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Newsletter: September 2022 | [View this email in your browser](#)



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What is your programme about? Why do you assist Government? These were the common questions my team and I had been receiving over the past five years. It was not easy finding concise responses to these questions as the (Cross-Border) Capacity Building Programme had never been a traditional humanitarian or recovery programme. Unlike DRC's other programmes, my team and I helped the Government institutions in Ukraine. Before 24 February, our programme's direct beneficiaries were the Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine and its predecessor two ministries, the Ukrainian National Centre for Peacebuilding and the Mariupol City Council. Since 2016, we have strengthened the human and institutional capacities of these state institutions on developing evidence-based policies and creating holistic systems which could have a positive, long-lasting impact on conflict-affected people in Ukraine.

It will be fair to say that my team and I have built the (Cross-Border) Capacity Building Programme from scratch as we did not have global experience or expertise in this sector within the DRC. This meant that we did not have manuals which would have guided us on how to preserve the programme and ensure its implementation when the beneficiary Ministries were dismissed, and the Ministers were changed almost every year. We did not have toolkits on what to do when we were told that the leadership of the Ministry could not join our international study visit due to an urgent assignment from the Office of the President, just 24 hours before the visit. We did not have stable funding streams, as the capacity building programmes cannot produce immediate and tangible results. Such programmes require time.

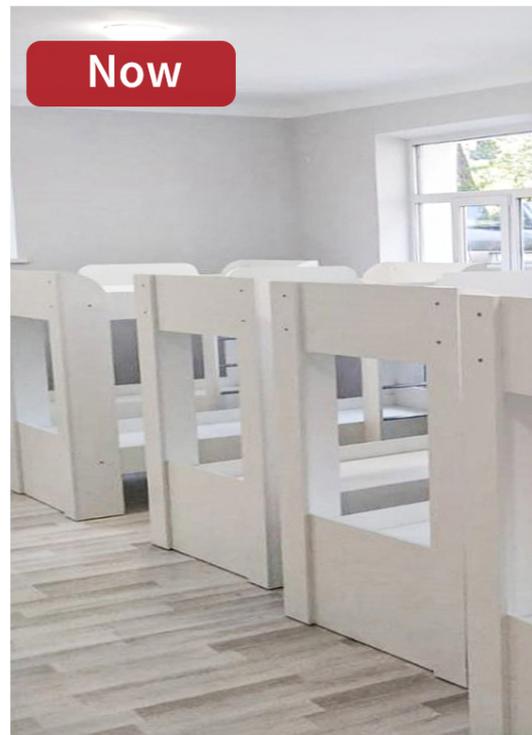
These difficulties and challenges have never discouraged me from motivating, encouraging and inspiring my team to retain trust in the great potential of our programme. We never substituted the responsibilities of the Government institutions, but we helped and supported them in producing comprehensive policies such as IDP Integration Strategy, Scoring System for Allocation of Affordable Housing, Framework for the State Monitoring System of IDPs' Integration in Ukraine, and Conceptual Framework of Peacebuilding Policy in Ukraine.

This is my last month at DRC Ukraine. In October 2017, when I took over the leadership of the Programme, one of my former colleagues told me: *'Eka, you are committing professional suicide by accepting this position and capacitating government'*. I was not then confident about what to answer. But five years later, I can proudly say that I have committed myself to a unique Programme, which has created a solid foundation to mitigate the suffering of hundreds of thousands of displaced and conflict-affected persons in Ukraine. This rewarding experience has reinforced my opinion that in conflict-affected countries, capacity building of the Government institutions is instrumental in ensuring stabilisation and peaceful transition from early recovery stages.

Eka Gvalia,
Durable Solutions Manager



Protection



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DRC supports shelters in hosting people with disabilities

Starting from the escalation of the conflict in February 2022, many Ukrainian educational institutions became shelters for internally displaced people (IDPs) from conflict-affected areas. However, the majority of schools and dormitories did not have basic facilities to accommodate people – limited access to water and hygiene utilities was one of the most crucial problems, especially for people with disabilities.

In September, DRC helped the shelter located in a school in Chernivtsi city, western Ukraine, with repairing the bathrooms and dormitories. The renovation was made according to the inclusion standards, ensuring that all the people have equal access to all the services.

Currently, the centre is accommodating 50 internally displaced persons who had to leave other school shelters because of the education year start. Access to water and hygiene services is a critical point for the vulnerable population to feel safe and comfortable in the shelters.

“I am so happy to see the bathrooms suitable for people with disabilities. It does help me not to feel excluded”, said one of the IDPs residing in the centre.

By Ivanna Tkachuk, Protection assistant, Chernivtsi



Protection: Legal Assistance



© Caritas Mariupol, Zaporizhzhia Oblast, Zaporizhzhia August 2022

Maria* is from Mariupol – a ruined city that is now non-government controlled area. Her daughter and grandchildren left the city in April, but Maria did not want to leave her home. During the active hostilities, the 82-year-old woman tried to survive in the basement of her house – but she was concussed and began to have hearing problems. Moreover, her apartment burned down along with all her personal documents.

Her daughter is now in Germany. She arranged with the volunteers to evacuate her mother to Zaporizhzhia. Maria wants to live with her daughter, but she needs a passport to cross the border with Poland, and then travel to Germany.

To resolve this issue, she turned to Caritas Mariupol for legal assistance, which is currently providing aid in Zaporizhzhia in cooperation with the DRC, thanks to the financial support of the European Union through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

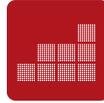
The lawyer started to solve Maria's problems at the banking institution because Maria did not receive a pension since the beginning of the hostilities in Mariupol. With Maria, the lawyer visited the bank to explain the situation, resulting in the renewal of her payment card, which allowed her to receive her pension from March.

Subsequently, the lawyer helped Maria submit documents for registering an ID card and a

passport to travel abroad. The ID card has already been received and now Maria is waiting for a passport, which will allow her to finally meet her relatives.

*Name changed for confidentiality purposes.

By Oksana Fedorova, Caritas Mariupol lawyer, Zaporizhzhia



Capacity Building



©DRC Ukraine, Uzhhorod, Zakarpattia Oblast, Mykhailo Melnychenko

The Capacity Building Programme continues its work in temporary shelters for IDPs in western Ukraine. In the shelters of five cities, IDPs, volunteers and administrative staff receive conflict-related and psychological counselling from mobile teams of mediators and psychologists.

Since June 15, the mobile teams have helped over 1200 IDPs and representatives of host communities. They have delivered 720 activities, including individual or group psychological counselling, conflict mediation, awareness-raising sessions, social and legal counselling, and art-therapy sessions.

“Thank you for your help; now I know what to do next,” “You helped us to understand our feelings and work more effectively with IDPs”, “I think that mediation is a step towards the future” – such feedback was received by the mobile teams. It proves the timeliness and advisability of interventions aimed at social cohesion and conflict prevention in the

communities affected by the conflict and migration flows.

Such activities will continue till mid-December 2022. The experience and lessons learnt from this pilot intervention will be reflected in an analytical paper and shared with the representatives of the peacebuilding community in Ukraine to improve the emergency response to the crisis.

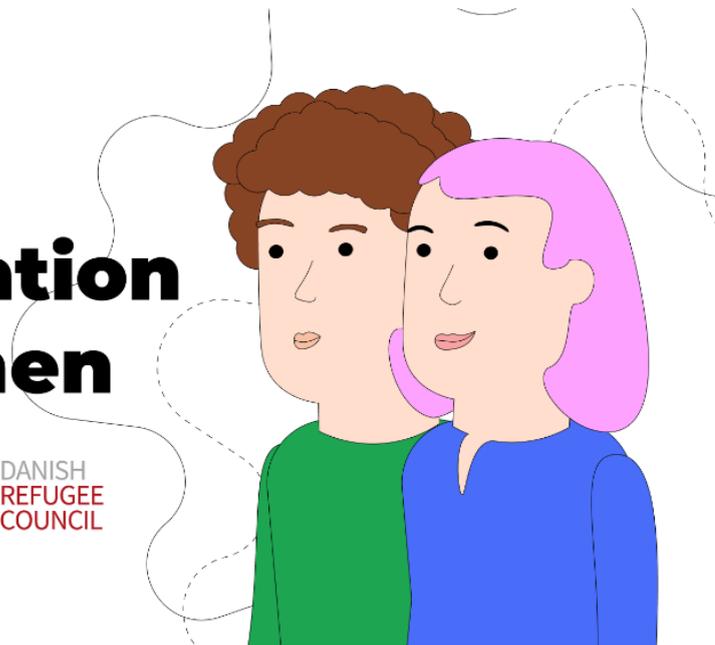
By Yuliia Demchuk, Peacebuilding Specialist, Kyiv



Economic Recovery

GO IT

IT education for women



In September, DRC launched a project “IT education for women” thanks to the generous help of the governments of Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The project has been implemented in cooperation with experienced IT mentors from the GoIT company in selecting and educating women, including those who were affected by the war. In total, we plan to graduate 130 people: 60 students should pass the Full-stack course and 70 the UI/UX design course.

This programme is aimed at providing vulnerable women with economic opportunities as the IT sector proved to be the most resilient in the face of the current context and offers both decent pay and flexibility. Before entering the programme, the applicants should go through a 2-level selection. Firstly, they will be tested on their computer literacy and capabilities to finish the course and find employment successfully. Then, they will fill in vulnerability forms and go through interviews with the DRC and implementing partner specialists.

“The programme found great interest among women. 1,052 women registered in Full-stack

development course, and 1,510 women in UI/UX Design course. However, these professions are difficult and only a few can master them. If we want participants to find jobs, we need people who can learn these skills and apply them successfully”, says Anna, GoIT Project Manager.

Currently, the participants go through the demo course, where successful candidates will continue to the next steps of the selection. A career centre is incorporated into the programme to guarantee that majority of those who passed the courses will find employment in the chosen profession and help their families become economically sustainable.

By Kristina Chopa, Economic Recovery Specialist



Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding



©DRC Ukraine, Chernihiv Oblast, Alexandra Strand Holm

The widespread presence of Explosive Ordnance (EO) in Ukraine after the conflict escalation creates devastating consequences for both individuals and society at large. Since 2018, DRC has been one of few organisations supporting survivors of EO accidents and their families – under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, which continues in 2022 as well.

One such example is Mykola* from Chernihiv Oblast, northern Ukraine. In March, the minibus he was in hit a landmine. It was just 50 meters from his home — fully destroyed by

hostilities a week after.

“The explosion came from the ground right under my feet, as I was standing up in the minibus with one other person next to me, and three seated in the front cabin. The blast affected me the most and threw me out of the minibus”, says Mykola.

Despite the free operation, Mykola needed to pay for special implants and parts to reconstruct the bones in his feet - DRC covered this expense. Inadequate medical support to survivors is one of [many challenges with Victim Assistance](#) DRC has been raising over the years.

“After months of recovery, I can walk a little now. It still hurts, but it is much better. My dream still is to become a driver”, says Mykola. Since February 2022, DRC supported 39 people with emergency items, medical assistance, improving living conditions, assistive devices, and access to education.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3dIYphY>

*Name changed for confidentiality purposes.

By Nick Vovk, Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Programme Manager, Kyiv

