine, September 2025.

HOW WE HELPED: FOOD

As evacuations from frontline areas continued, DEC members and their partners met the high needs for food assistance through food support to transit and collective centres, as well as individual food kits for internally displaced people. Depending on needs, ready-to-eat hot meals were provided in daily soup kitchens and monthly food baskets for families, containing buckwheat grain, pasta, beans, canned meat, sunflower oil, sugar, salt, oatmeal, canned sardines, rice and black tea. Feedback from recipients confirmed high satisfaction and catering inspections ensured standards were maintained to a high level throughout the response.

Supporting ongoing food security, programmes delivered agricultural grants and provided seeds and tools in areas which had recently been de-mined, alongside guidance on how to maintain soil health and water retention. Interventions aligned with the UN-led Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), which highlighted the severe contraction of the agri-food sector in Ukraine, and its impact on rural households reliant on agriculture. These activities

have helped small-scale farmers to recover and strengthen their resilience, particularly in supporting income generation. In one programme, 94% of recipients of the support reported that their situation had improved as a result of the assistance, largely due to the high quality of the seeds, which enabled families to save money on purchasing vegetables.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



218,500
people in Ukraine reached with food assistance such as food baskets, vouchers, ready-to-eat hot meals and agriculture packages



Vasylyna* takes part in a tailoring class run by a local partner of DEC charity Oxfam in Mykolaiv, Ukraine, part of a DEC-funded vocational training programme for residents and displaced people who lost their jobs due to the conflict, June 2024.

© Katya Moskalyuk/Fairpicture/DEC

Viktoria, a cycle volunteer for a local partner of DEC charity CAFOD, delivers food to Larysa, an older resident of Kharkiv, May 2022.



© Dmytro Minyailo/Arete/DEC

HOW WE HELPED: LIVELIHOODS

As the appeal programming evolved, taking into account the conflict dynamics and consultations with communities, livelihoods support became a priority, supporting households to rebuild their income. Support to women and entrepreneurs for socio-economic empowerment and sustainable businesses proved vital to support long-term recovery needs. Through vocational training, mentoring, monetary business grants and financial management training, recipients were able to restore income sources, promote self-reliance, and stimulate local economies. DEC members partnered with local experts and universities to deliver livelihood support and links to local employers.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



13,200
people benefitted from livelihood support

CASE STUDY

Save the Children support social enterprise

Save the Children's Social Enterprise Studio invested in early-stage businesses using grants alongside non-financial support and advisory services to help these businesses grow and develop their social impact. Save the Children worked with five local partners, who went on to support 51 entrepreneurs, exceeding the initial target of 20. These ranged from female-led businesses to those with products and services that support children, families and youth, and in turn went on to employ further people. One of the partners, Greencubator, funded three businesses with DEC funds: one in food processing and organic waste management; one in eco-friendly water production; one in sustainable product manufacturing.

During the appeal, Save the Children's Ukrainian implementing partners were seeing between 5 - 20% revenue growth of the supported businesses. Demonstrating ability to scale this model, Save the Children went on to successfully leverage further funding and investments from the private sector and philanthropic sources. Corporate partners also provided pro-bono support, including management specialists supporting impact measurement and legal counsel. Through this innovative financing model, capital was returned to the partner to reinvest in future entrepreneurs.

Save the Children also partnered with The Possible Alliance that invests and supports impact-driven entrepreneurs to help renew and rebuild Ukraine. They continue to deliver a co-designed process involving diverse local stakeholders and local government to develop prototypes for fast, impactful civic action, with the overall aim to renew and rebuild areas affected by war.¹²

¹² <https://thepossible.org.ua/en/partnership/>

HOW WE HELPED: PROTECTION

DEC members and their partners assisted civilians as protection needs across Ukraine escalated throughout the ongoing conflict. The majority of displaced people within Ukraine were women and children, many of whom faced significant safety and protection risks, such as domestic violence, human trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse. Children separated from their families became particularly vulnerable. In Phase 1 of the response, with DEC funds, women- and child-friendly spaces were set up in schools, sports halls and other public buildings in Odessa and Zaporizhzhia as well as other locations across the country. They provided a safe place where women could relax and share their experiences, and children could play and learn. These safe spaces also provided psychosocial support and counselling and played a major role in building the resilience of traumatised women and children.

Child protection teams operated throughout the whole response, with new partnerships forming as the frontlines shifted requiring new response mechanisms. Mobile teams also covered hard-to-reach areas, providing specialist child psychosocial support and individualising support on a case-by-case basis.

During evacuations and relocation to safer areas, legal advice and assistance to those displaced, support to those affected by gender-based violence (GBV) and protection programmes have served as vital lifelines over the past four years. A Safe Families Common Approach has strengthened family resilience and positive caregiving practices through an evidence-based parenting and psychosocial support methodology. Support centres have also provided mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), a hidden but widespread

Polina*, 35 (L), a mother from Kharkiv, holds her son, Igor*, at a DEC supported centre for displaced families run by a local partner of DEC charity Christian Aid in Odesa, Ukraine, February 2023.



need amongst conflict-affected populations. Programmes have combined individual psychological therapy sessions with education, practical exercises, and therapeutic practices such as art therapy, rhythm and music sessions, relaxation techniques, and yoga to respond to diverse needs. DEC member Plan International supported the establishment of the Centre of Social Services Provision for Pischynska and Vysochanska communities in Ukraine, providing support from social workers, psychologists and lawyers for holistic protection provision and case management. Protection hubs and hotlines have offered accessible information and counselling, while psychosocial support, delivered through group sessions and individual therapy, helped people manage trauma, anxiety, and loss.

A review of MHPSS services found that nine out of eleven external organisations, including local government officials and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), identified rural communities as having high levels of unmet mental health needs and reported being unable to support them due to limited funding and infrastructure. To address this, DEC members and their partners expanded a mobile team approach to deliver MHPSS services to frontline communities in rural and suburban conflict affected areas. Specialist, multi-modal teams provided a combination of group and individual psychological support sessions to vulnerable adults in three-month cohorts. People with severe psychological needs were referred to additional specialist support. A children’s social worker simultaneously ran art therapy sessions with children while caregivers participated in counselling. This remained crucial to the mobile team’s strategy for engaging caregivers: their experience shows that caregivers are more comfortable accepting psychosocial support if their children are also supported.

In partnership with MHPSS Collaborative, a global platform for research and advocacy in mental health and psychosocial support, DEC funds also supported the curation of a collection of resources that are specific to the needs of children and families in the context of the emergency in Ukraine.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



500,300
people in Ukraine received protection support, including information about legal assistance and advice, gender-based violence and evacuation support



68,400
people in Ukraine reached with mental health and psychosocial support



© Maciek Musialek/Arete/DEC
Representatives from a local initiative supported by DEC charity Christian Aid and their local partners to provide assistance to displaced people trying to rebuild their lives in Odesa, Ukraine, February 2023.

HOW WE HELPED: CAPACITY BRIDGING

Throughout the response, DEC members partnered with Ukrainian civil society and local and national organisations who provided deep understanding of local contexts and needs. They also facilitated swift access to communities. For many local partner agencies, the conflict escalation was the first experience of delivering a large-scale response. DEC members assisted across a full range of programmatic and institutional development, from procurement to safeguarding and ensuring activities were in line with the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and SPHERE standards.¹³ DEC members provided a variety of support, from formal training to embedding technical advisors in partner organisations, secondments, and accompaniment models where member staff worked alongside partners to co-develop policies,

frameworks, and tools. Organisational capacity bridging contributed directly to partner sustainability, enabling partners to have increased capacity to respond to future crises.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



21,500
people in Ukraine engaged in capacity bridging initiatives and support

“ Investments in governance, financial systems, safeguarding, HR and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) improved the long-term resilience of local organisations and positioned them well for future funding with a more diverse range of donors. DEC members also learned from partners through informal technical capacity exchanges which also contributed to the effectiveness of the response.”

Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal independent Post-Appeal Review [IOD-PARC]

¹³ Home | CHS 2024; The Sphere Handbook | Standards for quality humanitarian response

HOW WE HELPED: WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Amid ongoing attacks on Ukraine's water systems, DEC members and their partners restored access to safe water through the rehabilitation of wells, pipelines, and water towers, and the installation of solar-powered systems to ensure reliability during power cuts. Support to collective centres and care institutions included upgrades to toilets, showers, and kitchens, improving safety, accessibility, and dignity. Hygiene and menstrual hygiene kits were distributed to vulnerable groups, and public health promotion activities reduced hygiene-related risks. For WASH rehabilitation works, such as the restoration of water towers, DEC charity Oxfam collaborated with licensed companies to conduct technical feasibility assessments at the design stage, always including an environmental impact component. In accordance with climate and environment commitments (see section on page 54, members equipped public social laundries with solar panels and portable battery stations, ensuring service continuity during power cuts while reducing reliance on diesel.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



1,633,800
people in Ukraine received improved access to drinking water



192,000
people in Ukraine received improved access to sanitation, laundry and water storage facilities, including through support to collective shelters

Fyodor, Director of Vodokanal water company in Artsyz, Ukraine, checks a pump at a water facility following vital equipment upgrades provided by DEC charity Oxfam, November 2022.



© Maciek Mustalek/Arete/DEC

CASE STUDY

Following the conflict escalation, Artsyz in Odesa Oblast experienced high numbers of arrivals from people displaced from across Ukraine. With the increased load on the water utility and sewage systems, alongside aging machinery, employees of the Vodokanal water company worked around the clock to ensure access to water was maintained. Challenges persisted with a missile strike hitting Artsyz in May 2022, burning down electronic equipment and affecting the water supply. As temperatures increased over the summer months and lack of water risked the spread of diseases, Oxfam's support came at a critical time, deploying engineers and new pipes and cables to repair the system.



Thanks to the help of Oxfam, we managed to revive the supply to part of the town and provide water for the people who moved here. We got new pumps very quickly. We installed them and provided the people with water. Even when there is no electricity, like now, we can still supply water. And those old pipes were delivering dirty water so the new pipes have also improved the water quality. I'm very happy to say that, Oxfam, you're doing very important work – everyone in our town felt it a lot"

Fyodor, Director of the Vodokanal water company in Artsyz

HOW WE HELPED: HEALTH

Since the beginning of the conflict escalation, the World Health Organisation has documented at least 2,881 attacks on health care in Ukraine, affecting health workers, facilities, ambulances, and medical warehouses.¹⁴ DEC members and their partners provided widespread support to healthcare facilities across Ukraine, supporting the Ministry of Health to maintain services whilst under attack, contributing technical support, supplies and equipment in regions all across the country. At the community level, DEC charities supported primary health and mobile team units to provide services in remote locations and to internally displaced people facilities, often alongside other services using a holistic approach to meet the needs of individuals. DEC funds supported health care workers and specialist services, ensuring at-risk groups, such as HIV patients, were integrated into the health systems and received essential treatment. DEC member ActionAid delivered an "Intermediate Trauma Medical Course" focusing on practical skills for emergency response and trauma care.

DEC charity Christian Aid's partner Alliance for Public Health deployed mobile treatment point (MTP) teams to provide integrated

¹⁴ Attacks on Ukraine's health care increased by 20% in 2025', World Health Organisation News release February 2026

community-based health services to six regions (Kharkivska, Khersonska, Zaporizka, Donetsk, Mykolaivska, and Dnipropetrovska region) and 100 towns/villages in Eastern Ukraine with priority on communities on the frontlines with limited access to medical care, health system infrastructures, or even pharmacies. Specialist home-based care and hygiene supplies were also provided and a network of 135 trained local caregivers and social workers were mobilised to reach older individuals, people with disabilities and those requiring specialised support.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



185,400
people in Ukraine supported with the provision of healthcare and essential health supplies

Maria* (L) and her daughter Liliia* (R), both internally displaced due to the conflict, receive home-based care support from DEC charity Age International's local partner, HelpAge International, in eastern Ukraine, June 2024.



© Katya Moskaljuk/Fairpicture/DEC



Children play with staff during a class at the START Centre, a community-based organisation in western Ukraine providing support to displaced children with special needs, June 2022. The centre received a Flexible Small Grant from DEC charity Christian Aid and their local partner.

HOW WE HELPED: EDUCATION

As the conflict caused disruption to the daily lives of people in Ukraine, preschools faced the most critical and unmet needs. Young children spent prolonged periods in shelters without access to safe, stimulating, and age-appropriate learning spaces. DEC member Save the Children established 20 preschool shelters providing safe, comfortable, and child-friendly environments. To also address the critical gap in children’s access to digital learning tools due to conflict-related disruptions, additional cash transfers were provided to families with children. This enabled families to purchase devices (tablets, laptops, and desktop PCs), directly improving children’s ability to participate in education.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



23,100 adults and children in Ukraine supported with education through language courses, digital learning initiatives, educational trips and materials



11,600 adults and children participated in activities focused on integration and social cohesion

REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE

HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

The waves of attacks across Ukraine since the conflict escalation in 2022 created a refugee crisis on a scale not seen in Europe since the Second World War. Refugees required support with housing and accommodation, food, protection and legal rights, mental health and psychosocial support, socio-economic inclusion and livelihoods. Governments granted temporary protection status, granting people fleeing from Ukraine with access to welfare benefits, help with accommodation, healthcare and schools for children. The European Council has extended the protection regime until March 2027, and EU Member States are domestically implementing their own extensions, with many countries having already wound down services for Ukrainian refugees. Many accommodation and other programmes have closed, the transition bringing uncertainty to those still residing outside of Ukraine. Many have relied on the support of international actors, such as the DEC, as well as local and national groups in the absence of government programmes. These legislative changes, as well as constant population movements and fluctuating beneficiary numbers have required DEC members to remain adaptable. DEC members have partnered with local actors, supporting their delivery and enhancing systems to meet the high demands.



Displaced mothers impacted by the conflict in Ukraine take part in a psychological support session run by a mobile team of social workers from CNPAC, a local partner of DEC charity Plan International, at a refugee accommodation centre in Moldova, August 2022.



REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE: HOW WE HELPED

DEC members and their partners responded to the large-scale displacement from Ukraine into neighbouring countries: Poland, Moldova, Hungary, and Romania. From the outset, refugees were supported from their arrival at borders, at collective sites and their onwards movement and integration into host communities. Targeted support was delivered to meet the basic needs and enhance the wellbeing of the refugee population.

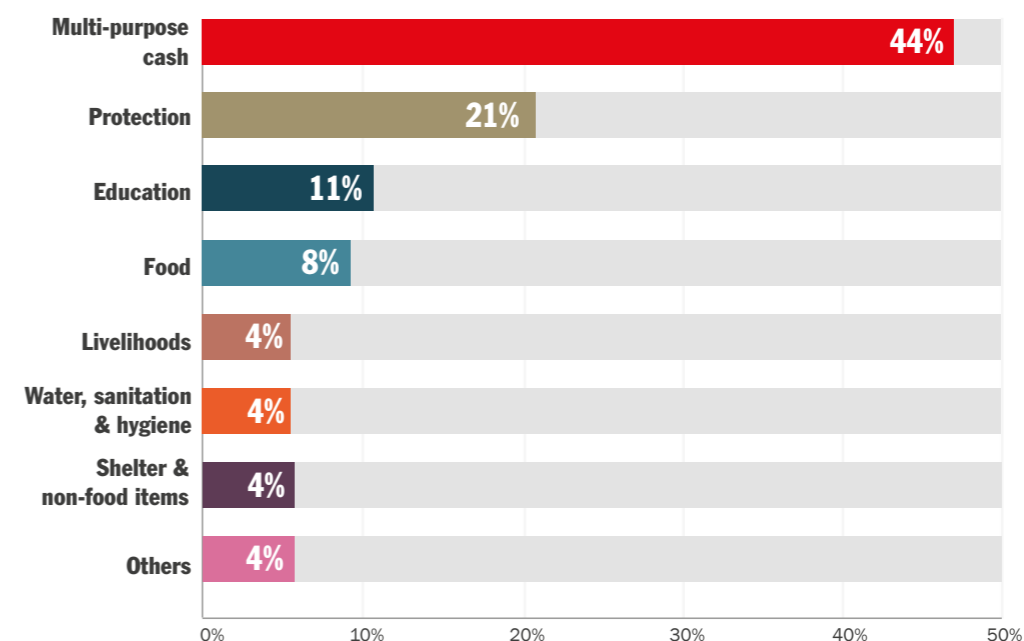
Programmes were aligned with the UN Refugee Response Plan (RRP) – a collaborative effort involving host governments, local authorities, national and local civil society and international partners, including the DEC. Alongside temporary accommodation, food, information and cash assistance, DEC members prioritised services that helped people retain agency, rebuild stability and navigate an unfamiliar system with confidence. DEC strategies were locally led, needs-driven, and informed by community experience, contributing to the long-term resilience of refugees from Ukraine, host communities and the integration of displaced youth.

Support to vulnerable members of host communities alongside refugees from Ukraine was critical in supporting social cohesion. Where there are pockets of poverty in Poland, Hungary and Romania and particularly acute in Moldova, many low-income families are dependent on pensions and social assistance. The arrival of thousands of refugees, 95% of whom either lived with local families or in their communities, put additional pressure on this already vulnerable population. Support to these groups too helped ease tensions between refugee and host communities and DEC programmes were intentionally inclusive to ensure assistance met diverse and urgent needs.

Through inclusive youth engagement, socialisation, and skills-building, programmes facilitated integration pathways for refugee children by building bridges into the educational and social systems. Language learning activities were in high demand throughout and served as a core part of facilitating integration. Clubs and courses proved instrumental for both adults and children going on to access education and employment and were tailored accordingly.

REGIONAL RESPONSE BY SECTOR

(March 2022 – August 2025)

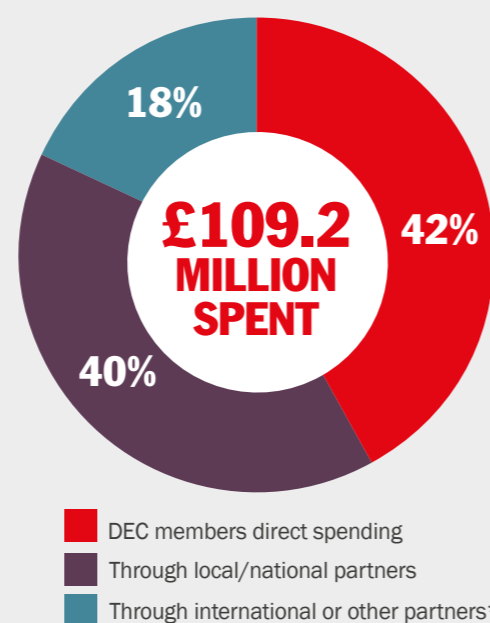


Dumitrita* (L) and Daria*, who fled Ukraine for Moldova due to the conflict, receive cash-assistance vouchers funded by the DEC and provided through DEC charity World Vision to help them buy essential items, January 2024.



REGIONAL RESPONSE EXPENDITURE

(March 2022 – August 2025)



*International or Other partners include partners such as DePaul International

Regional response local/national partners: 112

REGIONAL RESPONSE KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

(September 2022 – August 2025)



POLAND

CONTEXT

DEC members and their partners provided shelter, transportation, food, clothing, and medical aid for those arriving in Poland.

Over the course of the appeal, they responded with emergency cash assistance as well as longer-term livelihoods, including job counselling, skills training and microbusiness support.

DEC members undertook research with older people to support humanitarian partners in designing more inclusive responses, providing trainings and workshops. A pooled fund for the Refugee Response has since adopted priority allocations exclusively dedicated to older refugees and refugees with disabilities as a result.

Child protection programmes addressed urgent and systemic challenges, supporting children's safety as well as emotional recovery and educational inclusion, laying the foundation for long-term community resilience. DEC members and partners delivered

psychological, psychiatric, and legal support, group therapy, safe space activities and educational support (including Polish language learning, Polish school readiness, and tailored learning assistance) for both refugee and host community children. Activities included a combination of creative, educational, and physical activities, as well as educational resources to address the emotional and mental health needs of adolescents. A "School Full of Emotions" initiative provided two sets of multimedia materials in multiple languages and inclusive formats to support refugee children from Ukraine.

Protection programmes also included the establishment of child advocacy centres, helplines for children and youth, and comprehensive psychological and social support to children and families and targeting the most vulnerable refugee children from Ukraine in institutional care.

Staff from DEC charity Save the Children and their local partner in Poland work together during a Digital Learning Centre session for children from Ukraine at a library in Poland, October 2022.



© Paul Wu/DEC

CASE STUDY

Save the Children train local communities to be prepared for crisis

The "Local Community Prepared for Crisis" trainings were introduced to address emerging needs along the Poland-Ukraine border, where local communities required structured support in crisis preparedness and coordination. Drawing on Save the Children Poland's expertise in community engagement and preparedness programming, this initiative was designed to strengthen local capacities for effective emergency response and to fill a critical gap not addressed by other actors. Six local preparedness workshops were conducted, reaching 111 participants, alongside one regional event attended by 32 participants. Follow-up surveys showed that 94% of participants reported increased confidence in applying key crisis preparedness and response skills, including effective communication, rapid decision-making, and coordination during emergencies.



© Katarzyna Bzowska/IRC

A refugee from Ukraine now living in Poland after receiving livelihood support funded by the DEC and provided through DEC charity International Rescue Committee, February 2024.

Across non-child protection sectors, including sport and healthcare, members and partners enhanced child protection standards to ensure cross-sector protection measures. DEC member Plan International successfully embedded Child Protection Standards (CPS) across hospitals, mental health centres, universities, and sports organisations. Activities combined practical training, policy development, awareness-raising, and professional support, strengthening child protection in multiple non-CPS sectors.

In education settings, teachers and educators participated in a comprehensive training series, both in-person and online, covering trauma-informed approaches, multicultural classroom management, psychological first aid, resilience-building, and intercultural integration. 1,482 professionals enhanced their capacity to support children with migration experience, fostering inclusive, safe, and emotionally supportive learning environments across Poland.

DEC member Oxfam provided holistic protection support to women survivors of violence through safe spaces and services. A helpline, legal assistance, psychological care, therapeutic support, and provision of information and programming on gender-based violence (GBV) risks, prevention and where survivors may access help was delivered with partners across Poland. Survivors of GBV were assisted with cash, finding safe accommodation, and cash for rent and utilities.

CASE STUDY

International Rescue Committee provide microbusiness grants

DEC member International Rescue Committee provided refugees from Ukraine with livelihoods support through job fairs, job cafés, thematic employment support sessions, social gatherings, and language integration initiatives. International Rescue Committee launched Work Poland, a multilingual online platform providing clear, practical, and rights-based information on the Polish labour market, promoting economic inclusion for refugees and migrants. Individualised employment support was also offered through the development and implementation of Individual Action Plans (IAPs) at the Livelihood Centre in Katowice – providing a personalised pathway to short and long-term employment with a job counsellor and job matching services. Short-term vocational training programmes, business grants of US\$5000, wrap-around support, training, coaching and mentoring provided opportunities for economic integration.

ROMANIA

CONTEXT

Since February 2022, Romania has registered 4.9 million border crossings from Ukraine.¹⁵ Whilst the number of people crossing the border has reduced more recently and many refugees have returned to Ukraine, over 200,000 are recorded in Romania as of December 2025.¹⁶ Fluctuation in refugee numbers required flexible response mechanisms. High needs for protection services remained consistent, with risks relating to trafficking, exploitation and gender-based violence. Many refugees also faced barriers accessing healthcare support and services. Unpredictable government support for refugees from Ukraine increased vulnerability and reliance on humanitarian aid. Legislation changes introduced in 2024 restricted access to financial assistance and social services for refugees from Ukraine, disproportionately affecting families in shelters and children not yet enrolled in Romanian schools.

Alongside providing immediate assistance, DEC members prioritised support that helped refugee families navigate Romanian systems so that they could more easily access the services they needed. DEC member World Vision provided

refugees with up-to-date legal information, liaising with authorities to facilitate access, and expanded its own integration activities - including Romanian language classes, remedial education, and accreditation of Child-Friendly Spaces - to help families meet new eligibility criteria.

DEC member ActionAid also provided access to temporary accommodation, employment services, legal advice, counselling services, language training and support in navigating the Romanian healthcare and education systems. Youth-led initiatives, supporting Ukrainian and Romanian youth across their centres in Bucharest, Botoşani and Suceava has included vocational training workshops to enhance employability skills, language trainings to support integration, and cultural exchange activities aimed at fostering mutual understanding and appreciation of different cultures. Sessions on mental health support and wellbeing were also provided, including specialised classes for women such as wellness workshops, yoga, art therapy, and leadership development initiatives as well as individual and group therapy.

¹⁵ UNHCR, Inter-Agency Operational Update, October 2023, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/104814>

¹⁶ Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation: Romania, UNHCR Data <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10782>

The Romanian Red Cross launched an intercultural centre on 29 July 2022 to respond to the growing needs of children and adults impacted by the conflict in Ukraine, while also providing sustainable support to Romanian citizens facing difficult socio-economic conditions.



© Irina Ruano/IFRC



Refugees from Ukraine attend an English language class at a centre run by a local partner of DEC charity CAFOD in Bucharest, Romania, February 2023.

© Adrian Catu/DEC

A wide range of integrated services were delivered at the ROUA Centre in Baia Mare northwestern Romania, providing community members a safe, welcoming space, fostering resilience, inclusion, connection, well-being and solidarity among both refugees from Ukraine and local Romanian residents.

Through continuous needs assessments, direct feedback from project participants and the expertise of implementing partners working closely with affected populations, DEC members tailored responses to continue being relevant to refugees in Romania. Over the past three and a half years, members and their partners have delivered cash and voucher assistance, information and advice on immigration status, access to services, mental health and psychosocial support, access to education for children, training in child safeguarding, child protection and psychological first aid through integrated hubs, counselling hubs and mobile teams, serving key regions and extending distributions to remote areas. As part of a clear transition strategy from the outset, members worked closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the national and county Child Protection Agency and the General Inspectorate for Immigration to ensure appropriate referrals and integration into the existing public systems.

CASE STUDY

Role of young women in humanitarian action

DEC member ActionAid's regional strategy has focused on promoting voices from Romanian civil society, and particularly the role of young women in humanitarian action. ActionAid has promoted the visibility and support to women's rights organisations with the development of a participatory report, "Standing up for our rights: feminist insights from the Ukraine response".



Promoting women and their organisations to recognise and lead based off their capabilities – regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, religion, identity, age, disability or additional social constraints – supports the community to overcome barriers of discrimination and gender inequity but also sustain long-term transformative change.”

ActionAid report

MOLDOVA

CONTEXT

After the escalation of conflict in Ukraine, over a million people crossed the border into the Republic of Moldova.¹⁷ Moldova continues to host approximately 140,000 refugees,¹⁸ representing about 5% of the national population, one of the highest ratios per capita in Europe. As refugees arrived in Moldova, DEC members and their partners sought to bridge the critical gaps in education, economic empowerment and health, ensuring that refugee and host community members received immediate support through a multi-sectoral, locally led response. Combining protection, health, mental health and psychosocial support, education, women's economic empowerment, and sports-based social cohesion interventions, members aligned their programming with Moldova's Refugee Response Plan, UN frameworks, and broader regional protection and integration strategies, to enhance long-term resilience and social cohesion.

At the outset, shelter and housing needs were largely managed through Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) across eight regions, which have gradually transitioned to rented and hosted housing arrangements. DEC members and their partners provided information sessions across RACs and delivered programmes to strengthen frontline capacity across the refugee support system by training RAC managers, volunteers and supporting caregivers. These interventions strengthened

regulatory compliance across these settings as well as leadership, teamwork, and stress-management skills for RAC staff.

In January 2024, DEC partner HelpAge assessed 41 RACs to identify infrastructure barriers for people with disabilities and older persons. Findings were developed into plans to deliver comprehensive case management for refugees aged 50 and over who were to be relocated from the closing RACs into rented or host-provided housing. Each person underwent a detailed individual assessment covering health, housing, income, and psychosocial factors and were then supported with food and clothes vouchers, winter footwear, furniture and household essentials. These tailored interventions improved comfort, safety, and living standards in refugees' new homes.

Members also assisted refugees with multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA), e-vouchers and medical vouchers, assistive devices for older persons and food and hygiene items. Through post-distribution monitoring, it was seen that MPCA spending priorities amongst refugees focused largely on food, utilities and medicines, and confirmed that cash assistance effectively covered essential recurring needs. An online platform enabled Ukrainian refugees to register themselves and request their needs.

¹⁷ UNHCR Press release 31 March 2025: <https://www.unhcr.org/md/en/news/first-step-toward-safety-monitoring-moldova-s-borders>

¹⁸ UNHCR, Operational Data Portal Ukraine Refugee Situation February 2026 <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

Refugees from Ukraine, Elena and Victor, receive financial support from a DEC-funded cash vouchers programme provided by DEC charity Age International in Moldova, August 2022.



© Andreea Câmpeanu/DEC



© Plan International

A Parenting Under Pressure (PUP) group session for refugee parents and caregivers who fled the conflict in Ukraine and now live in Moldova, run by DEC charity Plan International. During the sessions, parents support one another, sharing experiences and positive parenting practices they use at home with their children.

Members combined humanitarian relief (vouchers, mental health and psychosocial support) with integration-oriented support such as child and adult education, language training and livelihoods support. The aim of this was to reduce dependency on short-term assistance and support the resilience of both refugees and host communities.

To support wellbeing and integration, DEC member Plan International delivered Parenting under Pressure (PUP) and Adolescent Life Skills programmes. This included equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to manage diversity, address bullying, prevent and respond to violence and promote cooperation among students, as well as providing caregivers with parenting skills. Through structured parenting sessions, 129 parents from four communities gained skills to manage stress, strengthen caregiving practices, and create supportive home and community environments for children's early development, recognising the direct link between family wellbeing and children's ability to thrive amidst the crisis of the conflict.

ENERGY CRISIS IN THE WINTER OF 2024-2025

An energy crisis engulfed Moldova throughout the winter of 2024. A state of emergency was declared by the Government in 2024, with the national risk framework identifying 31 potential scenarios, including power failures and threats to energy infrastructure. DEC members aligned their contingency measures to these scenarios, increasing context monitoring, and ensuring essential communications and data backups were ready.

To prevent exposure to cold and associated complications, members distributed winterisation kits including a thermal blanket, a one-liter thermos and five pairs of thermal socks, ensuring a minimum level of thermal comfort during the cold season and in the event of electricity cuts. DEC funded programmes responded to the increased demand for assistive equipment and home adaptations in the context of relocations from Refugee Accommodation Centers and the transition to community-based living over time.

HUNGARY

During the DEC response, more than 52,000 refugees from Ukraine were registered in Hungary.¹⁹ DEC members conducted assessments to ascertain what assistance was required to support vulnerable groups. Refugees were found to fit broadly into the following three categories: people waiting to return to Ukraine as soon as possible; settling in Hungary for the foreseeable future; uncertain about their future, neither committed to settling, nor determined to return. DEC member Christian Aid implemented programming to meet needs for those disproportionately affected by the crisis in all categories, with a tailored, demand-led approach.

¹⁹ UNHCR Operational Data Portal Ukraine Refugee Situation - Hungary



Children take part in activities at a summer camp for refugee children funded by DEC charity Christian Aid in Budapest, Hungary.

© Christian Aid/HIA

CASE STUDY

Survivor and community-led response in Hungary

DEC member Christian Aid's Survivor and Community-led Response (SCLR) is a hyper-localised approach to programming. It provides complete transparency on budget available for initiatives, selection of successful initiatives, and centres mutual accountability for project success. For Christian Aid's DEC programme in Hungary, a selection committee made up of both refugees and host communities from relevant backgrounds finalised a criterion for selecting proposals. This included that the initiative would provide support for refugees from Ukraine and community cohesion between refugee and host populations, benefit the wider community, and include vulnerable people. Over the response, 33 survivor and community led response initiatives were designed, proposed, funded and implemented by 29 community groups across Hungary. An estimated more than 10,000 people have been reached through these initiatives.

The Survivor and Community-led Response is designed to maximise accountability and put power into the hands of communities, with local groups and self-help groups given autonomy to plan and execute their own initiative to meet

unmet needs. The approach ensures a tailored response as the intervention is determined and designed by conflict-affected people themselves. This ensures it meets the current priority needs and delivers high value for money. As proposals and budgets are written by those with a deep understanding of often complex contexts, they are able to best identify how to use funds in a cost-effective manner. This includes locally sourcing materials to decrease delivery costs as well as contributing to the local economy. The very low wastage of the SCLR approach is also due to this inherent prioritisation of items of services based on relevance and need. The flexibility of the approach means that budgets and expenditure can be adapted to accommodate pricing changes, exchange rate fluctuation, and supply shortages, all of which are common in conflict affected areas, but can be navigated without reducing value for money through SCLR. Community leadership also means these funds are improving the psychosocial wellbeing of crisis affected people by transforming them from passive recipients of aid to empowered survivors with the means to support themselves and each other.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

As part of the appeal, the DEC allocated dedicated funding for innovative approaches - the first time in its history that resources had been set aside specifically to strengthen collaboration, foster innovation and address system-level gaps and challenges within an appeal. This marked a deliberate and forward-looking shift, signalling the DEC's commitment not only to funding programmes, but to strengthening the architecture of the response itself.

Collective Initiatives ranged from coordinated activities and research to events, piloting new approaches and developing new partnerships. Designed to generate benefits beyond any single member charity's programme, these initiatives added value across the wider response. Through this funding stream, the DEC, as a key funder to the Ukraine response, actively invested in collective, common-good projects that reinforced coordination, raised standards in quality and accountability, and strengthened system-wide effectiveness.

By investing in collaboration, quality and shared learning alongside direct humanitarian assistance, the DEC sought not only to respond to immediate needs in Ukraine and neighbouring refugee-hosting countries, but also to shape a more coherent, accountable and effective humanitarian response.

This approach has generated lessons and improvements with relevance beyond Ukraine, informing the wider humanitarian system.

Due diligence and cash capacity harmonisation project (Collaborative Cash Delivery Network)

This Collaborative Cash Delivery Network-led initiative addressed inefficiencies in due diligence processes that can inadvertently restrict local actors' access to humanitarian funding. In many cases, requirements are over-engineered, duplicative and administratively burdensome, creating unnecessary barriers for capable local partners who are well placed to deliver but often constrained by complex compliance demands. The project built on previous work by Start Network through developing a harmonised due diligence assessment tool, piloted by Concern Worldwide in Ukraine and World Vision in Moldova and also North-west Syria. The aim was to reduce duplication, save time for local NGOs, and enable 'passporting' where agencies accept each other's due diligence rather than conducting separate assessments. Following DEC investment, the tool is being embedded within Concern Worldwide's ongoing engagement with the Alliance 2015 network and has been taken up by the Ukraine Humanitarian Forum to strengthen their DEC-funded due diligence work - extending its reach and impact beyond the original project.

Oleh*, 9, a refugee from Ukraine living in Poland, attends a school setup by the Save the Children's partner, the Unbreakable Ukraine Foundation, October, 2022.



© Paul Wu/DEC

Localisation scoping exercise

As part of its commitment to strengthening locally led humanitarian action, the DEC commissioned a scoping study to hear directly from local and national organisations leading the response in Ukraine. Rather than designing solutions externally, this exercise sought to ground future approaches in the lived experience and priorities of Ukrainian civil society organisations working on the frontlines.

Published in January 2023 and made available in both English and Ukrainian, the study identified four key areas where DEC funding could better support and accelerate locally led action: funding and financial management, capacity strengthening and organisational development, equitable partnerships, and coordination and collaboration.

The findings and recommendations informed subsequent DEC-funded localisation initiatives, particularly the Ukraine Locally Led Pooled Fund Pilot, demonstrating the DEC's commitment to centre local and national perspectives in shaping programming, rather than imposing predetermined approaches. The exercise provided foundational evidence for designing locally led funding mechanisms and partnership models.

Ukraine locally led pooled fund pilot (Start Network, hosted by>NNLPPD)

Born out of the DEC localisation scoping review and civil society advocacy, this pilot was designed to test a more accessible, locally led pooled funding mechanism. While pooled funds already operated in Ukraine, entry thresholds and compliance requirements often limited access for smaller, hyper-local organisations, despite their central role in delivering frontline humanitarian assistance. This initiative sought to address those barriers by creating a funding model intentionally designed to be more locally accessible and responsive. Co-designed with over 70 Ukrainian civil society actors, the fund was hosted by the National Network of Local Philanthropy Development (>NNLPPD) with applications reviewed by national experts. 100% of funding went directly to local NGOs for humanitarian responses including hygiene support, mental health services, housing, and education. The adapted Start Network due diligence framework avoided binary pass/fail models, instead offering organisational strengthening grants to partners not yet meeting compliance thresholds, successfully demonstrating that local actors can design, manage, and deliver pooled funding.

“**Now there's confidence in this model, and it has been replicated in other [DEC] appeals, [...] just being led by DEC members supporting local organisations to host these funds. That's a huge win. We really advocated for it. That's a systemic change that has come out of the collective initiatives.**”

Ibrahim Njuguna, Humanitarian Director CAFOD

Women practise needlework and sing Ukrainian folk songs at a DEC funded Community Safe Space for older people in eastern Ukraine, June 2024. Age International's local partner, HelpAge International, provided DEC-funded safe spaces for older residents and displaced people across the eastern regions.



© Katya Moskalyuk/Fairpicture/DEC

Pathway to practitioner: Building local capacity for trauma-informed support (CAFOD & Christian Aid)

Ukrainian humanitarian workers were not only responding to the crisis - they were living through it. Many were themselves displaced, working long hours in a volatile and uncertain environment while supporting their own communities and country. Alongside the operational pressures of rapid scale-up, many were also exposed to vicarious or secondary trauma as a result of their work. This initiative therefore equipped Ukrainian humanitarian workers with skills to provide trauma-informed, sustainable support to people affected by war, displacement, and chronic stress. Since late 2023, over 130 practitioners across four cities completed intensive modular training co-developed with Ukrainian trainers and psychosocial specialists. The programme combined global best practices with culturally grounded care approaches, supported by a digital learning platform for blended learning and peer exchange.

Participants reported increased confidence in responding to trauma and recognising secondary stress. A final learning report and toolkit has been shared sector-wide to inform future localisation of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) initiatives in Ukraine and beyond.

Strengthening local response capacities - Romania (ActionAid & Plan International)

In a context where displacement and prolonged uncertainty risk marginalising young people, this initiative recognised the importance of sustaining youth engagement, reinforcing agency and affirming youth leadership in shaping the “day after” the conflict. In Romania, a key refugee-hosting country, youth-led and youth-serving organisations were often among the most proximate and trusted actors supporting displaced young people, yet many lacked the flexible resources and institutional support needed to sustain and scale their contribution. By strengthening youth-led and youth-serving organisations in Romania, the programme ensured that young people were not only recipients of support, but active contributors to inclusive humanitarian action for displaced Ukrainians. Through flexible microgrants, mentorship, and tailored training, the programme supported 18 local civil society organisations and informal youth groups on financial management, safeguarding, psychosocial first aid, and working with displaced communities. A Political Economy Analysis and national consultations with over 50 stakeholders mapped civil society actors and capacity-building opportunities. The project established a network of peer mentors and delivered mental health support for NGO staff and volunteers, laying groundwork for longer-term investment in youth-led leadership and offering a model for inclusive localisation in countries hosting people displaced from Ukraine.

SPRAVA : Shifting power for resilience and value of local actors (Action Against Hunger, Age International & ActionAid)

In a protracted crisis context such as Ukraine, where national resources are increasingly prioritised for defence and international assistance may fluctuate over time, the strength and sustainability of national civil society is critical. Ukrainian civil society organisations are not only central to the current humanitarian response but will remain essential long after international aid architecture scales down. Investing in their institutional resilience and leadership is therefore both an immediate and long-term priority.

This initiative addressed root causes of obstacles facing Ukrainian civil society through partner-developed, partner-driven, partner-led capacity strengthening. It focused on training of trainers, peer-to-peer learning, and small-scale grants, with topics selected by partners and local responders at the forefront of the response in Ukraine. The initiative included a peer-to-peer learning forum where civil society representatives hosted capacity-sharing sessions for small-scale and grassroots organisations. By fostering local solutions from local actors themselves, SPRAVA moved beyond participation buzzwords toward genuine powershifting, supporting Ukrainian civil society to grow through approaches that prioritised local leadership and decision-making.

Empowering schools: Child protection and safeguarding (Plan International & World Vision)

Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe, has been hosting refugees from Ukraine, and schools have played a critical role in absorbing increased demand while operating within already stretched systems. Strengthening child protection and safeguarding within the education sector was therefore both timely and strategic. This initiative enhanced understanding of child protection and safeguarding in Moldovan schools, updating referral pathways, mechanisms, policies, and procedures. The project fostered collaboration between schools, service providers (health, psychosocial support), and local authorities to create functional networks ensuring safer, more inclusive educational environments. Students from both Ukraine and Moldova benefited from improved protection systems. Working with the Child Rights Information Centre, the initiative strengthened institutional capacity to respond to safeguarding concerns and established coordinated approaches between education and protection sectors.

Flexible funding mechanism for women's rights organisations in Ukraine (Oxfam & ActionAid)

As Ukraine moves further into a protracted phase of crisis and recovery, locally rooted leadership becomes ever more important. Women-led and women's rights organisations are often at the forefront of responding to protection risks, gender-based violence and the needs of marginalised communities, while also advocating for more inclusive policies and social cohesion. In a context where public systems remain under strain, strengthening these organisations is critical to sustaining community-based support and advancing a more equitable recovery. The Women's Humanitarian Leadership Fund (WHLF) provided flexible funding to 12 diverse Women's Rights Organisations (WROs) in Ukraine, including groups working with Roma women, LGBTQIA+ communities, women with disabilities, survivors of violence, and rural women. Inspired by Oxfam's Women's Rights Fund (recognised as Overall Winner at the 2025 UK Charity Awards), the initiative offered tailored grants and capacity-strengthening through accompaniment, allowing WROs to cover core costs, strengthen systems, and advance community-led responses shaped by lived experience. The fund simplified due diligence, reduced reporting burdens, shifted decision-making power to local feminist actors, and included co-designed capacity strengthening with the Gender Bureau. A joint learning agenda generated evidence on flexible funding and feminist partnership models in crisis settings.

Staff from DEC charity Plan International and their partner, the Polish Migration Forum (PFM), stand together at the Warsaw Multicultural Centre in Poland, where refugees from Ukraine have received support through DEC-funded programmes, March 2025.



RISE: Refugee integration through support and employment (International Rescue Committee & Save the Children)

In the early stages of the crisis, neighbouring countries demonstrated remarkable generosity at both system and community levels in welcoming refugees from Ukraine. As displacement has become more protracted and public resources increasingly stretched, however, the focus has shifted from emergency reception to longer-term social and economic integration - with growing pressures on labour markets and social services. Against this backdrop, this initiative assessed barriers and pathways for refugees from Ukraine, particularly youth, to access sustainable livelihoods in Poland through employment or entrepreneurship. With the percentage of refugees planning to return significantly decreased nearly three years into the conflict, social and economic integration became increasingly important. The research examined multiple barriers including language proficiency gaps, caregiving responsibilities, skills mismatch, limited skills recognition procedures, inadequate information on employment policies, and lack of social and financial capital. The study identified ways forward for refugees to secure sustainable economic opportunities in their host country, with results informing programming for refugee integration and livelihoods support.

COLLECTIVE INITIATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

Navigating mental health challenges for Ukrainian men and boys (Plan International & CARE International)

Plan International Romania conducted a research project funded through the DEC Collective Initiatives in July 2024 that took place in 4 countries under the Ukraine Crisis Response (Ukraine, Romania, Poland, Moldova), in collaboration with the Federation of Non-government Organisations for Children (FONPC) and CARE International. The aim was to understand how the armed conflict in Ukraine has affected men and adolescent boys specifically, what mental health and psychosocial support services are available to them and to explore potential next steps. The specific objectives of this research were to understand the extent of mental health services utilised by Ukrainian men and boys inside Ukraine and in Romania, Moldova and Poland, as well as to understand the barriers, either structural or cultural, to men and boys accessing this help. The research also looked to understand men and boys' perspectives and perceptions about their mental health needs and the services available, and what actions they propose for government structures, civil society and other service providers to better manage their own health needs. This research had a participatory approach, co-creating the methodology tools and validating the research findings together with Ukrainian youth experts.

The key insight from the research was that Ukrainian adolescent boys and young men experience significant psychological distress, disrupted family dynamics, fractured peer networks, and barriers to mental health services, while employing both positive and maladaptive coping mechanisms. Resilience emerged as the most prominent finding in the research. However, stakeholders must take immediate action to mitigate the impact of male trauma and prioritise mental health in both humanitarian and national agendas by expanding gender sensitive, accessible, youth-friendly services, as well as combating stigma, enhancing coordination, addressing intersectional needs, and investing in capacity building to effectively support Ukrainian adolescent boys and young men.

The study concluded that male trauma and its implications for individuals and communities must be better understood to inform treatments and support programming. Building on the research findings, DEC partners have used the research recommendations in their subsequent projects, aiming to also focus on mental health wellbeing for boys and young men.

Plan International's mobile units, made up of a social worker, educator and therapist, travelled to different refugee centres, accommodation centres and other locations throughout the response to provide psychosocial support and informal education activities. They deliver on demand MHPSS services to adolescents dealing with challenges such as feelings of guilt about leaving Ukraine, a lack of social networks and support, and pressures encountered online. Plan International has also been training teachers and staff in specialist areas such as disability and quality inclusion for the provision of MHPSS.

CASE STUDY

Marina, a therapist and Ukrainian refugee, became an integral part of a mobile unit in Moldova run by CNPAC, a partner of Plan International. Throughout the refugee response, she has dedicated herself to offering essential mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) sessions for both children and adults. Marina's work extends across various regions of Moldova, where she addresses the profound impacts of the war on youth. Through her expertise and compassionate approach, she plays a crucial role in helping individuals cope with the psychological challenges stemming from displacement and conflict, fostering resilience and healing within the communities she serves.

"The feelings [we experience] are very difficult because for two years, our cities have been bombed, and our country has been non-stop bombed. Infrastructure is damaged, people are dying and houses are ruined. The psyche of people who are still living in Ukraine is also ruined. And those who have left also deal with significant stress.[...]"

For a child, there are significant psychological consequences of seeing war in action. Children from Ukraine often see or listen to information about the war. And in turn, they absorb this aggression, the aggression of other people. They have to cope with these feelings, and this can be reflected in their behaviour, most often with their families.

I would like to thank those people who, for a very long period of time, have offered support to those of us who have fled from Ukraine, when we didn't know what to do.

Marina, January 2024

Marina, a therapist and Ukrainian refugee, has become an integral part of the CNPAC mobile unit in Moldova, a partner of Plan International.



MEMBER CHARITY INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING



Anastasia* demonstrates one of the specially equipped taxis her new business will soon provide for people with disabilities in Mykolaiv, Ukraine, June 2024. She and her business partner received a small business grant from a local partner of DEC charity Oxfam.

SHIFT: Sustainable humanitarian innovation for transformation

Led by the Humanitarian Leadership Academy and running from March 2022 to August 2025, SHIFT explored a new programme model focused on driving systemic change within the humanitarian sector. Delivered mainly by Save the Children UK entities and partners, it included leadership development, research, social enterprise innovation, shared approaches to cash delivery, and analytical work. Its overarching aim was to strengthen the capacity of local civil society organisations and shift greater power and leadership to local actors in humanitarian response. The evaluation found that SHIFT strengthened skills, built networks, produced practical tools for more equitable partnerships (including shared due diligence and cash capacity approaches), amplified

local voices, and piloted innovative models such as social enterprise investment. Different organisations benefitted in varying ways depending on their stage of development.

Ukraine online database platform

Led by Christian Aid in partnership with other DEC members and Philanthropy in Ukraine, this project ran from March 2024 to March 2025. The Ukraine Online Database Platform was a further initiative responding to the localisation scoping study. The study had highlighted that local partners and networks lacked visibility, access to resources, and a central “one-stop shop” to connect with information and opportunities. The platform soft-launched in September 2024 with an initial website, resource centre, blogs, capacity strengthening activities, and research products, before its full launch in February 2025.

“ [The] Due diligence clearing platform that is locally led...came out of a collective initiative and is now being used widely in Ukraine, making inroads into a systemic issue within the aid system around making things easier for local agencies.”

Ibrahim Njuguna, Humanitarian Director - CAFOD

SHARED SERVICES

Shared Services were DEC secretariat-commissioned projects and initiatives designed to address wider system-level gaps or challenges that could not be tackled by individual member charities alone.

Due diligence harmonising

The Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal became a turning point for discussions on due diligence. The unprecedented scale of funding and mobilisation of over 100 national and local partners brought long-standing challenges into sharp focus - including duplication, complexity, and disproportionate or inadequate requirements. In practice, multiple overlapping due diligence processes were often over-engineered and placed significant strain on local partners, undermining delivery efforts, organisational capacity and access to funding.

In response, a DEC-funded initiative was established to rethink and reform due diligence requirements, aiming to reduce unnecessary burdens while maintaining essential safeguarding and accountability standards. As part of this effort, ActionAid, in collaboration with the Ukrainian NGO Platform, undertook a study on due diligence harmonisation processes. The research mapped and assessed existing initiatives and tools designed to streamline requirements and improve Ukrainian civil society organisations' access to international partnerships and funding.

Perception surveys

The DEC Secretariat partnered with **Ground Truth Solutions** to conduct regular, independent perception surveys capturing the views of crisis-affected people in Ukraine. These surveys provided DEC members and their partners with a real-time pulse check on the relevance, timeliness and quality of relief items and essential services, helping to ensure the response remained aligned with the priorities of affected communities.

²⁰ <https://spherestandards.org/humanitarian-standards/>



Dzvenyslava* (L), Adriana* (C) and Solomiia* (R) attend a vocational training class run by DEC charity Oxfam in Mykolaiv, Ukraine, June 2024.

CDAC (Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities) Network supported collective approaches to community engagement and two-way communication, helping partners strengthen accountability to affected populations across the response.

Translation of Sphere humanitarian standards

To strengthen the overall quality and accountability of the response, the DEC supported the translation of the **Sphere humanitarian standards**, the globally recognised minimum standards that underpin emergency humanitarian action, into Ukrainian and other regional languages.²⁰ This strategic investment ensured that local humanitarian agencies, many responding to a crisis of this scale for the first time, could understand the global minimum standards and contextualise them within their own response settings. The initiative was delivered by the DEC Secretariat in partnership with Aktion Deutschland Hilft, Japan Platform and Swiss Solidarity, reinforcing a shared commitment to quality across the response.

Innovative programmes highlighted in the sector

ActionAid hosted a Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week (HNPW) event in March 2025 exploring how due diligence and compliance requirements shape localisation practice in the Ukraine response, and the tensions these can create for local partners.

The Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD) Network seeded the creation of a global community of practice on due diligence harmonisation, now hosted by ICVA following the CCD project's closure in February 2025. The launch event attracted over 250 participants, with more than 800 registering interest in following the community's work.

Oxfam's feminist approach to funding, originally developed in another context, was adapted for the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal in partnership with ActionAid, channelling resources directly to twelve women's rights organisations.

CHALLENGES



Oleksandra*, takes part in a DEC funded vocational training class in tailoring run by DEC charity Oxfam, southern Ukraine, June 2024.

Security

Throughout the response, the security situation in Ukraine continued to deteriorate, particularly in southern and eastern Ukraine, which have continued to experience attacks. The increased use of drones has had serious consequences for civilians. Homes, hospitals and community centres have been damaged, disrupting daily life and essential services and placing families at risk. The most insecure areas of eastern and southern Ukraine continued to be primary targets. DEC member teams and their partners continued to operate during frequent air raids, assisting communities to evacuate or take shelter during attacks.

Access restrictions, damaged infrastructure, and fluctuating electricity supplies affected the operations of teams but were mitigated by flexible scheduling, remote work arrangements, and the use of EcoFlow energy systems and generators during power outages.

Mobilisation

The conscription of men into Ukraine's military forces was reported to impact DEC member charity partner staff wellbeing – both of men anticipating conscription and women whose husbands, sons and brothers were affected. Mobilisation also posed as a business continuity risk to operational delivery and constrained the movement of male staff around the country in the execution of their duties. Recruitment in frontline areas such as Kharkiv was particularly intense. Some partners were granted “critical entity” from the Ukrainian government, but the process was lengthy and likelihood of success was often unknown.

Staff wellbeing

Operating under the conditions of conflict for a prolonged period created a significant risk of staff burnout, trauma, and emotional strain. DEC members and their partners continued to roll out burnout prevention strategies and wellbeing measures throughout the appeal to address this, including flexible wellbeing vouchers, staff welfare budgets, the introduction of the Community Resilience Models, regular wellbeing meetings and psychosocial support, including bespoke training and support for teams who are regularly visiting frontline, and high-risk environments.

DEC CEO Saleh Saeed (C-R) visits a Rapid Response team from the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, partner organisation of DEC charity British Red Cross, during a training exercise in Odesa, Ukraine, January 2023.

Contraction of funding

The withdrawal of USAID funding at the beginning of 2025 put a lot of pressure on partners and services, with activities suddenly being stopped or delayed. DEC members supported partners to implement contingency plans to mitigate disruptions for communities and have worked alongside them to diversify income streams and alternative models.



© Maciek Musialek/Arete/DEC

HOW THE DEC IMPROVED HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME DELIVERY



DEC staff visit a centre in Bucharest where refugees from Ukraine receive financial support for medical treatments provided by DEC charity CAFOD and their local partner JRS in Romania, June 2022

Being accountable to communities

DEC member charities adhere to the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) that centre the rights and dignity of affected communities and outlines essential commitments for quality and accountability in humanitarian action. DEC members delivered training to partners to enhance understanding and practical application of CHS principles in daily work, to strengthen accountability to affected populations, and ensure higher quality and more coordinated humanitarian responses. Through peer-to-peer learning and exchange, accountability to affected populations was continually strengthened throughout the response.

Through collaboration with local authorities and peer organisations, DEC members enhanced transparency and credibility, ensuring that accountability was not confined to individual projects but embedded within a broader ecosystem of trust and co-ordination

across the humanitarian response. Activities were determined through ongoing needs assessments and feedback mechanisms to ensure programming remained relevant and responsive. All partners implemented accessible, multi-channel systems for collecting and responding to participant feedback. These included QR codes, online feedback forms, email, phone lines, social media, in-person consultations during activities and community-led forums. Posters and flyers explained the process and were displayed at activity sites and shared with participants, ensuring clarity on how to report abuse, misconduct, or other concerns. In response to feedback, members often adjusted the quantity and quality of items, made improvements in the distribution process, refined mental health and psychosocial support provision and identified additional needs.

Including vulnerable people

DEC members developed strategies across programmes to account for the specific needs of diverse groups. Gender considerations were central to projects, ensuring women, children and marginalised groups were not placed at any additional risk and gender-based violence risk reduction measures were integrated throughout. Taking into account the protection, exclusion and stigmatisation of at-risk groups, DEC members took a rights-based approach and sought to deliver tailored interventions for populations often overlooked in humanitarian response, such as LGBTQIA+, homeless and sex worker groups. The independent post appeal-review found that, “Gender, disability, older people and youth considerations ensured specific services for these groups as well as inclusive services for all members of affected communities.”

Romani refugees from Ukraine receiving shelter, education, language and legal support among other services from Foundation Towards Dialogue (FTD), a local partner of DEC charity Oxfam in Poland, July 2023.

For example, during the response, it was found that the Roma community faced persistent barriers to accessing healthcare. DEC charity Oxfam’s partner Voice of Romni worked to improve access to essential medical services for communities in Kryvyi Rih and Merefa of Ukraine. Through this initiative, individual consultations were provided, most addressing infectious diseases such as COVID-19 and influenza and supporting individuals to register with family doctors. Others focused on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted disease prevention, while some received assistance in obtaining medical referrals and specialist appointments. The interventions were found to have helped reduce barriers and strengthen access to primary healthcare for Roma households.



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Supporting a locally led response

DEC programmes made strong investments in community leadership and supporting Ukrainian civil society to be at the forefront of the response. The Localisation Scoping Study in 2022 sought to identify the barriers to local and national actors' participation and decision making, including access to funding and leadership in coordination forums for the response. The Alliance of Ukrainian Civil Society Organisations praised the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal for creating a "positive domino effect for localisation progress" within the wider response. Supporting actors who will remain in Ukraine following the appeal served as an effective sustainability strategy, leaving civil society greater prepared to respond to future shocks and crises.

DEC members established partnership approaches to bridge these barriers and strengthen the response by enhancing the capacity of national actors. Localisation and partnerships as a consistent focus throughout the appeal enabled rapid and tailored humanitarian response that was contextually relevant and culturally sensitive. This, in turn, enhanced the scale, quality and appropriateness of support for displaced people from Ukraine and host communities. DEC members and their partners worked closely with affected groups to co-design interventions and support their resilience.

A student takes part in a vocational training class supported by DEC member charity Oxfam in Mykolaiv city, Ukraine. The programme also provides business training and micro-grants for small businesses.



© Katya Moskalyuk/Fairpicture/DEC

Working through diverse Ukrainian partner organisations ensured that assistance was inclusive and responsive to community-identified needs. DEC members provided coordination, technical guidance, and compliance support, while partners led on programme design and delivery, drawing on their local knowledge, trust, and networks. This model enabled effective targeting of those most at risk—including women, older people, persons with disabilities, Roma communities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people in frontline or de-occupied areas. Through these inclusive and partner-led approaches, programmes reached people who are often left behind in large-scale responses, demonstrating that locally rooted delivery is key to identifying and meeting the evolving needs of vulnerable populations in Ukraine and across the regional response.

Partners were supported to lead in their fields, such as co-chairing the Cash Working Group and NGO Forum for Polish civil society organisations (CSOs). DEC members focused on training local staff and increasing their numbers in leadership roles.

DEC member Christian Aid's Survivor and Community-Led Response (SCLR) approach was evaluated independently as being "transformative" and also "making a meaningful contribution to community resilience". As one SCLR group member in Kharkiv noted, it "filled the missing pieces", ensuring assistance was not only additive but strategically positioned to address unmet needs. By working with communities so they could design and lead their own responses, SCLR not only meets immediate needs but also supports long-term recovery and resilience.



Community-led, trusted, and impactful"

Independent evaluation of Christian Aid's DEC programme in Ukraine, Crest Point for Consultancy and Development (CPCD), May 2025.



One of the things we did with the DEC Ukraine appeal in our mainstream programme was to use it as an opportunity to scale up our community-led response approaches. We give small grants to community groups, through our partners, who then design and deliver their own programmes, to try and enable more power to be shifted to community groups and more agency amongst communities to lead their own recovery."

Michael Mosselmans, Humanitarian Director Christian Aid



Women from Ukraine living in a host community in Moldova sign registration forms to receive DEC-funded food & hygiene kits provided by Action Against Hunger and their local partner in eastern Moldova, August 2022.

© Andreea Campeanu/DEC

Coordination

Strong coordination is critical in a response, particularly on the scale of the Ukraine humanitarian crisis. The UN- and government-led coordination structures were key throughout. This included the humanitarian "cluster system" - a coordination mechanism that brings together organisations working in the same sector (such as health, shelter or food) to plan, contextualise global standards to local contexts, share information and avoid duplication.

DEC members and their partners actively participated in these coordination mechanisms at all levels, engaging in clusters as well as with national agencies, government departments and local authorities. Coordinating cash assistance across Ukraine and neighbouring countries was also vital for accountability and transparency. Members and their partners took part in working groups and de-duplication processes to prevent overlap and ensure assistance reached those most in need.

Key examples

In Poland, DEC member International Rescue Committee promoted multi-stakeholder engagement and knowledge transfer to public sector actors, collaborating with the Regional Chamber of Commerce and local Labour Offices to ensure livelihood programming will have continued success beyond the appeal response. DEC member ActionAid has co-chaired Ukraine's NGO Platform's Localisation Task Force, sharing expertise from other contexts and advancing locally led and accountable humanitarian action.

The DEC brought members and their partners together for a series of online and in-person coordination, learning and reflection workshops in Ukraine and in the neighbouring countries throughout the appeal. These exercises promoted knowledge sharing and made improvements to the response over time, based on key learnings, findings and recommendations to real-time response reviews. DEC coordination complements existing coordination structures and mechanisms across the wider humanitarian operation, providing a unique environment for DEC funded programmes to be discussed at organisational and community level.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding against harm to children and vulnerable adults at all stages of implementation and all organisational levels is a core requirement of DEC programming. During a rapid scale up of humanitarian operations, meeting this core requirement necessitates clear policy, procedures, organisational commitment and oversight, performance management, robust partner support, community engagement and rapid and effective response to safeguarding reports.

Safeguarding involves preventing harm, enabling people to raise concerns, and responding effectively when issues arise. DEC members worked with over 208 local and national partners throughout this response and rolled out regular training, accompaniment support for policy development and monitoring, adherence and assessment against standards. As part of the Ukraine response, DEC member charities appointed full-time safeguarding staff at country level to ensure context specific safeguarding delivery, and the roll out of training to staff and volunteers in local languages. Awareness raising materials for communities were developed and made available in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and Romanian, and adapted for diverse audiences to be accessible for children, people with disabilities, and older people. Reporting channels were provided in local languages with trained staff. For its response with refugees from Ukraine in Poland, Age International implemented a hotline for raising complaints operated by experienced Ukrainian speaking staff members with confidentiality measures put in place.

As the response evolved, partners were further supported to conduct partner-led safeguarding risk assessments and further strengthen overall safeguarding systems. These efforts have led to a significant increase in partner awareness and a notable shift in organisational culture. As a result, safeguarding risks have been well understood and effectively managed across the response.

Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) was another key area of programming.²² Strengthening capacity in this area required supporting the establishment of community-based complaints and feedback mechanisms, awareness raising throughout community centres and project locations, close monitoring and organisational strengthening. DEC members provided oversight and accompaniment support to ensure mechanisms were strong and partners were prepared and trained to conduct investigations.

Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub (Eastern Europe)

As part of the Ukraine response, the DEC provided funding to the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub to produce contextualised technical resources and expert support. This initiative provided practical safeguarding resources for organisations and individuals responding to the Ukraine conflict, aiming to reduce harm to refugees and displaced people, and were provided in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and Romanian. Resources included training, webinars, guidance materials and advisory support. The Safeguarding and Resource and Support Hub is an established and trusted resource on safeguarding in the sector, and this funding allowed them to provide timely, contextualised support to the sector as the Ukrainian response experienced a rapid scale-up. Although DEC funding concluded in 2023, the resources remain available online, including the Safeguarding Essentials pack, which outlines practical and manageable steps to ensure appropriate protection measures are in place.

Adaptive programming

The DEC is a flexible funder which enables programmes to remain responsive and adaptable to evolving contexts. This was crucial in the Ukraine response, with ongoing attacks, constant population movements and legislative changes across neighbouring countries meaning that operational procedures had to adapt. Over the course of the appeal, emergency response was balanced with long-term resilience-building through the co-design of community-led approaches and ongoing technical accompaniment from DEC members. With continued evacuations from frontline oblasts, the DEC modality was found to be fit for purpose for enabling the re-direction of humanitarian assistance to meet the life-saving needs of communities. A flexible funding study has explored this approach across multiple DEC appeals, evidencing learning and results to influence the sector to maximise the impact of humanitarian programmes.²¹

“**By prioritising flexible funding, partnership-based delivery and member autonomy, the DEC created an enabling environment in which locally led approaches could develop and strengthen over time.**”

IOD-PARC, Post-Appeal Review, independent evaluation of DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal

²¹ Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) refers to efforts aimed at preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly in humanitarian and development contexts. It encompasses measures to protect individuals from abuse, ensure their rights are upheld, and provide necessary support and resources. PSEA involves any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting from the sexual exploitation of another.

²² DEC Flexible Funding report - Final Version.pdf [https://www.dec.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/2026-02/DEC%20Flexible%20Funding%20report%20-%20Final%20Version.pdf]



Anastasia, a volunteer art teacher supported by World Vision helps children with art therapy in art therapy in Moldova, February 2023.

Learning and improving

Continuous learning and improvement are integral to the DEC's approach. Throughout the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, independent reviews were commissioned at key milestones to assess performance, examine strategic innovations, and identify lessons. Findings were used both to inform corrective action during the response itself and to strengthen the design and delivery of future appeals. This structured reflection reinforces accountability, enhances quality and partnerships, and advances the DEC's commitment to more effective and locally led humanitarian action.

Real-Time Review (2022-2023) This review assessed the DEC's initial response across DEC members working in Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Moldova, and Hungary. It found members delivering effectively in difficult circumstances, primarily through local partners, though most faced slow deployment (except those previously in-country). The review recommended maintaining DEC's flexible funding and partnership approach while enhancing contingency planning, establishing direct funding mechanisms for local organisations, strengthening learning-sharing across members, and supporting coordination among local civil society.

Dual Response Strategy Reviews (2023-2025) The DEC commissioned midline (2023-2024) and endline (2025) reviews to assess its strategic innovation: allocating additional funds

beyond standard programming to four streams (Regional Initiatives, Collective Initiatives, and Shared Services) aimed at innovation, new partnerships, and systems change in localisation and safeguarding. The midline review, conducted two years into implementation, found the strategy successfully expanding DEC's programming range with most initiatives representing incremental change from business-as-usual. Early successes included new partnerships, capacity strengthening reaching significant numbers, and uptake of Ground Truth Solutions research, though challenges emerged around poor understanding of strategy elements, limited member communication, and delayed decision-making. The endline review found outcomes had matured with the strategy achieving meaningful departure from business-as-usual approaches through sustained partnerships and expanded priority programming.

Post-Appeal Review (January 2026) This comprehensive review of the £446.3 million appeal from March 2022 to August 2025 focused on localisation and partnerships. It found the DEC's flexible funding enabled both rapid scale-up and progressive shift toward locally led approaches. Local and national partners described DEC members as respectful, trust-based collaborators using accompaniment and mentoring rather than traditional capacity building. The review concluded that meaningful localisation is achievable in large-scale emergencies, with locally led delivery producing more accessible and culturally appropriate support for affected populations.

Environment

The ongoing conflict is having huge effects on the environment of Ukraine. The destruction of Kakhovka dam drained the reservoir and affected local land and farmland causing destruction to ecosystems. Widespread destruction caused by missile and drone attacks place strain on the natural environment across the country, destroying ecosystems and food systems, and has led to more pollution and emissions and a decline in air quality.

DEC programmes remained cognisant of their own potential impact on the environment through their activities. Through environmental do-no-harm checklists, and implementation of environmental policies, DEC charities assessed their interventions and devised mitigation measures to ensure green workspaces, green procurement and supply chains, green travel and green programming. For DEC charity Concern Worldwide, along with

other members, the use of electronic cash transfers reduced their programme’s carbon footprint. This digital modality reduced the need for transportation of in-kind items and paper-based transactions, supporting a low-emission operational model.

Environmental sustainability was integrated into humanitarian response also through awareness raising and education and the responsible use of natural resources. DEC charity ActionAid’s partner STAN organised permaculture camps for young people to promote sustainable living practices. Within the Ivano-Frankivsk region, the camps blended psychosocial recovery with ecological principles and mindfulness through a deep connection with nature. Participants took part in collective planting, observation of natural systems and reflective exercises that fostered grounding, calm and a renewed sense of vitality.

The dried up Kakhovka Reservoir in Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine following the Kakhovka Dam collapse in June 2023.



© Ukrainian Red Cross Society
Emergency Response Teams from the Ukrainian Red Cross assist people evacuated after severe flooding caused by the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam in Ukraine on 6 June 2023.



© Ukrainian Red Cross Society
Hundreds of people were evacuated from Kherson Oblast, including many with limited mobility, thanks to the joint efforts of the Ukrainian Red Cross Emergency Response Teams volunteers, the State Emergency Service, and the National Police.

LOOKING AHEAD

\$524 billion

Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery needs²³

over the next decade to recover from conflict-related damage and rebuild to resilient, low-carbon standards.

\$1 trillion

long-term estimates for Ukraine's recovery²⁴

At a meeting of the Ukraine Donor Platform during the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC-2025) in Rome, former Ukrainian prime minister Denys Shmyhal stated that full reconstruction and modernisation could reach up to \$1 trillion over 14 years, reflecting not only rebuilding, but long-term economic transformation and integration with the EU.

Throughout the DEC appeal, programmes combined emergency assistance with long-term recovery, inclusion, and community development, ensuring both immediate relief and sustainable

impact. DEC's partners were supported in developing plans for rapid response beyond the DEC appeal and a range of capacity strengthening initiatives enhanced their organisations across a range of departments.

As part of the programme's responsible exit and transition strategies, with the closure of DEC programmes, DEC members ensured that interventions were absorbed by government actors through strong partnerships and an acceleration of knowledge sharing in the final year of the appeal. There continues to be a high demand for services and therefore planning with local institutions was crucial so that communities can continue to be supported.

Many DEC members remain active in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, maintaining strong partnership and localisation commitments and pursuing further funding opportunities with their partners. Recovery and rehabilitation to energy, heating, electricity and water services will be critical over the coming months and years, as well as addressing the impact of trauma and mental health and psychosocial support needs.

²³ World Bank Ukraine - Fourth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA4): February 2022 - December 2024.

²⁴ Ukraine presents concept for creating two funds worth USD 1 trillion for reconstruction and modernisation: Prime Minister | Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, July 2025 <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/ukraina-prezentuie-kontseptsiu-stvorennia-dvokh-fondiv-obsiahom-1-trln-dolariv-dlia-vidbudovy-ta-modernizatsii-derzhavy-premier-ministr>

Local residents without electricity receive regular deliveries of firewood from Depaul Ukraine, local partner of DEC charity CAFOD, helping them survive harsh winters without risking their lives searching for fuel in forests littered with mines.



© Depaul Ukraine

EXAMPLES OF EXIT AND TRANSITION STRATEGIES

Age International

DEC members shared learnings across their programmes for responsible transition away from DEC funding. In Moldova, Age International's exit strategy was implemented across three pillars. Activities were aligned for integration with national systems; capacity strengthening for staff and training on standards and the minimum quality requirements for services was delivered within the RACs along with communication skills essential for working in sensitive, multicultural environments. Local actors were also trained in safeguarding and case management. The third pillar was ensuring social cohesion: with a design for 30% of assistance going to vulnerable Moldovans alongside refugees from Ukraine to reduce tensions and encourage mutual acceptance that will last beyond external humanitarian aid. As DEC programming came to a close, partners were better equipped to lead activities and integrate learnings from the response into ongoing service delivery.

In Ukraine, DEC member Age International established peer-to-peer groups in each Community Safe Space that continue to be supported by local authorities and civil society. These groups continue to provide assistance to the most vulnerable older people, including those who are housebound and unable to attend services in person.

Oxfam

From the outset, Oxfam's Ukraine humanitarian response was designed as a time-bound intervention, with the intention of shifting leadership and resources to local actors. In line with this, Oxfam developed a responsible exit strategy to conclude its presence in Ukraine by August 2026, building on lessons from earlier phase-outs in Moldova, Romania, and Poland. These demonstrated that early, transparent communication and tailored support plans are critical for sustainability.

Save the Children

In the north and west Ukraine, formal Memorandums of Understanding between DEC member Save the Children and regional administrations - covering Khmelnytska, Vinnytska, Zakarpatska, Ivano-Frankivska, and Chernivetska Oblasts - helped institutionalise cooperation and align project activities with local development priorities. This approach promoted the integration of programme outcomes into existing local systems and laid the foundation for continued collaboration in education, child protection, and livelihoods sectors. Overall, by prioritising localisation and investing in partner capacity strengthening, the programme contributed to a more resilient and empowered local response network, capable of sustaining impact and addressing evolving community needs beyond the programme's closure.

CAFOD

In the third year since the full-scale invasion, DEC member CAFOD supported its partner Depaul Ukraine (DPU) to carry out an organisational wide self-assessment (using CAFOD's own Humanitarian Capacity Strengthening tool), in which DPU staff produced a graded assessment of their own capacity across different domains. Based on the assessment, CAFOD and DPU co-developed an action plan to strengthen DPU's organisational resilience. Looking beyond the project level, the action plan focuses on the organisational level - external engagement (fundraising, communications, advocacy), resource management (HR, IT) and leadership (organisational culture and learning). The action plan has since been used as the basis for a multi-year flexible capacity strengthening grant (funded through CAFOD's Ukraine Appeal). The flexible grant is a pot which DPU can draw down from to fill the gaps in their capacity identified by the self-assessment and improve their organisational resilience.

HOW THE DEC WORKS

The DEC is unique. No other organisation in the UK does what we do – bringing together 15 leading UK aid charities, institutional stakeholders, broadcasters and the public to raise funds quickly and efficiently at times of crisis overseas. It allocates appeal funds to its members and makes sure that the generous donations of the UK public are spent where the need is greatest. This means providing immediate emergency aid for communities devastated by humanitarian crises, as well as long term support to help people rebuild their lives and strengthen their resilience by working with the communities affected.

We are a trusted convenor of the UK's leading aid charities, supporting collaboration, impact and shifts in power dynamics in the aid response. We also recognise a responsibility to strengthen the collective voice of all 15 member charities, sharing our expertise and learnings to make sure we

continue to improve our highly effective sector-leading humanitarian response.

Pooling our resources to work as one, we are pivotal in co-ordinating the UK public's response to overseas disasters. Donating through the DEC is simple and effective. It removes unnecessary competition for funding between aid charities, avoids duplication, reduces administration costs and improves coordination, collaboration, and efficiency.

Our annual costs of approximately £4.6 million cover our core team and infrastructure, which is needed year-round to ensure we can function effectively to prepare, assess, launch, evaluate, report back on appeals, and deliver our core work. We operate a highly efficient model, keeping costs to a minimum. We limit our staffing levels to a core team of around 40 people. These core

costs are part-funded by member charity contributions, with the remainder coming from legacy income and a proportion of Gift Aid raised in appeals.

As part of our current 2024-2029 strategy, we are seeking to move towards a model whereby more of the core operational work of the DEC is funded by strategic donors (such as trusts & foundations, philanthropists, corporate partners, and institutional funders), maximising the funds that go to appeals and ensuring the DEC is always ready to launch effective and efficient responses and can maximise its role in strengthening the humanitarian system and improving outcomes for affected populations.

Over the past eight years, the DEC has supported communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gaza, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, Myanmar, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, the West Bank, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

Mykolaiv city in June 2024 where DEC funds have been supporting a livelihoods programme run by a local partner of DEC charity Oxfam to support residents and internally displaced people who lost their jobs due to the conflict.





DEC MEMBER CHARITIES



act:onaid

ageInternational



CAFOD
Catholic Agency for
Overseas Development



CONCERN
worldwide



Save the
Children

tearfund

World Vision

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