




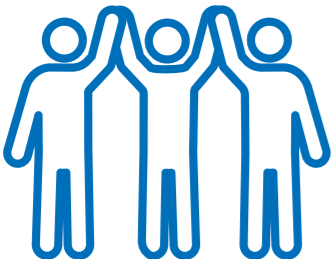
HUNGARIAN  
INTERCHURCH AID | actalliance



# Hungarian Interchurch Aid's response to the crisis caused by the war in Ukraine

MULTISECTORAL ASSISTANCE  
IN A PROLONGED CRISIS  
2022–2025

# Our response at a glance



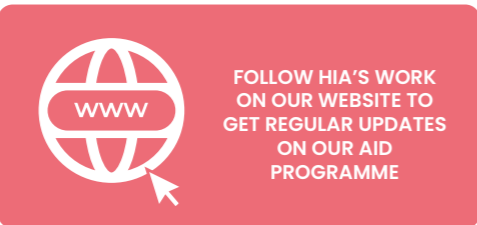
**832,006** assisted people through our aid programme in Ukraine and Hungary



**2387** metric tons food, sanitary- and childcare products, household items for shelters, generators, medicine



**51,042,493** USD value of aid programme implemented since February 2022



For three years, the people of Ukraine have endured unimaginable hardship as war continues to be forced upon them. Displacement, relentless air raids, missile attacks, conscription, destroyed homes, the loss of loved ones, and the uncertainty of tomorrow—any one of these would be a heavy burden to bear. Yet, for millions of Ukrainians, these tragedies have become daily realities. From the very first days of the war, the global humanitarian community—including Hungarian Interchurch Aid—committed itself to alleviating their suffering. Today, as the conflict enters its fourth year, the question remains: can we keep our promise?

While we dare to hope for peace, we must not let optimism overshadow the growing humanitarian needs. Foreign funding is dwindling, organizations are withdrawing, and countless people remain without support. The end of active combat will not mark the end of hardship—it will signal the beginning of an even greater challenge: rebuilding lives, restoring communities, and healing a nation. Meeting this challenge requires us to stay true to HIA's 27-year commitment to Ukraine.

Three years on, our solidarity is unwavering, but our vision is sharper. Embracing a multisectoral approach, Hungarian Interchurch Aid has expanded its reach across 23 regions of Ukraine, responding to urgent needs from Kramatorsk to Berehove, from Bucha to Kherson. In Hungary, our Support Centre continues to assist those forced to flee their homeland.

None of this would be possible without the strength, sacrifice, and generosity of those who form the pillars of our response—our implementing partners, international donors, volunteers, corporate partners, churches, and the Government of Hungary. Together, we have built a vital force within the international humanitarian response to this crisis.

As we mark three years of unwavering commitment, we must also acknowledge the goals still unmet and the work still ahead. With this report, we seek to demonstrate how we have transformed the solidarity of our many donors into tangible support for those suffering the consequences of war. We sincerely thank you for your continued trust and generosity and encourage you to stand with us as we press forward—because our work is far from over.


Yours sincerely,

**László Lehel**

President-Director  
Hungarian Interchurch Aid  
24 February 2025

# Hungarian Interchurch Aid in Ukraine

OUR RESPONSE 2022-2025



More than **700,000** people assisted in Ukraine



Since February 2022 Hungarian Interchurch Aid has doubled down on its efforts to provide help to those in need – both in Hungary and Ukraine.

From tangible, in-kind food aid to cash assistance, community-based relief and psychosocial help, HIA's aid programme is **multisectoral and flexible**. In the past three years of the conflict, HIA has helped **710,483 people** in Ukraine, often in hard-to-reach areas. Its humanitarian operations encompass **23 regions of Ukraine**, from westernmost Zakarpattia to Kramatorsk in the east and Kherson in the south. Believing in the power of community, HIA also worked with **176 grassroots-level organisations** in its response – with special emphasis on **faith-based communities**.

- HIA Office
- Protection
- WASH Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- FSL Food Security and Livelihoods
- Education
- Health
- Shelter/NFI Non-Food Items
- Logistics
- Early recovery
- MPCA Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
- Information

# Helping Ukraine one aid package at a time

## HIA'S EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

With the onset of the conflict 3 years ago, Hungarian Interchurch Aid immediately responded to the arising urgent needs. The disruption of supply chains coupled with a huge displacement crisis meant that during the chaotic spring months, providing emergency access to basic food and non-food items as well as health & hygiene products was critical. While shifting needs have caused a relative decrease in in-kind type of support, they still present a fairly important part of our response. Winterization support and emergency aid in cases of catastrophes such as the Kakhovka dam disaster remains paramount to this day.

In the first days of the war, HIA has set up warehouses and offices to support its nationwide operations, which remain the backbone of its response in Ukraine. More than 300 shelters and 450 thousand people received some form of

in-kind aid since the first days of war. Changing needs saw the focus of HIA's programmes shift from food kits for displaced people who've left hastily to supporting the needy living in military combat zones as well as winterisation support.

**2387**  
tonnes of aid delivered

In-kind assistance is a type of assistance in which contributions take the form of tangible goods rather than money – whether that be supplies, equipment or material.



Due to the frequent blackouts and power cuts, procuring and distributing electric generators was also a priority for HIA. These allowed partner organisations and smaller NGOs to continue their humanitarian work throughout the country, and also contributed to the resumption of utilities in Kherson and its surroundings. By establishing an operational presence in Ukraine's war-torn

South – especially Kherson oblast – HIA was able to bring help where other international aid organisations rarely venture. This also enabled HIA to instantly react to the humanitarian needs caused by the flooding of the Dnipro river after the Kakhovka dam explosion and subsequently deliver generators, pumps and essential equipment to facilitate restoration.

### WHY IS IN-KIND AID IMPORTANT?

## Voices of our beneficiaries

**Svitlana**, from Kherson was evacuated when the Dnipro flooded her home following the Kakhovka dam explosion.

*"In our district, water is all around the houses. No electricity, no drinking water, no gas. Shops are flooded as well. The package I received came at a time of great need, perhaps at the best moment. Me and my son unfortunately need to use the sleeping mats, powerbanks and flashlights."*



**Natalia's** home lacks gas, she cooks on firewood. To save costs, she received a resourceful stove designed by local entrepreneurs from HIA.

*"I need to watch how much and when I put wood on the fire. I used to put something on the stove for the night to boil slowly and save firewood. Now I don't have to combine heating and cooking."*

IF YOU WANT TO READ THEIR FULL STORIES OR FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WE HELP, SCAN THIS QR-CODE!

# Empowering civil society in Ukraine

## GRANTS FOR A COMMUNITY BASED RESPONSE TO HELP UKRAINIANS IN NEED

The Ukrainian civil society was quick to organise itself after the outbreak of war, doing tremendous and essential work – but as the war dragged on, their financial means to continue doing their part became increasingly limited. Believing in the power of community, HIA introduced two modalities for these organisations who are involved in the humanitarian work in Ukraine: Flexible Small Grants (FSGs) and Survivor and Community-led Response (SCLR) grants. The cooperation between HIA and the organisations is mutually beneficial, since the knowledge of local needs coupled with HIA’s humanitarian expertise enables a grassroots-level response while strengthening the resilience of local actors. As a faith-based organisation itself, HIA places emphasis on working with other religious partners in its response.

Some organisations need these microgrants to buy food & hygiene products for the displaced people in their care, others need them for equipment or specialists for therapy. Whatever the purpose of the grantees may be, HIA supports their aim with flexible-use grants up to \$10,000 each. Each project has a duration of 2 to 3 months, after which the cooperation is evaluated, and a decision is made on the renewal of the agreement.

Projects funded through Survivor & Community-led Response grants on the other hand support smaller organisations or even informal civil initiatives, and usually only last only 2 months. The SCLR approach promotes mutually beneficial outcomes and leaves community members with the tools, skillset, and most importantly the will to continue to advocate for their communities and its development.



**Hanna** is a teacher in a special kindergarten at a Lviv shelter for IDPs, which was equipped within the SCLR programme.

*“This space created by HIA is a real happiness and relief for parents in our challenging times. Despite what is happening in the adult world, these displaced children still have their childhood and can play in the kindergarten room, grow up and learn about the world in safety.”*

WHY ARE COMMUNITY-BASED RESPONSES IMPORTANT?

### Voices of our beneficiaries

IF YOU WANT TO READ THEIR FULL STORIES OR FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WE HELP, SCAN THIS QR-CODE!



Through its community-based programmes, HIA has reached **133 thousand** people, helping them in a wide variety of ways.

In total, **176** beneficiary organisations received **\$1,575,000** in funding

**Yulia** participated in a winter retreat for mothers of large families organised by HIA’s FSG partner. Having recently lost her husband, here the mother of five received a mental toolkit to rely on in difficult situations to come.

*“I always thought only about my children – their clothes, food, education. Here, for the first time in a long time, I was able to stop and think about myself. Now I realize how much I needed this time to regain my strength and return home with love and energy. When I’m not at my best, my children feel it.”*



# Protection of the vulnerable

## PROTECTING THE MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Through several programmes, Hungarian Interchurch Aid provides protection interventions nationwide in Ukraine. From free legal counsel to resilience-building community workshops, from art- and psychotherapy to evacuations to safer cities, HIA and its partners in the field work together to preserve the mental & physical wellbeing of the war-affected communities.

HIA remains committed to supporting those impacted by the ongoing fighting, bombings, and uncertainty of life in Ukraine. On the ground, HIA offers protection counseling and facilitates evacuations through its network of 20 support points located in frontline settlements across the Donetsk, Khersonska, and Zaporizka oblasts.

In regions less affected by active combat, the organization prioritizes psychosocial assistance, focusing on vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, and internally displaced persons. In 2024, HIA also launched a new initiative to support the mental well-being and reintegration of former combatants.



### Protection activities and programmes

aim to facilitate and strengthen resilience within individuals, families and communities to recover from and adapt to critical adversities with potentially damaging long-term impacts. This modality thus promotes the restoration of social cohesion and mental health for those, who take part in the programme.

Hungarian Interchurch Aid and partner-implemented protection schemes contributed to the preservation of the mental wellbeing of

# 89,605

Ukrainians since the start of the war throughout the country.



**Olena**, a 15 year old displaced girl participated in HIA's autumn camp in Zakarpattia.

*"Almost every night, the girls and I gather in the room and share our secrets after the lights out at the camp. I am not as lonely as I used to be. I lost my best friend in Mariupol when my parents and I left, and he and his family stayed behind. And I don't know his whereabouts ever since. But my new friends in the camp support me and say that they went through the same things."*

HOW DO THESE ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO MENTAL WELLBEING?

## Voices of our beneficiaries

IF YOU WANT TO READ THEIR FULL STORIES OR FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WE HELP, SCAN THIS QR-CODE!



**Kateryna** and her family were stuck in frontline Pokrovsk when the mandatory evacuation of the city was announced. Unable to afford costly commercial services, a call from HIA's local support point became a lifeline for her. Finally, they arrived in safety with all of their belongings.

*"I felt like we were trapped, with nowhere to run or hide. We had no money, my husband was far away, and the explosions and shelling were constant. Half the night, we sat awake on the bed, too afraid to sleep. I distracted the children with cartoons to ease their fear. Our windows were already shattered by the shockwaves, and something also hit the neighbouring house. Fortunately, we got a call from HIA's support point operator. We just couldn't stay any longer, so the help in evacuation was vital to us."*

# Flexible aid mechanisms helping in a dignified way

## HIA'S CASH PROGRAMMES IN UKRAINE

To help those deprived by the war, HIA employs two types of cash transfers for individuals. In the organisation's effort to empower large masses of people at once, multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) allows for a more people-centred relief, granting beneficiaries freedom of choice and returning a degree of dignity into their lives.

The financial support received within the MPCA programme is a three-month instalment of 10,800 UAH. Cash for protection intends to benefit those, who have specific protection issues that cannot be covered by the multi-purpose cash transfers, like an upcoming medical expenditure.

Hungarian Interchurch Aid has been providing internally displaced Ukrainians with cash transfers since June of 2022. Applicants are registered and reviewed whether they fit the criteria agreed by the Cash Working Group in Ukraine.



**Lydia** from Rokytno needed an expensive eye surgery due to diabetes. She was finally able to have it done thanks to MPCA funds.

*"In fact, when the notification came that the money was transferred, I couldn't even read it. Then when they read it to me, I couldn't believe it at first. Now I can cook again because I can see what I am doing. And finally, I can take care of myself."*

HOW DOES CASH ASSISTANCE BECOME HELP?

### Voices of our beneficiaries

IF YOU WANT TO READ THEIR FULL STORIES OR FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WE HELP, SCAN THIS QR-CODE!

**Dmytro** and his family had to start from scratch again after fleeing the warzones of the Donbas. Helped by HIA's Cash for Protection programme, he started renovating a dilapidated hut they bought near Bohuslav entirely on his own.

*"You know, my plan is this: every day, at least something has to be done. With HIA's help, we bought what we did not have before: pipes for the sewage system, machinery for the water system, water pipes, a toilet, a bathtub. And little by little, it becomes a lot."*



In total, HIA has supported

# 57,245

Ukrainians with cash transfers worth over

# \$9.3 million.

**Cash for protection** is a modality, in which beneficiaries receive cash transfers to achieve specific, pre-agreed protection outcomes.

**Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance** is a cash transfer programme, through which beneficiaries receive regular payments. Cash transfers are, by definition, unrestricted – because cash can be spent on anything. It is a modality which offers recipients the maximum degree of choice, flexibility and dignity.

# Early recovery in this prolonged crisis

## TACKLING THE MASSIVE DESTRUCTION LEFT BEHIND IN FORMER COMBAT ZONES

Devastated by shelling, bombardment and intense conflict, a significant portion of Ukraine has witnessed destruction unparalleled in Europe since World War II. The notion that crisis responses should follow a linear progression from the humanitarian stage to distinct stages of recovery and then development – particularly in protracted crises – has faced scrutiny in light of the complex realities on the ground. The thoroughly and intentionally damaged homes, public infrastructure and essential services has reinforced the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, and necessitated the inclusion of development work into HIA’s response.

Following the deoccupation of Northern Ukraine, HIA has set out to renovate critical infrastructure. Partnered with the Government of Hungary, the complete renovation of a school in Zahal'tsi near Borodyanka commenced alongside the establishment of a container kindergarten and an ambulance station in Bucha. In Synyak, HIA has handed over a multifunctional hub with healthcare, postal and local government

functions. Moreover, HIA completed renovations on nine additional educational institutions in Kyiv and Chernihiv Oblasts, striving to facilitate the return of students to on-site education. Reconstruction efforts of the past three years were not limited to essential infrastructure. The scale of destruction among private households in Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts prompted HIA to conduct light- and medium repairs in a total of 530 homes.



**Nina’s** house in Kherson oblast was damaged by shelling, and was subsequently renovated by HIA.

*“I am not afraid to be in my house now. The only thing I’m still afraid of is the sound of airplanes and flying missiles over the roof. Despite everything, I feel good in my house. It’s where I’ve lived forever, it is where I want to live until I die. I did not want to leave. The name of this village is Blahodatne (“blessed”), and thanks to you, I can stay in my home, warm and blessed!”*

WHY IS RECONSTRUCTION ESSENTIAL?

### Voices of our beneficiaries

IF YOU WANT TO READ THEIR FULL STORIES OR FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WE HELP, SCAN THIS QR-CODE!

Overall, HIA has spent **\$10+** million on infrastructure projects.



**Mykhailo** lived in Kharkiv’s Saltivka with his paralysed wife, and barely escaped alive when their house was shelled. HIA’s light repairs project allowed them to return to their home.

*“I didn’t know how to prepare the apartment for winter and didn’t expect anyone to help us replace the windows, because I was so used to relying on myself. Thanks to the new windows, the apartment will be warm, and I’ll get the flat ready for the return of my wife.”*



# Assistance for refugees in Hungary 2022–2025

## A HELPING HAND FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING BEHIND

With the imminent refugee crisis in mind, Hungarian Interchurch Aid decided to deliver a two-pronged approach to assist those suffering from the effects of war. Besides setting up its response in Ukraine, HIA also needed to react to the thousands of refugees arriving from Ukraine in a swift and decisive manner. In the beginning, refugee support points were needed, then HIA cooperated with other charitable organisations and the government to create a transit hub for incoming refugees.

After the first months it became clear that the needs have shifted towards integration and sustained support of the refugees that arrived in the country. This is when HIA has opened its Support Centre for Ukrainian Refugees with the aim to create a space where all of its activities related to the refugees could be coordinated from. It became much more than that: a meeting point for the community, a place to receive help not only from aid workers, but also from fellow refugees.



More than **120,000** refugees assisted in Hungary

- Protection
- WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- FSL: Food Security and Livelihoods
- Education
- Health
- Shelter/NFI: Non-Food Items
- Logistics
- Early recovery
- MPCA: Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
- Information

# Adjusting to life in Hungary

## ASSISTING REFUGEES STAYING IN THE COUNTRY

The refugees arriving in Hungary have often left everything behind – but their challenges and their struggle doesn't stop at the border. Adjusting to a different life in a strange country is a difficult and challenging process, especially since many still carry the traumas of their past lives with them. Looking for a way to support them in this process, HIA established its Support Centre for Ukrainian Refugees in the heart of Budapest.

From providing all kinds of information, organising various community events and courses to the distribution of in-kind donations and cash vouchers, this hub aims to cover all issues refugees can face while living in Hungary. The institution employs psychologists as well as social and aid workers to give a helping hand to refugees looking for financial and mental support, legal counsel, accommodation, access to the labour market, healthcare and education.

Mental health is a central issue to many refugees, it is thus a central element of HIA's response in Hungary. In cooperation with UNHCR, HIA runs

a crisis centre to for refugee victims of gender-based violence in the Support Centre and online. Closely attached to the Support Centre is a community space where Ukrainian-speaking mental health professionals help children aged 1 to 6 to cope with their underlying traumas by providing various kinds of therapies (art, music) while their parents are off to work.

HIA's institutions in the countryside and its extensive network of supported congregations, groups and organisations doing humanitarian work in Hungary allow HIA to support refugees country-wide.



**Zinaida** is 84 years old, she fled when her house was damaged by bombing. She found a community in the drawing course organised in cooperation by the Lutheran Church and HIA.

*"For us, this is not just an introduction to art, but also psychological help, salvation from depression. After what I went through, I only wanted to cover myself with a blanket and stay in my bed, but here I can feel life again. I'm not very good at drawing, but when I draw I forget about all the bad things. I hope the courses continue, because it is where I meet with my newfound friends."*

WHAT KIND OF HELP DO REFUGEES RECEIVE IN HUNGARY?

### Voices of our beneficiaries



IF YOU WANT TO READ THEIR FULL STORIES OR FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WE HELP, SCAN THIS QR-CODE!



**HIA's Support Centre helps to overcome all kinds of challenges refugees from Ukraine can face while living in Hungary**



**Anna** and her family are refugees, the cash vouchers from HIA are essential for survival in an increasingly inflation-ridden economic environment.

*"The vouchers help us to cover our basic needs in all circumstances. We are therefore very grateful for this, as we have had to struggle to stay afloat. I am confident that we can build on this newly gained income security provided by the voucher system to build up an existence, get through this difficult period and – with perseverance – create a better life for ourselves."*

# Main partners

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CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER  
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**FCA**

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World Vision 

  
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FEBA

**UHF** Ukraine  
Humanitarian  
Fund

 **UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

  
**HUNGARY HELPS**

  
**GOVERNMENT OF HUNGARY**

# Our supporting partners

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SZERENCSEJÁTÉK ZRT.

Taipei Representative Office,  
Budapest, Hungary

Thank you for  
helping together  
with us!

# Hungarian Interchurch Aid

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Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA) was founded in 1991 by Hungarian historical Protestant and Orthodox churches. The founding churches are now working together as a growing community of professionals, volunteers, donors and responsible corporate partners to help those in need. As one of the largest, internationally recognized charity organisations in Hungary, HIA has carried out humanitarian and development work in over 50 countries, providing assistance to those in need wherever they may be regardless of nationality, religion or world view, all the while meeting the highest professional and transparency requirements. HIA has its Headquarters in Budapest, Hungary, and operates Regional Offices in Ukraine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey and Ethiopia.

[ukraine.hia.hu](http://ukraine.hia.hu)