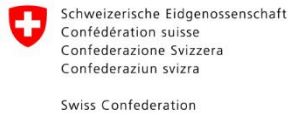


DRC



DRC Ukraine Newsletter: July 2022



@DRC Ukraine, Kramatorsk, Donetsk Oblast, 2020

Joining the DRC Ukraine Team in Humanitarian Mine Action was a milestone in my career. When years ago, the territory of my home city in eastern Ukraine was contaminated with Explosive Ordnance, I realised that my skills may be helpful, perhaps not in clearance, but in the information support of mine action programmes. This work can literally save lives and I'm proud to be a part of it.

Despite the fact that the type of job was new to me, I applied my technical skills to support DRC mine action operations. Over time, I have broadened my knowledge and used modern online tools and approaches to make operations more efficient. Every day, I process large amounts of data and I see the real results of our teams' operations — how they release step by step the cleared territories from the previous impact of explosive remnants of war. It inspires and encourages me to continue working and help as best as I can.

Writing these lines, I hope one day my dream come true — that the land of my country and my home city will be safe again — and that I will enjoy the summertime with my family and friends, with no fear about our safety, having the possibility to move freely wherever we want.

Vira Holodniak

DRC Information Management Coordinator

Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding

Currently in Denmark

Protection



©DRC Ukraine, Busk town, Lviv Oblast, 2022

In July, DRC supported the organisation of three football festivals for internally displaced children in several towns of Lviv Oblast in western Ukraine. Such activities help children to integrate into the host communities proactively. In total, six events were organised, involving more than 500 children from three western Oblasts, both newcomers to these areas and locals.

The festivals provided an opportunity for positive social interaction and help strengthen the communities' cohesion. It was amazing to see how children from different parts of Ukraine created a real team spirit and new friendship. Unfortunately, the game was interrupted by an air alarm. However, the children being used to such interferences were back on the grass with moods upbeat after 20 minutes in a shelter where they enjoyed refreshments before resuming the game.

The sports festivals were organised in cooperation with the Lviv Football Federations and the NGO Protection of Children's Rights.

By Nataliia Kunytsyna, DRC Protection Officer, Lviv

Protection: Legal Assistance



© DRC Ukraine, Dnipro city, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, Arsen Dzodzaev, 2022

In 2016, Bogdan, Lyudmila and their son Ilya moved from Horlivka, to escape what had become a Non-Government-Controlled Area, to Bakhmut in Donetsk Oblast in eastern Ukraine. After the relocation, the spouses both received certificates of being internally displaced persons (IDP), but their son Ilya was denied a certificate because the parents did not provide legally correct proof of his place of registration. In fact, for six years Ilya lived without the official IDP status – essentially depriving him of rights that would soon become crucial to his education.

In February 2022, after the Russian Federation military offensive was launched, the family once again fled, this time to Dnipropetrovsk Oblast in central Ukraine. Ilya is now 14 years old and wants to enter a vocational education college. However, in order to be eligible for benefits such as IDP payments, the possibility of accommodation in a dormitory and a simpler procedure when entering the college, it is necessary to have documentation that he holds IDP status.

In July, Ilya reached out for help and found the Bakhmut Free Legal Aid Clinic, which is supported by DRC thanks to the funding of the European Union through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. We were able to draw up an application for an IDP certificate with documents confirming Ilya's birth, residence and relocation together with his parents, first to Bakhmut and then to Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. Finally, after submitting the application with the correct package of documents, Ilya received the long-awaited IDP certificate and will now be able to enroll into the college using a simpler procedure.

By Oksana Sudak, Lawyer of Bakhmut Free Legal Aid Clinic, Kyiv

Capacity Building Programme



DRC's Capacity Building Programme now provides conflict-related and psychological counselling in temporary shelters for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Lviv, Stryi, Rivne, Uzhhorod and Mukachevo cities in western Ukraine.

The five mobile DRC teams of mediators and psychologists have visited 31 shelters, where 5,280 IDPs are hosted. They have delivered psychological counselling 48 individuals or groups, and conflict mediation sessions to internally displaced, volunteers and administrative staff of the shelters.

The mobile teams have also collected information about the urgent needs observed in the shelters. IDPs have voiced the need for food and non-food items and legal aid, whilst the staff working in the shelters have highlighted that they were often involved in disputes in the shelters, that they felt exhausted and required both short-term supportive sessions as well as long-term psychological counselling. Internally displaced people have also raised their concerns and fear of possible evictions. Many shelters are being closed in recent weeks, particularly the ones located in education system facilities, in preparation for the upcoming academic year.

The mobile teams will continue their efforts in the shelters. At the same time, DRC works to build bridges with other humanitarian actors to address the needs of the shelters' residents through the referral mechanism.

By Yuliia Demchuk, DRC Peacebuilding Specialist, Kyiv

Economic Recovery Livelihoods



©DRC Ukraine, Mykolaiv Oblast, NGO Pure Hearts, 2022

The Ukrainian NGO Pure Hearts helps people in need in Mykolaiv and Kherson Oblasts in the south of the country. DRC supports their work with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and UK Aid. Thanks to the grant, Pure Hearts purchased 550 big food kits with cereals, canned food, oil, sugar, salt, etc.

"This help is much appreciated. We are regularly approached by internally displaced persons, people with disabilities and unemployed who ask for help," says Anastasia from the local NGO.

Pure Hearts also delivered parcels with emergency aid and basic necessities to settlements close to the 'contact line'. There is a drastic deterioration of the humanitarian situation, but some residents decided to stay because, for instance, they do not want to leave their relatives who cannot walk.

"We usually deliver food directly to families in need, and this time we were able to help about 2,000 people," Anastasia adds.

By Volodymyr Malynka, DRC Communications Officer, Kyiv

Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding



©DRC Ukraine, Luhansk Oblast, 2021

The issue of Explosive Ordnance threats has been a burning one for Ukraine since 2014. However, after several months of active fighting and warfare with the use of massive amounts of ammunition since the end of February 2022, this problem has taken on horrifying proportions becoming a tragedy for millions of Ukrainians.

To prevent injuries and fatal cases related to mines and Explosive Ordnance, DRC in Ukraine has been providing mine action awareness campaigns and risk education ever since 2015. Given the fact the problem has multiplied, DRC has now scaled up and intensified its Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) programme.

Protecting the lives of civilians exposed to threats from Explosive Ordnance highly depends on the quality of information and access to guidance, and therefore DRC team strives to constantly improve and raise the standards. The recent successful completion of external monitoring of DRC EORE Education activities performed by the national Certification Unit "Demining Centre" is evidence of this. On 5 of July 2022, in Kamianets-Podilskyi, Khmelnytska Oblast in the presence of the representatives of the Certification Unit, the DRC EORE team provided a specialised session for adolescents in the summer camp "Podillia".

Confirmation of DRC EORE team compliance with the established accreditation requirements has been determined as a result of this monitoring. This will lead to the extension of the Certificate of Conformity for DRC EORE operations for another five years and gives a solid basis to continue and expand outreach in Ukraine.

By Hanna Reshetnikova, DRC HDP Programme Officer, Kyiv