



IMPACT
REPORT

Ukraine Appeal

One year later

In the first year since the escalation of conflict in Ukraine, Plan International has reached more than 250,000 people with critical support.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| The Situation | 3 |
| The Emergency Response | 5 |
| The Rundown | 6 |
| Spotlight: Yulia, In her own words | 10 |
| Spotlight: Mini dispatch from Ukraine | 11 |
| Spotlight: Mini dispatch from Poland | 11 |
| Look Ahead | 12 |
| Thank you for your support | 14 |

Cover: (Clockwise, from top left) Sisters Polina, 10, and Nadia, 11, live in an internally displaced centre after fleeing from Mykolaiv, a region in Ukraine that is close to Crimea. They both dream of going home as soon as possible; Milana, 3, takes part in creative play session led by Plan International's mobile unit in Moldova; A volunteer hands out juice to children in one of the refugee reception centres; **On this page:** In Kyiv, this vehicle now stands as a monument reflecting the conflict in Ukraine.



The Situation

“People living in Kyiv told me that as recently as August [2022], life felt almost normal,” says **Linda Liutkus, a monitoring and evaluation advisor with Plan International Canada** who traveled to Kyiv. But in October 2022, the Russian bombs started dropping on the capital. Sometimes the air raids were daily, sometimes weekly, sometimes two to three times a day.

When Liutkus arrived, this already had been happening for weeks – and it continues. Damage from the bombings means that power, water and communications in Kyiv come on and off. Sometimes the city shuts off power for 12 to 16 hours a day in order to make repairs. “It’s an ongoing challenge of finding a jacket to wear to keep warm when the heat turns off or a plug to recharge computers before the power cuts again or a flashlight so you can see,” she says.

Communities in the eastern parts of Ukraine have been affected by conflict since 2014. But on February 24, 2022, the world watched as the war between Ukraine and Russia escalated dramatically, and it has continued to do so. To date, **almost 15 million people have been forced to leave their homes in Ukraine**, resulting in Europe’s largest refugee wave since World War II. Critical infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, continues to be damaged by air raids and other attacks. Temperatures in winter drop as low as -20°C in some parts of the country, and many people are living in homes that have been damaged or in temporary shelters that are not suited for winter conditions.

“
There is a real fear the world will lose interest.”

BY THE NUMBERS

Almost **15 million people** have been forced to leave their homes in Ukraine.

More than **6.5 million people** are still internally displaced in Ukraine.

An estimated **17.7 million people** – about **40%** of Ukraine’s population – are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Most of those who fled Ukraine were women. Some were travelling alone; many were mothers with small children and even grandmothers with grandchildren. Still, many of the people who were forced to flee to Poland believe they will get to go home one day, says **Dr. Erika Silva, health advisor with Plan International Canada**, who was in Poland. Many remain reluctant to immigrate overseas to places like Canada or the United States, choosing instead to stay close to Ukraine.

Silva recalls how one woman from Ukraine, who is now in Poland, showed her a photo on her phone of a pile of rubble where her house used to be. Although she was sad and in disbelief, she also remained hopeful – hopeful that people like her will one day be able to return home, and hopeful that the world will not forget about them.

“There is a real fear the world will lose interest,” says Silva about effects of the war in Ukraine.



Fighting has damaged 2,300 out of Ukraine's 17,000 schools, particularly in Kyiv's suburbs where many towns were occupied. Plan International is working to support the refurbishment of schools and bomb shelters in Ukraine and will assist with the creation of Digital Learning Centres to help children catch-up with their classes.

WE ARE AMPING UP OUR DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS

“We responded to multiple complex crises in 2022 that affected women and children. The need for disaster relief will only grow. That's why we're evolving to become **the number one organization to help girls facing disasters and crises.**”

—Jessica Capasso,
director of emergency and humanitarian assistance at Plan International Canada

WITH YOUR SUPPORT

Plan International is providing emergency humanitarian response to thousands of families within Ukraine as well as to families who have been forced to relocate to Moldova, Poland and Romania.

Thank you for your continued support.

Read on to learn more about our continuing efforts in Ukraine and beyond.

DID YOU KNOW?

- More than **\$18.8 million** has been provided by Plan International to civil society partner organizations to respond to the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons since the start of the conflict.
- **\$1.48 million** was provided to refugees from Ukraine in the first four months of the crisis alone.

The Emergency Response

Plan International has been working to support people forced to flee Ukraine and seek refuge in bordering countries – including Poland, Romania and Moldova – since March 2022, just weeks after the conflict escalated, as well as those within Ukraine since August 2022. To date, **Plan International has reached more than 250,000 people with critical support**, including food, blankets, warm winter clothing, heating appliances and safe spaces for children to continue learning.

“The staff in Ukraine are still rolling out projects and doing their jobs every day, even when that means writing funding proposals from bomb shelters,” says **Plan International Canada's Linda Liutkus.**

For six weeks in late 2022, Liutkus, a Plan International Canada monitoring and evaluation advisor, joined Plan International colleagues and partners in the capital city of Kyiv to report on efforts – and continue the work. Together, they are working hard to deliver critical emergency services despite air missile attacks and days without electricity or heat.

Outreach efforts range from teacher training to providing school supplies and cash vouchers, which help families pay for basic necessities. Plan International is working to **rebuild the educational infrastructure in Ukraine, including 75 schools and 25 shelters, directly supporting nearly 40,000 children, adolescents and their families.**

Local partners are key to emergency responses

Plan International's Ukraine office works closely with partner organizations based in the area. Together, they deliver critical services well beyond the capital city. For example, the Dobrodiy Club partners with Plan International to bring creative entertainment and art therapy to children affected by the conflict in regions closer to the eastern borders.

Since 2016, the club – which is led by a group of young women who began funding their work through small online donations – has developed art materials for children facing various challenges. As the war in Ukraine escalated, the club began providing art therapy boxes that specifically address the effects of living in a war zone. **“They go into a community and find out who the children are and what their needs are,”** explains Liutkus. **“Then they adapt the boxes to provide the kind of profound support that children need when they're living through something like this.”**

To date, Plan International has reached more than **250,000 people** with critical support. That's over:

- **37,000 people** in Poland
- **93,000 people** in Romania
- More than **50,000 people** in Moldova
- More than **65,000 people** in Ukraine

LOCAL STAFF LEAD PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S EFFORTS IN UKRAINE

90% of Plan International staff globally are local to the area where they work. While international staff such as **Linda Liutkus** continue to make vital contributions to our Ukraine response, as of February 2023, two thirds of the staff in our Kyiv office are Ukrainian.

The Rundown

RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

In the span of a year, Plan International has reached more than 250,000 people in Ukraine, Poland, Moldova and Romania, having partnered with over 30 local organizations to set up more than 40 projects. Here's a look at some of our efforts:

In Ukraine

The response so far has largely focused on immediate relief efforts: food, shelter, clothing and heat – especially as winter began. **Support also addresses children's education, safety and psychological well-being.** Repairs have been made to damaged school buildings, tablets for online learning have been provided to help ensure that students' education continues, and children living in shelters are being given activity kits that offer entertainment and comfort.

In Poland

Shelters and daycare centres have been established to keep women and children safe. **One project that Plan International helped support was the opening of nine daycares**

Nastya, 15, and Amina, 14, in front of their school's art wall in a village outside of Kyiv



for children from Ukraine and Poland.

These daycares have been able to train and employ 38 women and two men who were forced to leave Ukraine, allowing them to work in the daycares. Others who use the daycares have been able to see examples of positive parenting. “Some of these women were exposed to violence as well. They were stressed, and some didn't have the parenting skills to be caring and affectionate toward their own kids,” says **Dr. Erika Silva, health advisor with Plan International Canada.** “The idea was to bring the mothers to the daycare so they could see positive mothers as well.” Dr. Silva adds that it has also been an opportunity for the families to gain access to much-needed counselling.

In Moldova

Plan International is working with partners like Amici del Bambini to send a bus stuffed with toys and staffed by psychologists to different villages and refugee centres. It is essentially a “playmobile” that helps children recover from trauma. Plan International also **supplied 500 backpacks**



Since arriving in Moldova, Plan International's emergency response team has been working to identify and support local partners, finding ways to add value to existing, locally driven response efforts. One of these is the volunteer group Moldova for Peace, which is distributing goods and food to Ukrainian refugees arriving in the country's capital Chisinau.

to refugee children living in Moldova.

The packs were filled with essentials like pens, notebooks and coloured pencils, which they would need once they were enrolled in school again. “The conflict in Ukraine has disrupted the education of a whole generation of children,” says **Emilia Sorrentino, education-in-emergencies specialist at Plan International.** “Getting pupils back into school is critical to provide a sense of normality and safety as they start to rebuild their lives in a new country.”

In Romania and Poland

Women and families have been provided kits with menstrual pads, shampoo, wet wipes and other hygiene products. Along with Plan International Germany, Silva helped oversee **the distribution of more than 12,000 health kits** to adolescent girls and women at Polish border crossings and at shelters set up to house women who had fled Ukraine. The kits contained everything from underwear and toothbrushes to menstrual pads and condoms and were given out over the span of a few days.

By the numbers

- **14,000 individuals** have received relief items such as blankets, winter clothing, heating appliances and heating fuel, particularly those in isolated areas of Ukraine
- **5,000 blankets** have been distributed to vulnerable families in Moldova
- **12,000 children** and their caregivers in Moldova have been provided in-depth psychosocial support via mobile teams offering services in 10 districts and 14 settings
- **75 schools** and **25 shelters** have been rehabilitated and reconstructed to support infrastructure for close to **40,000 children, adolescents and their caregivers**
- **30,000 children** have been reached with protection services
- **11,200 hygiene kits** have been distributed, including **7,000 period dignity kits** in Poland, **600 in Romania** and **600 in Moldova** to girls and young women
- **9 daycare centres** have been established in Poland, offering protection services to children and employment to refugee women
- **40,000 individuals** have benefitted from unconditional and unrestricted cash in Ukraine, Poland and Romania
- **1,500+ teachers** have been trained in mental health and psychosocial support, social and emotional learning, psychological first aid and classroom integration in Poland and Moldova
- **2,500+ individuals** have received information on their relevant rights, legal aid and documentation or have received support in looking for housing
- **60,000 people** have reached food assistance in Moldova and Ukraine
- **15,000 children** have benefitted from formal or informal learning activities, including the provision of tablets to continue to follow the all-Ukrainian school curriculum online
- **1,200+ backpacks** with school materials were provided to children as part of Back to School campaigns in conjunction with local municipalities and ministries of education



Education remains critical in emergency response

One in five schools in Ukraine has been damaged, and displacement is causing further interruptions to children's education. Plan International is supporting repairs, training teachers and helping establish safe spaces and alternative learning options to ensure that education remains a lifeline for children living in conflict.

Ukraine key stats:

- By the end of January 2023, 2,631 education facilities across the country had been damaged and 420 destroyed.
- Plan International partners estimate that in the last three months of 2022, at least half of all online classes were cancelled.
- The education of over 70% of Ukrainian children has been impacted since the escalation of the conflict in February 2022.
- 5.2 million children and teachers across Ukraine require substantial education assistance.

Plan International is partnering with JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) to ensure that Ukrainian children and adolescents in Romania have uninterrupted access to safe inclusive, quality education that supports their psychosocial wellbeing, and that of their families and teachers.

Moldova, Poland and Romania key stats:

- In January 2023, two out of three displaced school-age children were not enrolled in their host country's education system.
- In Moldova, out of 43,196 minors from Ukraine, 1,155 of them were enrolled in school in grades 1 to 12.
- Plan International partners in Romania stated that out of the approximately 38,000 school-age children from Ukraine currently in Romania, only about 4,000 (10.5%) are registered in Romanian schools.
- In Poland, UNICEF and UNHCR figures for January 2022 indicated that of the 600,200-plus school-age children from Ukraine currently in Poland, 69.4% of them are not in the Polish education system.

A Plan International delegation visits a school outside of Kyiv that was damaged by explosions.



“We all know that access to schools, access to a safe space is a lifeline for children. Plan International and our partners are here to ensure there is uninterrupted access to safe spaces and learning environments so girls and boys can continue their learning and also so we can provide psychosocial care, both for children and their caregivers and their family members.”

—Sven Coppens,
Plan International's director
of Ukraine crisis response

“When we work in countries where there has been conflict for decades, there is an assumption that teachers support children who have experienced trauma. A teacher in Ukraine is not accustomed to having children with post-traumatic stress disorder in their classes. We're training teachers on how to respond to the needs of children living through crises.”

—Linda Liutkus,
monitoring and evaluation advisor
with Plan International Canada





Spotlight: Yulia, In her own words

Yulia shares how she and her three-year-old son, Kiril, are coping after fleeing their home. They are now safely in Romania, where Plan International has been helping them cope and make new friends.

“On the first day of war, Kiril witnessed the explosions in Dnipro and got very scared. He ran to the bathroom and fell and hit his face. Because we live on the 10th floor, I was scared a missile might fall on our building, so we went to a shelter. After a few nights, I returned to my apartment and called my family to tell them we needed to go. It was very difficult to leave the city because there was only one train. It was -7°C , and we stood outside for seven hours.

“Many people are prepared to die because they don’t want to be separated from their loved ones. They are ready to stay in the city. Kiril doesn’t have a father, so I had no one to leave behind. One of the impacts of war is that he is afraid to go to the bathroom alone and he sleeps with the lights on. I have applied for a visa to Canada, and I’m waiting for a response. If I receive one, I will go and try to start a new life there.

“But today all my thoughts are still in Ukraine. I keep thinking about my place, my home. I waited for my apartment for 10 years. I invested my soul into it, decorating it and making it comfortable. I hope many people will read my story and understand how I feel.”



A children’s playground in Kyiv against a backdrop of bomb-damaged buildings. “Sometimes you’d see little kids playing in a playground, and it would be surreal because we were literally down in a bomb shelter six hours ago with missiles being shot over the city,” says Linda Liutkus, who traveled to Kyiv.



Spotlight: Mini dispatch from Ukraine

Linda Liutkus, a monitoring and evaluation advisor with Plan International Canada, spent six weeks in Kyiv in 2023.

“What I saw in Kyiv was people banding together to support each other through the worst crisis they have faced in decades. No matter what was happening – no heat, no lights, no water – the sentiment was that people were there for each other and that they will not be broken.”



Spotlight: Mini dispatch from Poland

Dr. Erika Silva, health advisor with Plan International Canada, was in Poland soon after the escalation, and she travelled to Poland again in 2023.

“The sentiment before [in February 2022] was that this was going to end soon,” says Dr. Silva. At the time, she says, the people she spoke with crossing into Poland “felt that ‘soon’ was going to be two to four months. Now, ‘soon’ can be anytime. We are all realizing that this is an ongoing conflict.”

Look Ahead

Long-term relief efforts continue in Ukraine.

“We know that even once the conflict is over, it’s going to take years to fully recover,” says Linda Liutkus.

She was in Kyiv, in part, to help consider what the needs will be in Ukraine’s communities over the next few years. Plan International staff and partners are focusing on the future: They run support programs for people displaced by the ongoing conflict and are also establishing operations to support long-term recovery for families and communities. They’re beginning work on initiatives that consider what the needs will be in these communities over the next two to three years.

When Liutkus arrived in Kyiv, the team was working to hire additional team members who best understood the context and community needs. Today, two thirds of the staff in the Kyiv office are Ukrainian. They help manage projects and operations. They provide financial



A boy living with his family in a refugee receiving centre in Chisinau, Moldova joins other children in some play therapy. The sessions are held by volunteer specialists including psychologists, art therapists and childcare workers.

management and measure the effectiveness of programs. They act as drivers and security personnel to facilitate safe travel to communities. They provide essential expertise in child protection, psychosocial care and education in emergencies. We thank all of our staff and local partners for their work to deliver vital services in extremely difficult circumstances.

During small breaks from working on Plan International’s relief efforts, Ukrainian staff invited Liutkus and other international workers on walks to explore Kyiv. The staff wanted to show off the city that they take so much pride in. Liutkus saw beautiful artwork in metro stations, she saw restaurants that were striving to reopen despite the regular air raids, and she even attended a relaunched 45-minute ballet performance (with accessible \$5 tickets).

“It was so inspiring,” she says. “Even during the months when the ballet stopped performing, the dancers kept practicing.” But the experience was surreal. One moment, Liutkus and her colleagues were in a basement waiting for the all-clear on an air raid. Thirty minutes later, they were sitting in the opera house watching a world-renowned ballet company.

“There was this insistence that ‘We will keep going as the amazing city that we are despite what’s happening,’” Liutkus explains. **“It’s one of the ways I saw people in Ukraine saying, ‘We’re going to keep going.’”**



When part of this school building less than an hour’s drive from Kyiv was destroyed during fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces, school staff and parents joined forces to rehabilitate it. The head teacher repainted the walls of the corridors herself, in bright colours, to lift the spirits of her pupils. Although sections of the school are still badly damaged, parts of it were able to be reopened to allow face-to-face learning – one of the few schools in the area to be able to welcome students back into the classroom.



Plan International staff pose in front of a city landmark in Kyiv.

 **Thank you for your support**

Plan International Canada is committed to the long-term support of people – especially women and girls – whose lives have been completely changed by war. We are determined to help, and we remain cautiously optimistic – just like many of the resilient people still living in the war zone.



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About Plan International Canada

Plan International Canada strives for a just world that advances children’s rights and equality for girls. We stand with children, especially girls, wherever they are oppressed, exploited, left behind or not equally valued. Plan International and Plan International Canada have no political or religious affiliations; however, we do believe in the power of global citizenship. We are a member of a global organization that partners with youth, families, communities, local organizations, supporters, celebrated ambassadors and governments. We collaborate with women-led groups and youth councils in shaping our programs. We work to ensure that children, especially girls, are safe, healthy, educated and empowered.