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Ukraine Response

The media stories of the raging conflict in Ukraine follow the themes of destruction, uncertainty, insecurity, and unimaginable suffering. All of these are true. But there are other themes that are equally true. They can be seen in the people in Ukraine, as well as those in neighbouring countries who are assisting refugees. These themes are courage, resilience, and trust in God.

ADRA Ukraine has been serving the country through its headquarters in Kyiv and three regional offices in Mariupol, Kramatorsk, and Severodonetsk. Within days of the conflict, the staff at ADRA Ukraine became part of the vulnerable people they have been working to support since the office's inception in 1993.

Artem Dikhtiaruk, the Programs Director for ADRA Ukraine, saw tanks and heard bombs dropping around his city. He sheltered with neighbours in the basement of his apartment building. "My family left, but I could not let myself go because I knew if I got in the car, I would not have internet and would not be able to work. So, I stayed, and it became

worse and worse until I realized that the city was occupied and cut off from the rest of the country," says Artem in a Zoom call with writer Heather Grbic.

Artem's dedication to ADRA's humanitarian response to this crisis is shared by hundreds more. From the first moments of the bombing, ADRA Ukraine was quick to assist the most vulnerable. Even before the war broke out, ADRA Ukraine was prepared with a database of over 300 volunteers across the country who were at the ready in the event of a humanitarian response to conflict.

In partnership with ADRA and the Hope Channel Ukraine, Ukrainian churches and volunteers organized food, water, hygiene, shelter, and convoys of supplies. Thanks to their quick response, those fleeing the violence were sheltered, fed, and transported to safe regions.

"I saw so many humanitarian cars being also just with the shelling (sic), and they were stopped on the side of the road. You can always be sure this was a humanitarian truck

[with] humanitarian aid and some of those people didn't reach – some of those humanitarian convoys didn't reach their destinations,” shares Artem.

With reports of heavy losses of life and intensive damage to critical infrastructure, priority was given to the evacuation of people to the borders of neighbouring countries like Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Moldova, and Hungary. ADRA offices in these countries partnered with local Seventh-day Adventist conferences, churches, and volunteers to provide for the refugees as they crossed the borders. Essential services such as warmth, food, water, shelter, information, a place to rest, phone charging stations, transportation to safe destinations, and trauma counselling were provided by dedicated staff and committed volunteers.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian response within Ukraine is ongoing. In the early days of the crisis, ADRA Canada joined an ADRA network response to provide unconditional cash to the most vulnerable in 10 cities in Ukraine. In a crisis such as this, when things change by the minute, cash is often the most versatile and meaningful response. The cash vouchers provided families with the means to purchase their greatest needs, while also assisting the local economy against potential collapse. In this way, the project provided baby supplies, warm clothing and blankets, water, food, and more to families.

Other responses include humanitarian convoys from neighbouring countries which truck in much-needed supplies. ADRA volunteers receive the shipments, offload them into a warehouse, and prepare them for distribution across the country.

ADRA evacuation vans are going into hotspots with essential supplies for those who are unable to evacuate. For those who can evacuate, a ride on the ADRA evacuation van takes them to safer regions. Thousands of lives have been saved through this work.

Right now, your Canadian donations are working alongside contributions from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to meet the needs of thousands in southern Ukraine, a region seeing active fighting. Your gifts are also providing for the needs of refugees who have fled to neighbouring Moldova, the country with the largest concentration of refugees per capita. These projects are reaching out to female-headed households; the elderly and disabled; pregnant and lactating women; those with chronic or severe medical conditions, including conflict-related injuries; and other highly vulnerable groups. Again, through unconditional cash vouchers, project participants are empowered to meet their most pressing needs.

These two projects, and nearly all the other ADRA-supported projects, have two additional components of trauma counselling and protection. Trauma counselling works to help survivors begin to process what they have been through, to understand where they can get additional help, and most importantly, to rebuild their inner strength to continue to face adversity and tackle problems.



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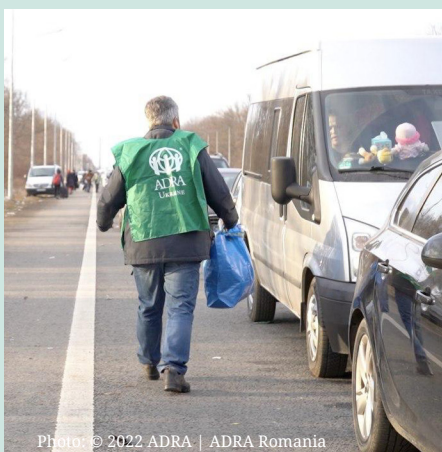


Photo: © 2022 ADRA | ADRA Romania

Women and children suffer the most during times of war. Often unable to defend themselves, they are targets for violence. Without the protection of male family members, they are also targets for human trafficking. The protection component in ADRA projects offers services to women, girls, and other vulnerable groups against abuse and exploitation to combat the risks they face. Through a hotline and referral services, victims of violence can access help and support.

During this horrific war, there are people with a razor-sharp focus on saving lives. This takes courage, resilience, and ultimately, trust in God to provide the means, the safety, and the success. Those who are suffering from the same war are also combating its devastation with love and compassion.

“There is so much damage that has been done,” says Artem. “The news cannot show everything. But the most important thing is the lives of the people, and that’s what we are focusing on, saving lives.”

You
did it!

A Purpose-Driven Concert

As soon as they heard about the war in Ukraine, Kandus Thorp and her husband, Pr. Brad Thorp, knew they had to do something to help.

Approached by her brother-in-law, Greg Thorp, with the idea, Kandus decided to help organize a fundraising concert for Ukraine in her small town of Oliver, British Columbia. "I prayed a lot about it, and I knew we needed to do it. We needed to step out in faith."

Kandus connected with ADRA to learn about its response in Ukraine. That is when she learned that ADRA has evacuation vans that enter hotspots with supplies and exit with evacuees. Excited by this opportunity to support, the team called the concert 1,000 Rides Out. A gift of \$27 would cover the cost of evacuating one person. The concert's goal was to fund 1,000 rides out of hotspots in Ukraine.

Kandus was amazed at how God provided for everything to make the concert possible. Not only did He make the concert possible in less than two weeks, but He also blessed it with success beyond Kandus' imagining.

"Gina Williams, a well-known Seventh-day Adventist musician and performer, was available at short notice to lead the concert. Local musicians were happy to headline the concert. Local businesses donated for a silent auction. All in all, we raised \$28,000!"

That's not all. The leap of faith of a small community and the Oliver and Osoyoos churches has led to more 1000 Rides Out concerts put on by church and community members.

We're so grateful to Kandus and all those involved to make this concert a reality. Your efforts have truly saved lives!



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SHARE

Your ADRA Story

We'd love to hear from people involved in ADRA's mission. Why not send us a few lines about what you and/or your group are doing?

Send 200 words, a picture* of your activities and your contact details to stayintouch@ADRA.ca.

* Digital photos should be a minimum of 3 megapixels. By sending photos and stories to ADRA you give permission for either to be published at the discretion of ADRA.

You
asked

How does ADRA respond to disasters in Canada?

When a disaster strikes in Canada, such as the recent wildfires and floods in British Columbia in 2021, the local Conferences of Seventh-day Adventists contact ADRA to help coordinate a response. ADRA partners with the conference, local churches, and volunteers to respond in a meaningful, timely, and efficient way. These projects can include using church facilities as resilience centres, shelters, or for distribution of food, water, and other essentials.

ADRA is a standing member of the National Emergency Consortium of Canada and an active member of provincial non-governmental organization (NGO) alliances, involving various organizations across the country. These two memberships entail joining provincial emergency response debriefings, where ADRA offers its expertise and capacity in response efforts. Through our collaboration and engagement with these provincial emergency response teams, ADRA received the mandate to manage in-kind donations after disasters, such as after the wildfires in Alberta in 2016 and in British Columbia in 2021.

ADRA also aims to be ready for disasters before they strike. Through disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, and psycho-social support training and seminars, ADRA prepares volunteers across the country to be ready to respond to the next disaster. To learn more about these seminars, please visit ADRA.ca/volunteer-in-emergencies.



Photo: © 2021 ADRA | Michael Kirkby

Gender-Equal Households are Healthier and Happier

Working as a gender-equality advisor for ADRA Canada, Mahider Yeshaw sees the negative impact of women's responsibilities as caregivers on their physical and mental health. The single mother faces her own domestic obligations at the end of her workday, with an exhausting "second shift" looking after her home and 3 children.

"Caregiving is a universal phenomenon: it affects every woman," says Yeshaw. At home, she's "socializing" her 12-year-old son to participate in such household tasks, she says, "to break generationally perpetuated norms" that women and girls do more care work. "Now he's able to cook, he's able to clean, he's able to do laundry and fold clothes," she reports.

ADRA Canada employs much of the same strategy in many of its 57 projects in Canada and overseas designed to help people lift themselves out of poverty. Yeshaw says getting men to share in caregiving duties and ensuring a "fair distribution of unpaid care work" is important to the organization's programming. This includes projects that focus on everything from water and sanitation improvements to strengthening climate-change adaptations to enhancing sexual and reproductive health.

Women are expected to fulfill 3 roles, Yeshaw explains. These include a productive role that is generating income for the household; a reproductive role, including child-rearing and unpaid care duties; and a community role, where they contribute to the community voluntarily.

Yeshaw, who grew up in Ethiopia and came to Canada 6 years ago, settling in Toronto, says that countering these rigid and complex gender dynamics requires different strategies. These include making services accessible to women and showing men the benefits of sharing household tasks and decision-making with their partners.

Women who get help at home benefit emotionally and physically, Yeshaw says. "They have time for self-development, they can extend their education, they can go out and work," she explains. "Gender-equal households are healthier and happier."



Ukraine Crisis

The war in Ukraine has devastated homes, displaced families, and taken lives. Please continue to keep the Ukraine crisis in your prayers. Please pray that those caught in the crisis will be kept safe, that God will provide for their needs, and fill them with the reassurance of His mighty presence with them. Please also pray for those responding to the crisis by meeting the many humanitarian needs. May they be blessed with safety, wisdom, and means to continue to save lives. Finally, please pray for peace. May God bless world leaders with abundant wisdom and guidance, and may He intervene to bring about a swift end to this conflict.

World Hunger

The global pandemic sharpened global hunger pangs, and now the war in Ukraine is making matters worse. Before the war, Russia and Ukraine were major exporters of food, particularly to countries already suffering from conflicts, drought, and locust swarms. As the war rages on, the people of these countries are facing a lack of supply and rising food prices. Please pray that solutions and provisions can be found soon to prevent continued and worsening suffering. May God sustain and support the families facing hunger, giving them peace and confidence in Him. May He also give means to governments and organizations to bring timely, lifesaving assistance.

Conflicts

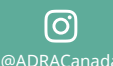
Civil and military conflicts are raging around our world. Our hearts go out to the innocent families caught in the crossfire. Please join us in praying for the end of hostilities. Please also pray that the mothers, fathers, and children swept up in these conflicts will be brought to a secure place where their needs are met with kindness and respect. May God's compassionate and caring hand be upon them in ways that they can feel and experience.

Yemen Project

Please join us in praising God for the approval of a new project in Yemen! Yemen has seen over seven years of conflict which has plunged into the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. We are so grateful to God for this opportunity to continue to meet the needs of families deeply affected by the conflict. May God bless this project so it may save lives and touch hearts with His love.



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