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Among the key goals set by DRC Ukraine for 2023 were the following two: Solid presence in the South of Ukraine - and enhancing DRC ability to adapt to sudden contextual changes while delivering adequate humanitarian responses. And we did it!

After establishing and enhancing DRC emergency response capabilities based out of Mykolaiv, we faced a monumental test in June 2023: The devastating destruction of the Nova Kakhovka Dam. This event led to immediate flooding and forced displacement along the Dnipro River, immediately affecting thousands of people and causing significant environmental impact that experts consider an ecological catastrophe also in the longer-term.

In the immediate aftermath of the dam's destruction, DRC activated its rapid response mechanisms. Our teams set out and were present at strategic and critical locations attending to the needs of evacuees from flooded areas. We provided support in locations ranging from the Mykolaiv Train Station, where convoys of busses arrived and trains came in bringing people from flood-affected settlements, to supporting in Kherson at a repurposed, and already overwhelmed, hospital, that hosted the most vulnerable evacuees.

Once more, we have witnessed – and continue to see - the resilience and perseverance of crisis affected populations as well as the DRC teams deployed in such volatile and unpredictable contexts. It is crucial to acknowledge that this response was only possible with the essential support of DRC Ukraine donors combined with the swift adaptability to launch a tailored mobilisation of human and in-kind resources from all over DRC Ukraine.

Juan Manuel Tejera Herrera
Area Manager, Mykolaiv
DRC Ukraine



Protection



©DRC Ukraine, June 2023, Mykolaiv.

In April 2023, DRC Ukraine's Protection Team began operating in Mykolaiv. Needs here are immense and cover entire communities as well as individuals. During a meeting with a

group of vulnerable citizens, we identified yet another need for urgent individual assistance.

Olena*, a 15-year-old girl from Mykolaiv, underwent a complicated surgery to remove her thyroid gland. Since the start of the war, her grandmother had been looking after Olena. Due to the grandmother's health issues, Olena chose home schooling over attending school with her peers. She often did her homework lying down due to her health and had to use an old mobile phone for studying. The small screen made learning even more difficult and tiring for her.

DRC processed her case and eventually provided Olena with a laptop. Now, she can continue her studies using an updated and user-friendly device, which is less straining on her eyes and general health.

Funding from Novo Nordisk made this possible.

*By Viktoriia Klimova,
DRC Ukraine Protection Team Leader
Mykolaiv*

*Names changed for confidentiality purposes



Protection: Legal Aid



©DRC Ukraine, June 2023, Dnipro.

It is often that important personal documents get lost or misplaced during displacement. Restoring these documents or initiating legal processes is not always a priority for people whose focus is centred around finding safe shelter, food, water and perhaps medical treatment.

"Sich"- a human rights group from Dnipro that is also a partner of DRC - was approached by Nykyfor, a man displaced from Donetsk Oblast. Nykyfor had to leave his home as it was no longer safe, but later returned to legally inherit and register the ownership of his home which was also his mother's house.

However, the public notary found a spelling discrepancy in the mother's and son's surnames, which resulted in the denial of property ownership.

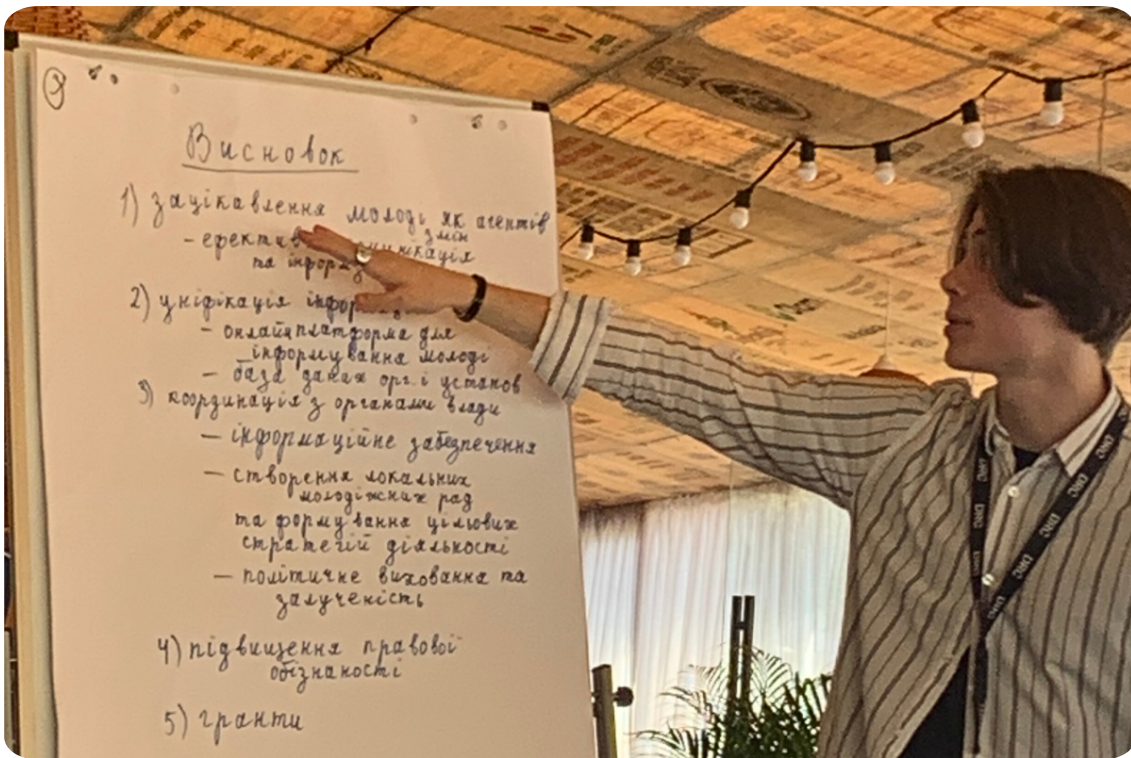
"Such an error can completely block a person's right to inherit. The problem can only be resolved in court by establishing the family ties," said Artem Bezruk, a lawyer from "Sich". The lawyer gathered all the necessary documents and presented them in court. The proceedings took several months, and Nykyfor has now legally inherited and taken ownership of the house.

Funding from the European Union through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations made this collaboration and support possible.

*By Oksana Chekmeniova,
DRC Ukraine Protection Officer,
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Capacity Building



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In May, DRC Ukraine's Capacity Building Programme (CBP) initiated activities under a new consortium project titled "Civil Society Promoting Resilience in Ukraine." This project is part of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Peace and Stabilisation Programme in Ukraine (PSPU).

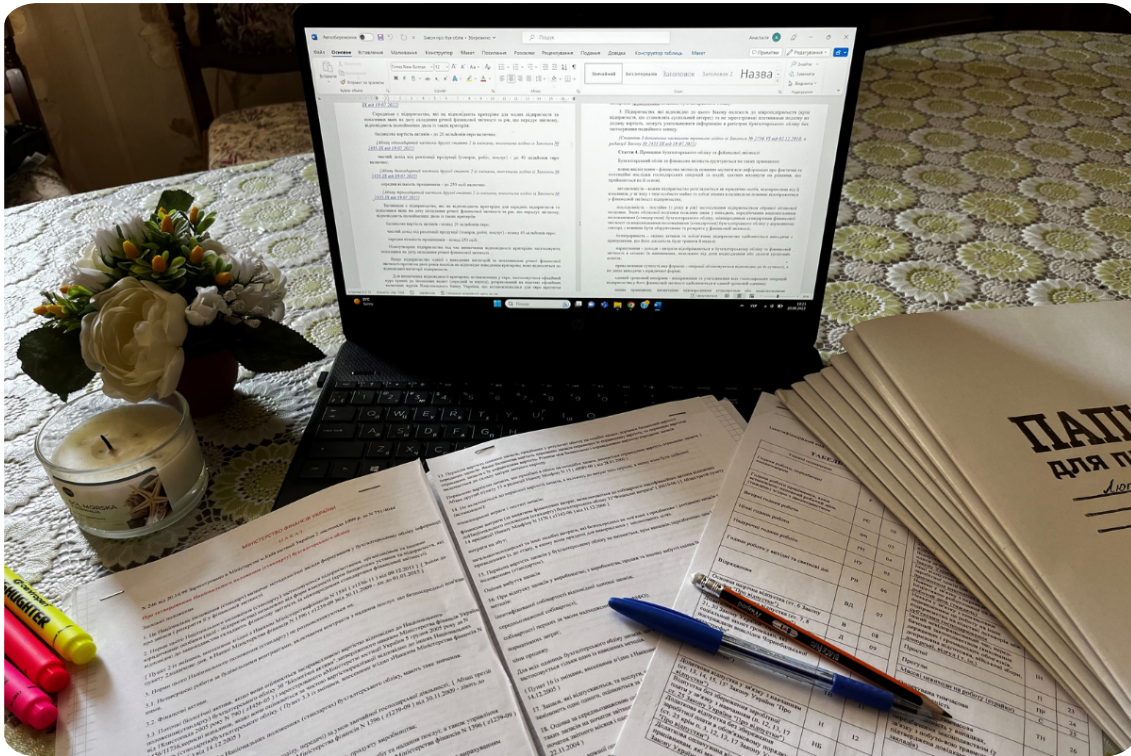
Danish Red Cross, DIGNITY, and DRC together with local implementing partners, are working in this consortium to enhance people of Ukraine's resilience and ability to cope with some of the impacts of the war. This effort involves community engagement and specific support for civil society. The project aims to establish a long-term impact, fostering an environment where conflict-affected and vulnerable groups in Ukraine can lead a protected and dignified life within socially united communities.

Activities include conflict resolution training for young people, mentorship schemes, and small grants for civil society organisations (CSOs) that promote women's empowerment and contribute to the prevention of gender-based violence in Ukraine. In June, the project partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the first of four women-led Ukrainian local civil society organisations that will receive support throughout the project's duration.

*By Kateryna Kishchynska,
DRC Ukraine Peace and Stabilisation Programme Coordinator,
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Economic Recovery



©DRC Ukraine, June 2023, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.

Since July 2022, DRC has provided support to vulnerable families in Ukraine via Vocational Educational Training (VET) courses. Over 110 internally displaced people from across Ukraine have been able to enhance their professional skills or gain new qualifications. The primary aim of such training is to create new opportunities for people to support themselves and their families.

One of the participants in the Programme is Anastasiia, who had to leave her home in Donetsk Oblast for safety reasons, leading to the loss of her job. Owing to her disability and a minimal income sourced only from government support, she found herself in a challenging situation.

She relocated to Novomoskovsk in the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast and received a job offer for an Assistant Accountant position. However, she lacked professional knowledge of specific software. To bridge this gap, Anastasiia enrolled in the VET programme to take courses on accounting software.

"I am more confident in using this specific software and learnt an entire programme from scratch. I never imagined that I would get the opportunity to learn and work at the same time," tells Anastasiia.

Once the security situation permits, Anastasiia plans to return to her hometown of Ozerne and dream of taking up the position of Chief Accountant, all while continuing to build her knowledge and skills.

Funding from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Government of the United Kingdom made this support possible.

*By Kateryna Markevych,
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Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding



©DRC Ukraine, May 2023, Oleksandr Ratushniak, Kyiv.

The escalation of the armed conflict in 2022 in Ukraine has led to a sharp increase in casualties caused by Explosive Ordnance (EO). An important aspect of Humanitarian Mine Action involves guaranteeing support to individuals affected by EO. This should include essential elements such as gathering data, providing medical treatment, psychological and psychosocial support, promoting socio-economic integration, and ensuring equal opportunities for all.

DRC conducted the second coordination roundtable on assistance to victims of EO in Ukraine in May 2023. The roundtable gathered sector experts and stakeholders from various clusters to begin practically addressing the three challenges prioritised by over 60 Victim Assistance Working Group (VAWG) members. These were financial assistance to EO victims; decreasing stigma concerning people with disabilities; and the database of EO victims.

“DRC hosts this working group as a platform for collaboration and coordination of government and other related actors,” said Nick Vovk, DRC Ukraine Programme Manager, in his opening speech: “These activities highlight the multifaceted problems of EO victims and advocate for their effective resolutions. All developments and challenges will be considered by the VAWG, operating under the auspices of the Mine Action Area of Responsibility in Ukraine.”

The event was held in cooperation with Humanity & Inclusion and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ukraine.

*By Vitalina Burlaka,
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See also: DRC Ukraine April-May Newsletter 2023



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