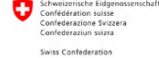


DRC



Newsletter: April-May 2023 | [View this email in your browser](#)



Protection



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Stress, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder have become common in everyone's life across Ukraine, and where new surroundings, pressure on host communities, and complicated interpersonal relationships add to the stressful conditions of internally displaced people. To address some of these complex emotional challenges, DRC has since December 2022, offered Psychosocial Support (PSS) group sessions for over 800 Ukrainians forced from their homes, as well as for their host communities.

In April, DRC and Charitable Foundation Caritas-Zaporizhzhia worked together to provide a session for conflict-affected individuals and volunteers working to support them. Participants were reminded of the importance of taking care of their mental well-being, especially during these times, with the help of Bohdan and Kateryna, two of DRC's Protection Staff.

"We wanted to create a warm and friendly environment so that participants would feel comfortable and at ease. Then, we also shared some simple techniques to help them maintain emotional balance and a positive attitude," says Bohdan, DRC Psychosocial Support Assistant.

The Psychosocial Support was provided by DRC through funding from the European Union through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

*By Anna Popsui,
DRC Communications Assistant,
Kyiv*



©DRC Ukraine, May 2023, Lviv Oblast.

The recent music concerts organised by DRC and the local band "Fiji Band" in various locations across Lviv Oblast were a display of the power of music to heal and bring communities together. These concerts were part of a project that aimed to provide Psychosocial Support (PSS) to people affected by war.

For many Ukrainians who have been forced from their homes, these concerts offered a rare opportunity to escape the challenges of their daily lives and simply enjoy the music. The concerts created a positive and unified atmosphere that was appreciated by the audience.

Beyond the immediate enjoyment of the concerts, the project aimed at having a deeper impact on the mental health and well-being of the people. Each event began with a brief

introduction to DRC's activities in Ukraine and concluded with PSS Team members sharing helpful tips on self-care. Additionally, these concerts aimed to promote the integration of internally displaced people into local communities, recognising the importance of social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Funding from the USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) made this Psychosocial support event possible.

*By Stepan Pasichnyk,
DRC Protection Officer,
Lviv*



Protection: Legal Aid



©DRC Ukraine, March 2023, Lutsk.

Before 24 February 2022, residents of the Geriatric Nursing Homes in Vovchansk, Kharkiv Oblast, and Korosten, Zhytomyr Oblast had received pensions via the branches of the national postal service – Ukrposhta, – which was convenient enough since they did not need to leave the place. Unfortunately, after the escalation in the conflict, all the residents of both nursing homes were uprooted and relocated to find safety at Lutsk Geriatric Nursing Home in Volyn Oblast.

For more than half a year they could not receive the pensions on which many rely. In October 2022, the residents reached out to the organisation Volyn Institute of Law for legal assistance in the matter. The lawyers prepared and submitted relevant appeals and

requests to the Pension Fund Departments of Kharkiv, Volyn, and Zhytomyr Oblasts, alongside the national postal services Ukrposhta itself, and through diligent communication achieved the desired outcome – in March and April 2023, all the residents received the unpaid pensions in the full amount.

Free legal aid is provided by the Volyn Institute of Law in cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) within the framework of the project “Multisectoral Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Ukraine” and thanks to the financial support of the USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

By NGO Volyn Institute of Law, Lutsk



©DRC Ukraine, April 2023, Dnipro.

During my visit to Caritas-Donetsk who is a partner organisation of DRC in Dnipro, I had the opportunity to meet Nina, a 64-year-old woman from Popasna, Luhansk Oblast from where she is displaced. Nina's husband, who had been involved in the clean-up efforts following the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, sadly passed away at the end of 2021.

As a widow, Nina was eligible for one-time compensation due to the loss of her husband, who was the main breadwinner. However, despite having the right to this compensation, she faced difficulties in claiming it. She had applied to the Medical and Social Expert Commission (MSEC) at the end of 2021, but due to the escalation of hostilities in Luhansk Oblast, she did not receive a conclusion from them.

At DRC, our work began by searching for the Expert Opinion from the Central MSEC of the Ministry of Health and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine. We finally received it in June 2022. Simultaneously, we assisted Nina in applying to the Department of Social Protection to obtain the financial compensation she was entitled to. Unfortunately, her application was rejected due to missed deadlines. In response, DRC's lawyers prepared a

lawsuit on behalf of Nina, which ultimately resulted in a favourable outcome for her. This May, Nina finally received the rightful compensation she deserved.

Funding from the European Union through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations made DRC assistance to Nina possible.

*By Oksana Chekmeniova,
DRC Protection Officer,
Kyiv*



Capacity Building



©DRC Ukraine, March 2023, Kyiv.

On March 24, 2023, DRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, also known as the Ombudsman of Ukraine. The objective of this MoU is to ensure a close, long-term partnership, particularly in the areas of technical and material support, exchange of knowledge, and consultations on potential areas of further collaboration.

This MoU represents a continuation of the successful cooperation between DRC and the Ombudsman's office over the past few weeks. The Capacity Building Programme (CBP) has been supporting the Ombudsman with their advocacy campaigns and procuring IT equipment. At the signing event, Dmytro Lubinets, the Ombudsman, expressed his gratitude and emphasised the importance of the support from DRC for the Ombudsman's office and Ukraine.

"The Memorandum provides an excellent opportunity for the CBP, as well as other DRC programmes, to strengthen the capacities of the Ombudsman's Office and their commitment to supporting civil society in Ukraine," said Julian Zakrzewski, Country Director of DRC Ukraine.

*By Alisa Toropova,
DRC Capacity Building Programme Project Assistant,
Kyiv*



©DRC Ukraine, April 2023, Makariv, Kyiv Oblast.

DRC is localising humanitarian actions through supporting an increasing the number of Ukrainian civil society organisations. This includes enhancing their coordination and response capabilities for them to be able to meet the basic needs of people affected by war across the country.

Between March 2022 and May 2023, DRC's Capacity Building Programme (CBP) implemented an organisational support initiative for 11 Ukrainian organisations, funded by the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF). This support programme was designed based on comprehensive assessments of the organisations' capacities and needs. It included a series of online training sessions and opportunities for experience-sharing, aimed at addressing their specific requirements and fostering their organisational development and performance.

During the programme, 10 management employees from the organisations participated in eight online sessions dedicated to sharing experiences and networking. These sessions provided knowledge exchange and facilitated the establishment of contacts for future coordination and collaboration. Another 108 representatives from these organisations attended eight training sessions covering various topics such as the [Core Humanitarian](#)

Standard, Protection Mainstreaming, Leadership and Project Management, Dialogue Facilitation, and Fundraising.

One of the participating organisations shared their feedback:

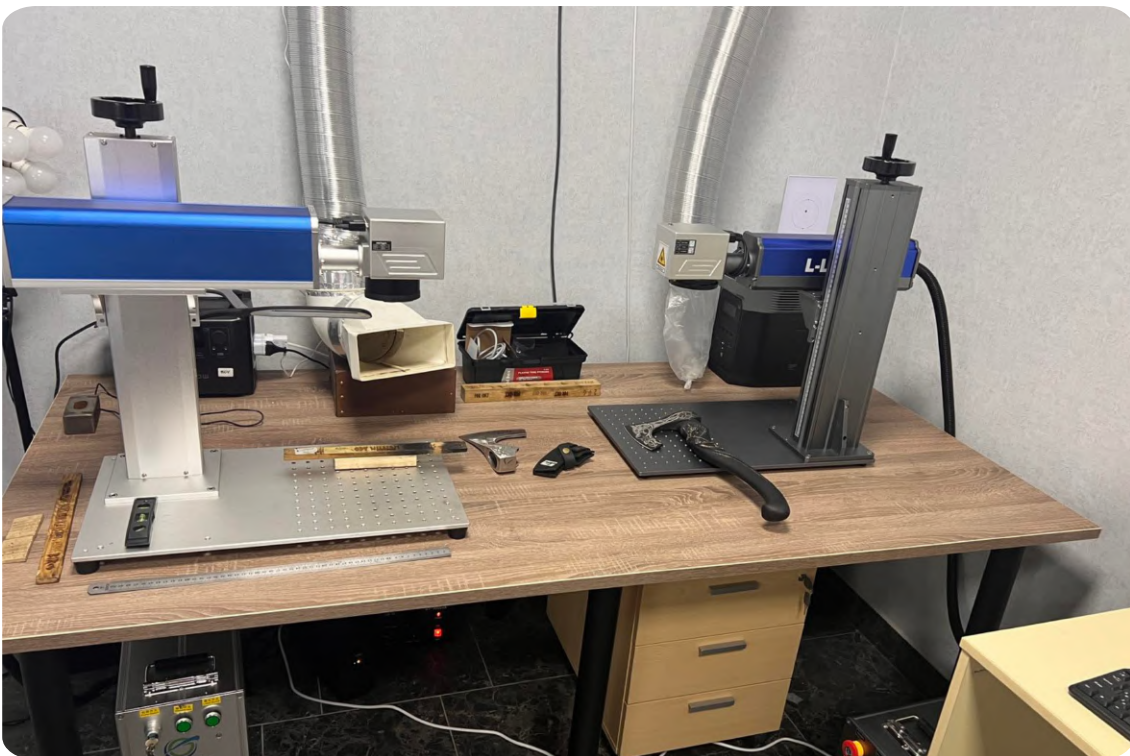
"The training session on fundraising organised by DRC allowed our staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in initiating fundraising campaigns to provide essential food kits, vitamins, and medications to those in need."

Through these capacity-building measures, DRC is actively supporting civil society organisations in their vital work and enabling them to better serve and assist individuals and entire communities in Ukraine.

*By Serhii Havrylenko,
DRC Capacity Development Team Leader,
Kyiv*



Economic Recovery



©DRC Ukraine, April 2023, Kyiv Oblast.

Mykhailo is the owner of the "Ancient Smithy." brand, specialising in Viking hand-forged axes. These axes can be used for chopping wood or gifted as a souvenir. He operates six production workshops located in different cities across Ukraine, with the central office situated in Hostomel and the main production facilities based in Kyiv.

Unfortunately, due to hostilities in Kyiv Oblast last spring, the production facilities were partially damaged, and the main warehouse containing a lot of goods was destroyed. Despite a quick restart, regular blackouts in the autumn and winter months disrupted the production process, and orders were not completed on time.

With funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, DRC helped to cover the expenses for a generator, voltage stabilisers, and a new metal laser. This allowed the business to create new products and increase profits.

"Thanks to the grant, we have been able to create more comfortable working conditions for our staff, maintain existing jobs, and even provide work opportunities for three people from Irpin city. By the way, we are always looking for talented craftsmen across the country," says Mykhailo.

*By Kateryna Markevych,
DRC Economic Recovery Specialist,
Kyiv*



©DRC Ukraine, April 2023, Ivano-Frankivsk.

Anastasiia is one of 130 women who took part in "IT Education for Women," a DRC pilot project launched in September 2022. Originally from Odesa, Anastasiia was studying International Relations before the war disrupted her plans. She got interested in the field of Information Technology (IT) and decided to make this her new ambition, even from Ivano-Frankivsk to where she had fled. There, she applied for an educational programme offered by the platform "[GoIT](#)" and was offered a seat.

Anastasiia completed the UI/UX Design course, which not only expanded her IT skills but also helped her secure a job. The photo above shows one of her projects, dedicated to an architect company event. Anastasiia now works as a Social Media Designer at the company

QArea and continues to learn about designing for mobile devices. Her dream is now to start her own company someday.

Another participant, Mariia, who had a background in psychology but a passion for web design, also joined the UI/UX Design course. She received an offer to work at the design and development studio called Grivalure. Mariia shared that the knowledge she gained through the course expanded her outlook on the future, helped her find a job, and ultimately increase her income.

Through this project, DRC aims to empower women like Anastasiia and Mariia by providing them with new education and employment opportunities. These skills are in demand and the project is designed to equip more people to gain employment and work remote when needed. This project received support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Government of the United Kingdom, in collaboration with the EdTech company "GoIT.

*By Kateryna Markevych,
DRC Economic Recovery Specialist,
Kyiv*



Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding



©DRC Ukraine, Kyiv Oblast, February 2023, Volodymyr Cheppel.

Every year on April 4th, the world celebrates International Mine Awareness Day. This year, the DRC Ukraine Team held two events at schools in Ichnia, Chernihiv Oblast and Ivankiv,

Kyiv Oblast. In both localities, DRC provides clearance services, assistance to Explosive Ordnance victims, and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) sessions.

During these events, schoolchildren learned about the humanitarian mine action activities in an exciting and engaging format. The children were divided into three teams and went on an exciting journey with multiple stops. At each stop, the teams learned about a different aspect of mine action and received special stickers, which they could exchange for a gift at the end.

At the first stop, the clearance team presented their tools and equipment, and the children were able to try on Personal Protective Equipment and learn about the unique aspects of a deminer's job. The second stop was dedicated to inclusive communication with people with disabilities. Participants tried to complete simple tasks with certain complications that people with disabilities may encounter. Finally, at the EORE station, the DRC team members taught the children safe behaviour rules in a playful manner.

Events like these are essential for communities in EO-contaminated territories, and they serve as a useful advocacy tool for mine action activities.

*By Olena Bogdanova,
DRC Victim Assistance Specialist,
Kyiv*



©DRC Ukraine, Kyiv Oblast, November 2022, Arsen Drodzaev.

For each day, the number of unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war add to the risks across Ukraine. From the Donbas region on the border to the Russian Federation being the part of Ukraine that demanded intense mine action, vast areas are now affected. Among the areas where DRC is tasked by the National Mine Action Authority and Mine Action Centre to conduct humanitarian demining is Pryputni village in Chernihiv

Oblast, located in the north of Ukraine. The settlement was heavily affected during the first days of the Russian Federation's military offensive. Although the village became accessible to the community once the attacks subsided, its territory was far from safe. Because of severe Explosive Ordnance (EO) contamination, officials reported two EO casualties occurred near the pontoon bridge that connects the village with nearby settlements. Therefore, DRC implemented a timely and effective response to reduce risks related to mines and explosive remnants of war and save lives.

In May 2023, DRC passed an external quality control inspection for the release of 7,500 square metres of contaminated territory conducted by the Interregional Center for Humanitarian Demining and Rapid Response of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine. The land has been proclaimed safe and is planned to be officially handed over to the beneficiaries in the nearest future.

This activity was conducted with the support of the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

*By Vitalina Burlaka,
DRC Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Project Officer,
Kyiv*

