



THE UKRAINE WAR AND MIGRANT CRISIS: A STATISTICAL REVIEW

Jim Memory

Mapping migration in Europe has been a regular theme in *Vista Journal*. We have dedicated several editions to migration issues from a number of different perspectives for migration is, arguably, the most important missiological reality for the church in Europe today. The arrival of millions of Christians from the Majority World over the last 50 years has changed the face of the church in Europe. Yet the Ukraine War and subsequent migrant crisis has changed Europe again, for it has resulted in the largest migration of refugees within Europe since World War II: more than 7.5 million refugees have fled to other European countries as of the end of September 2022.¹ This article seeks to provide a statistical description of the dimensions of the Ukraine War and migrant crisis, and to briefly discuss its impact on mission in Europe.

Refugees from Europe

We have become used to the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees over the last few decades, most notably in 2015/16 when some two million people fleeing the conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan made their way to Europe by land and sea. Yet the Ukraine migration crisis has been different to these situations in a number of ways.

EDITORIAL

War in Europe

“...the old concepts of fighting big tank battles on European land mass are over.” Boris Johnson, 21st November 2021

That was an opinion held by many, perhaps most of us, as recently as this time last year. Yet 2022 will now always be associated with the return of war to Europe. The resulting refugee crisis is the biggest humanitarian situation in Europe since WWII.

As always, this edition of *Vista* considers different perspectives. My lead article looks at the statistics. Kristy Williams, Ruslan Maliuta, and Yuriy Kulakevych take a view from inside Ukraine, Rafał Piekarski and Barbora Filipová then consider the impact on the *gateway countries*, the nations that border Ukraine and took the initial flows, and then Jo Appleton looks at the other *receiving countries* and their response to the crisis.

Yet we also wanted to get a Russian perspective. Pavel Kolesnikov’s article makes sober reading, not least because it avoids any kind of political engagement, focussing exclusively on the love that is also being shown by Russian churches. *Vista* concludes with an article about a platform that has emerged to foster collaboration in the refugee response.

In these times of war, may *Vista* feed your prayers and actions and “your feet (be) fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15)

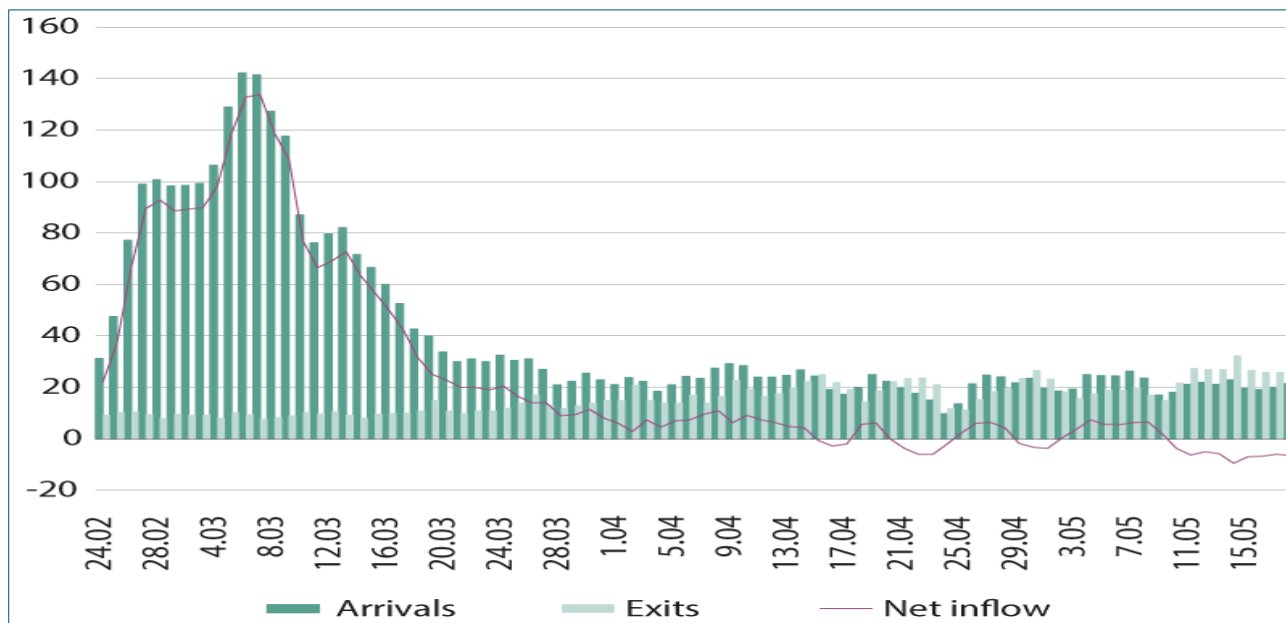
Jim Memory

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Firstly, it was different in its speed. The graphic below shows the daily border traffic from Ukraine into Poland in the first weeks following the Russian invasion in February 2022.² Within just a few days, more than a hundred thousand people a day were crossing the border into Poland, and in the first two months, that number totalled around 3.5 million. Poland took the brunt of this first wave of refugees but many others fled into the other neighbouring countries. The appearance of refugee camps across Central and Eastern Europe encouraged countries in Western Europe and further afield to open their doors to host refugees.

“in the first two months around 3.5 million people crossed the border into Poland”

Daily border traffic (in thousands) between Ukraine and Poland, 24 Feb.- 19 May 2022



Secondly, the Ukraine refugee crisis was different in its demographic makeup. As can be seen from the table below, the vast majority of the Ukrainian refugees were women and children. This was evident from the very earliest days and may have influenced the willingness of many nations to host them on a temporary basis, but it also made them particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

Demographic structure of war refugees in Poland

	Number of war refugees	Share of total(%)
Children (aged 0-18)	519,567	47.35
Working age adults	503,071	45.85
Female	460,361	41.96
Male	42,710	3.89
Retirement age adults	74,579	6.80
Female	63,878	5.82
Male	10,701	0.98
Total refugees	1,097,217	100.00

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Thirdly, the size of the numbers of refugees simply dwarfs any other European humanitarian crisis in recent memory. The UN Operational Data Portal records 7,536,433 refugees from Ukraine reported across Europe, 4,183,841 of whom have registered for Temporary Protection Schemes or similar. Around 2.5 million of the remainder are estimated to have fled or been forcibly transported into Russia.

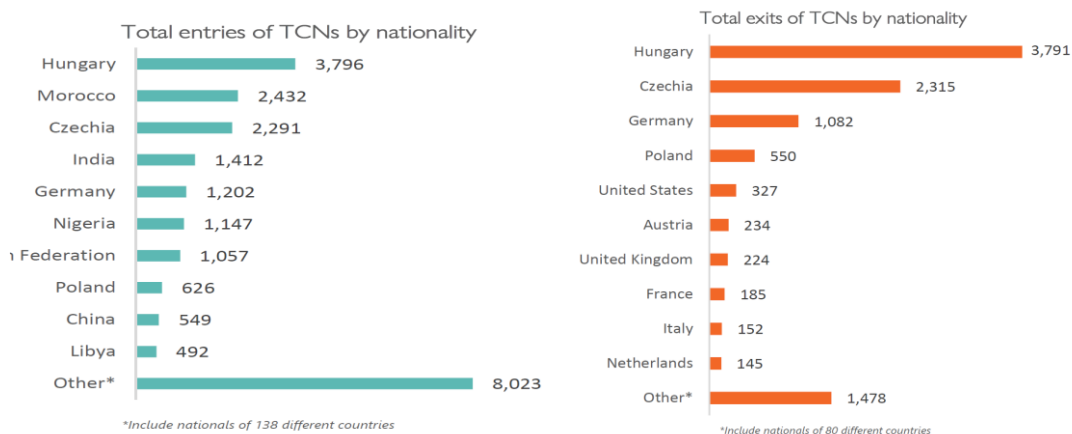
Yet these numbers do not include the 7 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs) which the International Organisation for Migration estimate to be in Ukraine as of the end of August 2022³. We should remember that this conflict did not begin in February 2022, but rather with the commencement of hostilities in 2014, and many Ukrainians have been living as IDPs in Central and particularly Western Ukraine for some years. Nevertheless, on the basis of a pre-conflict national population of 44 million, the salient truth is that roughly one in three Ukrainians have been forced from their homes as a result of the conflict.

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Other Dimensions

Whilst governments across Europe made early arrangements to provide Ukrainian nationals with temporary protection, the fate of Third Country Nationals (TCNs) caught in Ukraine was more problematic. In June 2022, the International Organisation for Migration conducted a survey among TCNs who fled the war into Germany. According to official figures, around 18,000 TCNs from Ukraine had sought temporary protection in Germany since February 2022. Though the survey sample was small (just 114 respondents) the results suggest that the TCNs seeking refuge in Germany were overwhelmingly young African men who were studying in Ukraine when war broke out³. More reliable perhaps is the picture that emerges from another IOM study in Slovakia⁴. During the first two months of the conflict, this survey found that of the 360,498 people registered at entry, 332,587 (92%) were Ukrainians, 4,884 (1%) were Slovaks, and 23,027 (7%) were TCNs. Of these, 10,483 then exited the country for other destinations. The top ten nationalities of TCNs entering were Hungarians, Moroccans, Czechs, Indians, Germans, Nigerians, Russians, Poles, Chinese and Libyans, though as indicated below, almost all the Hungarians, Czechs, Germans and Poles then exited, leaving many non-European TCNs stranded in these countries. Their legal status continues to be an issue.

Numbers of Third Country Nationals by Nationality entering and subsequently leaving countries bordering Ukraine



Finally, we cannot ignore that the Ukraine refugee crisis has provided an opportunity for people traffickers and others who wish to exploit victims for other purposes, not least because the refugees are predominantly women and children. A recent report describes abusive and exploitative situations both inside Ukraine and at the borders⁵. Even prior to the conflict, Ukrainians were identified as having been trafficked into many different countries. This is likely to have increased significantly this year. Even more troublingly, the aforementioned TCNs may need to resort to people smugglers in order to get out of the legal limbo in which they find themselves. The Moroccans, Indians, Nigerians, Chinese, Libyans in the above chart may be particularly vulnerable.

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Missiological Reflections

The scale of the Ukraine war and refugee crisis is unprecedented in the experience of most Europeans. This article has focused on the statistics of the war. However, behind every statistic is a person, a life and a story - and in this case, millions of individual people, lives and stories, each with hopes, dreams and fears (and each one precious to God).

The response from churches from across Europe has been extraordinary. Thousands of churches and Christian families have opened their doors to receive Ukrainian refugees. As described elsewhere in this edition of *Vista*, in every nation organisations have emerged to take the lead in the local response, and transnational platforms have emerged to connect and coordinate initiatives. These connections may have long-lasting consequences for mission in Europe.

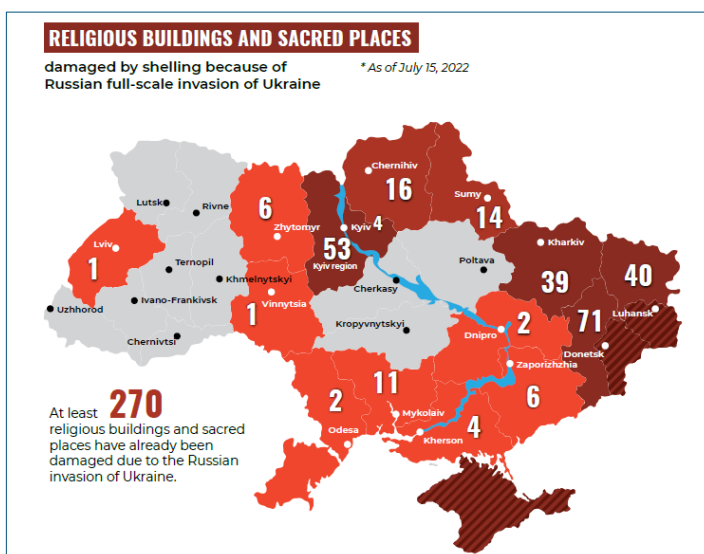
For the last 30 years, Ukraine has had one of the most dynamic mission movements in Eastern Europe. Thousands of Ukrainian missionaries were mobilised and sent into Russia, the Central Asian Republics, and into Europe. Now many

“we should not diminish the impact this barbaric war has had on the refugees and on those who have remained in Ukraine”

others have been forced to leave by the war and find themselves spread across Western Europe. Every Christian migrant is a potential missionary and these Ukrainian Christians can be a huge blessing to those who are receiving them.

However, we should not diminish the impact that this barbaric war has had on the refugees and on those who have remained in Ukraine. Many are grieving and traumatised and need our care and support. And in Ukraine itself, millions remain under the threat of Russian bombardment or worse. A recent study by the Institute for Religious Freedom found that at least 270 religious buildings, educational institutions and sacred sites had been damaged or destroyed⁶. These were concentrated in the regions of Donetsk (71), Kyiv (53), Luhansk (40 and Kharkiv (39).

There is also evidence of pastors and other religious leaders being detained or killed by Russian troops. Yet stories are also emerging of churches that now have three services every Sunday rather than one as they did back in February, such is the hunger for God’s word. There is devastation and fear but there is also faith. Could the breadbasket of Europe become the basket from which the bread of life is spread in Ukraine and across the whole of Europe?



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End notes

- 1 UNHCR Operational Data Portal, Ukraine Refugee Situation, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>, Accessed 1st October 2022
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4. International Organisation for Migration, IOM Germany – Third Country Nationals arriving from Ukraine in Germany, June 2022, <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/germany-third-country-nationals-arriving-ukraine-germany-june-2022>
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WHAT ARE THE MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE?

Kristy Williams, Ruslan Maliuta, and Yuriy Kulakevych

As *Vista* continues its reflection on crucial issues for mission in Europe today, few incidents appear to be more relevant than the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The February 24th attack on a sovereign nation of 43.2 million people¹ and the war that has ensued remain on Europe's heart and mind. While the conflict has resulted in 6.4 million Ukrainian refugees scattered across Europe, even more Ukrainians are displaced inside their country.² The Russia-Ukraine war carries significant missiological implications for all Christian stakeholders involved but particularly for the body of believers remaining in Ukraine.

The Church in Ukraine has been ready to respond to the mission of God ever since the 2014 Russian occupation of Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. As 2021 concluded, churches across Ukraine felt the direct threat from Russia and began to mobilise for a new season of mission – physical and spiritual preparation not only for an enemy invasion but also for a new wave of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) that would flood west from Ukraine's existing eastern battlefield. While no one could have predicted the extent of the first weeks of attacks in places like Kharkiv, Kherson, Mariupol, Kyiv, and its now-famous suburbs like Bucha, Irpin, Borodyanka, and Hostomel, Ukrainian believers quickly realised the time had come “to rescue those who are being taken away to death” (Prov. 24:11). They recognised that part of being on God's mission is to be in direct battle with the devil himself.

“As 2021 concluded, churches across Ukraine felt the direct threat from Russia and began to mobilise for a new season of mission.”

Since the onset of war, the Ukrainian evangelical community has been active in bringing the message of Christ to those in pain, and in responding to a plethora of needs. In God's kingdom, there is no template for missional identity and action – the options for mission can vary radically from person to person. Each Ukrainian Christian has had to seek God's will as an individual, as a family unit, and as a local church body, and then follow Him into the invitation and command to mission. Since February 24th, we have asked ourselves many questions: “*Should we offer social services? Should we partner with the city hall? Should we feed the hungry? Should we share the Gospel? Should we house the homeless? Should we join the armed forces or the territorial defense services? Should we start a church for IDPs? Should we go to the front as chaplains?*”. Ukrainians have done it all and more for the sake of the Gospel, that they might win some (1 Cor. 9:22).

Ukrainian believers' witness to the mission of Christ to save the lost has been an inspiring testimony over the past 200+ days of war. The missional opportunities during war times in Ukraine have been endless, and the whole world is watching. The Ukrainian Church is not isolated from society but rather lives out its calling to be salt and light wherever it goes. This aroma of Christ is attracting the masses. The Church is building trust with people they only dreamed about reaching in the past. Many Evangelical churches in war zones have not closed their doors. This phenomenon is particularly true in places of targeted violence and attack, where the once frowned-upon Protestant church building has become the provider and shelter for the town. Although many congregants in cities under shelling have fled abroad or to safer areas of Ukraine, the servants of the Lord who stay are reporting church attendance of 2-3 times more people than before February 24. Also, reports of co-operation between Catholic, Ukrainian Orthodox, and Protestant churches are on the rise.

The missional focus of believers is not without noticeable challenges. For example, churches in areas that come under Russian occupation are soon persecuted by the Russian authorities through physical abuse, confiscation of property, psychological pressure, and constant questioning and monitoring. For example, three large facilities that belonged

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to different Evangelical churches have been taken over by the Russian soldiers in Melitopol, a city in Southern Ukraine. Historically, Protestants have been viewed as western spies and any church but the Russian Orthodox Church is considered heretical. Nonetheless, some pastors in occupied Ukraine continue to shepherd the flock and take their churches underground.

During war times, evangelism in Ukraine has come in two forms. The more obvious one is, for example, sharing daily Bible teaching and the practical love of Christ at churches and community centers that serve IDPs. Ukrainians have been more drawn to the church in war times, whether free food packets are offered or not. Ukrainians from the east and south often experience their own version of culture shock as they resettle to more western regions of Ukraine – differences in language, mentality, religious practice, and attitude add to the complex reality of mission and ministry. Ukrainian IDPs, especially youth, struggle with loneliness in a new place, which is where the church is offering community, friendship, and aid for their transition.

The second form of evangelism is more urgent and direct – “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the kingdom of Heaven is near” (Mat. 4:17). Since many Ukrainians live on a precipice between literal life and death with no guarantee of tomorrow, their time to make peace with God is today. “Behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2) has never been a more relevant and welcomed message.

“In spite of great uncertainty and challenge, the Ukrainian Church is setting the direction of its core ministries for the months and years to come”

In spite of great uncertainty and challenge, the Ukrainian Church is setting the direction of its core ministries for the months and years to come. The Resolution of the Ukrainian Partnering Summit, hosted by the UA Council of Evangelical Protestant Churches

and the World Evangelical Alliance, determined that while humanitarian assistance to IDPs, refugees, and those caught in economic hardship is still essential, pastoral care for the soul is of primary concern (June 28, 2022). The Economist estimated that 3-4 million Ukrainians will need medication to handle the mental implications of war, and that 15 million Ukrainians are in need of psychological support³. The Ukrainian Church needs to focus on rehabilitation and spiritual and psychological support for those affected by the war.

The Church in Ukraine needs to respond to the emotional and spiritual needs of its people as the ongoing extension of the mission of God to help bring healing and redemption. This goal will require not only the conceptual unity that the evangelical community in Ukraine has been experiencing to a significant degree over the past half-year; the Church also needs to strengthen its functional unity that effectively partners to face a crisis of mass proportions. And the war is not over yet. Ukrainian believers are still in the midst of a daily struggle while living out a unique narrative, “written in the heat of missionary efforts”⁴.

As Ukrainians grapple with invasion, oppression, and a front-row seat to a battle between good and evil and darkness and light, their war rages on. The gut-wrenching reality is that no believer can make this right. It is God alone who ceases wars, who changes the hearts of kings, and who can stop aggression. God is the sole Redeemer, with the mission to make this right and wipe away every tear.

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Endnotes

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2. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine> Accessed 10th September 2022

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THE UKRAINE WAR AND REFUGEE CRISIS

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE GATEWAY COUNTRIES

Rafał Piekarski and Barbora Filipová



Refugees at Warsaw Central Station

The Background

Unsurprisingly, the Russian invasion of Ukraine caught the countries around it unprepared for what was to come. Apart from the direct neighbours of Ukraine (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova), we are also including the Czech Republic and Bulgaria in this article, since huge numbers of refugees headed there too. Although we got used to calling these countries “gateways”, the following weeks and months showed that they were not just unavoidable transit countries for these refugees, but were to become longer-term havens for many of them.

As former Soviet/Russian satellites, these countries have a lot in common. One particular similarity relates to the attitude that these countries express towards immigration. According to the European Social Survey from 2018, the people in Central and Eastern European (CEE) were less likely to welcome immigrants than their Western counterparts. This was manifested during the Syrian refugee crisis that hit Europe in 2015 when their governments strongly opposed plans to relocate asylum applicants and vowed to keep their borders closed to refugees, which caused a major rift within the EU.

Nevertheless, since the Soviet Union’s disintegration, Ukrainians have been the largest minority in many CEE countries and the general experience with them has been mostly positive: most of them came in search of jobs to be able to feed their families back home, which made them trouble-free neighbours and reliable co-workers, with no major cultural differences. Furthermore, the shared view of Russia as a lasting potential threat made CEE countries sympathise with Ukraine, especially since 2014, when the attacks of Russian forces started in Donbas, and Crimea was annexed.

The Invasion

As Russian troops openly invaded Ukraine on February 24th, the biggest refugee crisis in the recent history of Europe started, this time mainly impacting the region that used to show the least solidarity in the past. In only the first five weeks more than four million Ukrainians were forced to leave their country. Overnight, the gateway countries were

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flooded by people fleeing the war. The situation on borders and in key transport cities was dramatic and chaotic, but both the governments and the civil society, including churches, responded quickly and worked out emergency plans to help those fleeing the Russian invasion.

“Most of the churches immediately offered their venues, finances, workers, volunteers, and other resources to face what they saw to be the challenge of their lifetime.”

Churches were among the first who responded. Although low in numbers in this region (esp. of evangelical believers) but due to many existing connections and partnerships with Ukrainian churches they were able to help immediately, organically, flexibly, and effectively, long before the big players were able to step in. Most of the churches immediately offered their venues, finances, workers, volunteers, and other resources to face what they saw to be a challenge of their lifetime. New systems were set up, new leaders organised evacuation, transport, accommodation, humanitarian aid, language courses, and many other services.

The number and variety of stories is overwhelming. There are hundreds of thousands of churches like Maják, a small evangelical church in the small town of Vsetín, Czech Republic, that originally wanted to help 10-15 Ukrainian families close to some of their church members, but ended up helping a thousand of refugees in just the first week of the crisis; or like PROEM Christian Center in Zakościele, Poland, that swiftly adjusted all its programmes and connected with partners to be able to offer care in various ways for thousands of people fleeing the war, or like the network of Ukrainian Bucharest Churches (UBC22), that connected 800 volunteers who assisted over 5,000 refugees and delivered more than 100 tons of food to Ukraine.

As approx. 50% of the refugees were children and 80% of the adult refugees were women, former concerns and fears about immigration were forgotten and empathy and solidarity prevailed throughout society. Many unchurched people were drawn to cooperate with churches during this time, trusting and appreciating their selfless and efficient ministry.

Through serving the refugees, Christ was made visible in the Church.



Volunteers providing help to refugees at Praha Hlavní nádraží Photographs by [janbery](#).

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This intense first phase lasted for approximately two months. Then, fatigue came. The volunteers slowly started to withdraw. The leaders burned out and realised they need support themselves. The future was uncertain, but it was clear that most of the refugees would stay, not willing to move further from their homeland and the family members that they left behind. Churches realised that cooperating and creating long-term sustainable ministry patterns of refugee ministry is inevitable.

New Challenges and Opportunities

“Turning evil into good” is a biblical pattern of God working in the midst of the most difficult circumstances, changing what was intended for destruction into accomplishing His purposes. From that perspective we can identify four main areas of new challenges and opportunities for the Church in the neighbouring countries.

Sustainability – despite the difficulties, keep developing what you have already started: In the last months the Church has grown in the areas of spiritual care and social involvement in ways unseen

before. New ministries have been established, new people have stepped up, new leaders have risen. But the war in Ukraine has impacted the economy in countries like Poland, Czech Republic or Moldova, and people in churches may grow weary in helping the Ukrainian refugees while experiencing inflation, growing costs of electricity and heating as the winter approaches. Thus, it is of high importance to keep bringing the war in Ukraine to the front of our attention. Unlike the media, we cannot take it down from our church headlines as people grow weary of hearing about it. Instead, the Church needs to look for ways to make ministering to the Ukrainians sustainable and long-term.

“Churches have realised that cooperating and creating long-term sustainable ministry patterns of refugee ministry is inevitable.”

Intentionality – despite serving many, keep looking out for the still unseen and unanswered needs of the few: With the governments scaling down their involvement in helping the refugees, the Church needs to take an active role in identifying and responding to new needs as well as identifying refugees who fall through the existing systems. Children are struggling to balance school education on-site and online. Handicapped people are unable to get registered in any support programs. Single mothers with infants are not able to work or send their kids to preschool. Men are

“With the governments scaling down their involvement in helping the refugees, the Church needs to take an active role.”

struggling with addictions. Elderly people cannot count on the support of either the government or their adult children. These are specific needs that can be answered only through intentional involvement.

Equipping & Outreach - despite natural gravitation towards those who are already in the church, keep reaching out to the lost: There is a common tendency in the Church to focus on those who are already followers of Jesus and neglect those who still don't know Him. Yet the Great Commission does not lose its relevance in the circumstances of war. As followers of Jesus, we are still called to “go and make disciples of all nations”. Therefore, we need to find ways of ministering to people whom God has brought to our doorsteps, though displaced and afflicted by the horrors of the war.

Equipping the Ukrainian believers as well as seeking, developing, and supporting diaspora leaders who can mobilise others to reach out to their Ukrainian neighbours should become another focus of our attention. As Yaroslav Pizsh, the President of Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary has put it, helping the refugees turn “from victims to ambassadors” for Jesus is critical in this process. Ministering to the Ukrainians from outside of the Church whose marriages have been strained, identity has been shaken and a sense of belonging has been undermined provides yet another opportunity to reach out to them with the Gospel of Christ. Mobilising female leaders, given that over 80 percent of all the refugees are women, is of the utmost importance despite the cultural challenges that this involves.

Unexpected partnerships – despite the challenges, keep developing new partnerships within and outside of the Church: The last six months of the war resulted in forming new partnerships, both within and outside of the Church. Many communities of believers have become more visible in their local context, cooperating with other non-

profits and local authorities. At the same time, new partnerships (both national and international) have been established, providing opportunities for further outreach in the future. Developing these partnerships will hopefully result in the further recognition and growth of the Church in countries like Poland or the Czech Republic where evangelicals are considered an insignificant minority. Let us use this time wisely, not for our own glory, but for the glory of God and the ultimate expansion of His Kingdom.

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THE PERSPECTIVE OF RECEIVING COUNTRIES

Jo Appleton



A volunteer holding a sign to guide refugees at Berlin's central rail station

As refugees from Ukraine arrived into European countries following the invasion of Ukraine, institutions at all levels responded. For the first time since its adoption 2001, the European Union triggered a 'temporary protection directive', described as a 'exceptional measure to provide immediate and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx or imminent mass influx of displaced persons from non-EU countries who are unable to return to their country of origin.'¹ Other countries such as the UK, Denmark and non-EU member states of Schengen also quickly put in place similar schemes.²

Alongside the legal frameworks enabling people to enter and stay in a country, many governments asked local residents to open their homes to Ukrainian refugees on a temporary basis. Other benefits, not normally afforded so quickly to asylum seekers from other countries, included access to employment, education and jobs.

The response of Churches

In late February, many of the international Christian ecumenical or denominational organisations released statements calling for the conflict to end and a call to prayer.³ The Conference of European Churches (CEC) raised the issue of the church's humanitarian response at the European Parliament in July⁴ and some denominational networks such as the European Baptist Federation continue to hold regular pan-European online prayer meetings.⁵ And elsewhere in this edition of Vista, you can read about Christian Ukraine Collaboration, a platform that emerged in the weeks following the invasion to encourage pan-European communication and collaboration in responding to the refugee crisis. At the other end of the spectrum, individual Christians, churches and mission organisations responded in many different ways, for example as Daniel Zimmerman from Forum Wiedenest in Germany explains:

“I think most churches somehow got involved with Ukrainians in their area and many collaborated in ways they had not done before.”

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“A few churches will have given financial support in one or another way. Many churches took part in Humanitarian Aid Transports. Activities involved organising their own transports through personal contacts, collecting clothing and other necessities, and offering their church buildings as hubs for collecting the goods.

I think most churches somehow got involved with Ukrainians in their area and many collaborated in ways they had not done before. They helped by handing out clothing, food, and other supplies of daily need. They held services for Ukrainians, either by translating content or having a separate service. They started programs for Ukrainians, often language courses, Kids programs, or Cafes.”

A Ukrainian who has lived in Spain for more than 20 years observes, “The response of the Spanish churches has been exemplary in every sense. Aid was offered according to the needs of each moment, and today, after 6 months, it continues to be important, although not as intense as at the beginning.”

And Sue Butler from Welcome churches in the UK agrees; “Churches have leapt at the opportunity to welcome Ukrainians in their communities, not only as individual hosts, but many churches have become the focal points for support groups, meet-ups and job support. It has been an opportunity for churches in areas where there have not traditionally been large numbers of refugees to join in with proactively welcoming those seeking safety in the UK.”

Creating networks of support

As days have turned into weeks and now months, a level of coordination between Christian organisations and churches in countries has emerged, although a larger scale coordinated effort which takes more time but could be more efficient has yet to happen. Many of the offers of support have grown out of existing networks – for example the UK ‘Welcome Churches’ network already trained, equipped, and supported churches across the UK to welcome refugees and people seeking asylum from all backgrounds in their location.

“Over 1000 people from local churches have attended our Welcome Ukraine training which includes information about current good practice for helping those newly arriving in the UK as well as information about Ukrainian culture, food and churches,” explains Sue Butler. “We also have organised online Trauma Awareness training to equip churches and help them think through how they can better understand and be helpful to those suffering from trauma and stress.”

“Welcome Churches are speaking directly to councils across the UK and encouraging the church community to step up as emergency hosts.”

Some networks have also compiled online information for Ukrainians arriving in their country, with information in Ukrainian, Russian, English or a local language. This typically includes useful information about the country and local services and links to churches: “Over 35,000 people have accessed the Welcome Churches site⁶, with 15% still in Poland or Ukraine,” Sue comments.

Challenges and opportunities ahead

While many people arriving from Ukraine since February plan to return, the prolonged duration of the war means that this is not possible yet. Short term crisis solutions will not be enough, and many churches and networks are involved in creating a longer term response.

In August, the Spanish government’s emergency reception programme ended three months ahead of schedule due to falling numbers of people arriving. Spanish NGO organisation Diaconía España had worked with the Government to provide short term accommodation.

“We have now opened long-stay places to continue looking after those who were in our emergency resources,” explains Conchi Gutiérrez, Director of Diaconía España. “No Ukrainian refugee who has been sheltered by the Government in the resources provided through the Diaconía and the 19 NGOs that are part of the Shelter System will remain homeless”.



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However in the UK, the official Homes4Ukraine scheme only required a six month commitment to host Ukrainian guests, although this could be extended.

Some Ukrainians have found it difficult to find work, perhaps due to having young children at home or lack of proficiency in the language, and having the money to privately rent property may be difficult. With the hosting arrangement coming to an end for many, there is a worrying increase in the number of Ukrainians facing homelessness. According to Sue Butler, Welcome Churches are speaking directly to councils across the UK and encouraging the church community to step up as emergency hosts for these families.

Other ongoing challenges may be financial, as churches who have given sacrificially to support the humanitarian response now struggle with longer-term financial support, particularly as the cost of living for their members continues to rise.

But there are opportunities for churches as they welcome Ukrainians into their midst, many of whom come from evangelical backgrounds. As a Ukrainian living in Spain observes: “Despite the difficulties, they are active in service, they integrate easily into congregational life, with a clear vocation to give testimony to Jesus Christ where they live, mostly in places of welcome that have nothing to do with local evangelicals”.

And reflecting on the long-term implications of the movement of Ukrainians across Europe, Daniel Zimmerman adds: “From a political point of view western countries like Germany need qualified workers, so they will be trying to keep them, while Ukraine will desperately need its workforce back to rebuild at some point hopefully. On a more personal level I think that the consequences of this war will be felt on many levels and for a long time. For Ukrainians, the level of trauma they have to deal with is immense. For the people of other European countries there will be a price to be paid as well. The question remains: How may peace come in our countries but also in our hearts?”

Jo Appleton is one of the founding editors of Vista

Endnotes

- [1. EU invokes Temporary Protection Directive to help those fleeing Ukraine | European Website on Integration \(europa.eu\) Temporary protection \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [2. New Danish law for those fleeing Ukraine mirrors EU Temporary Protection Directive | European Website on Integration \(europa.eu\) Q&A: The UK and the Ukraine refugee situation - Migration Observatory - The Migration Observatory \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)
- [3. Statement on Ukraine - EEA \(europeana.org\)](#)
- [4. Churches highlight their humanitarian response to Ukraine at European Parliament | CEC \(ceceurope.org\)](#)
- [5. Ukraine | EBF](#)
- [6. Ukraine Welcome - Welcome Churches](#)

Just as we were about to publish this edition of Vista, the WEA published their own Situation Report from Ukraine which can be viewed here: <https://worlddea.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/WEA-Ukraine-Sitrep-October.pdf>

WEA EST. 1846
WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

The Response - UKRAINE Special Task Force
Situation Report #2 | October 2022

The Global Church Is Standing with Ukraine for the Long Term

Established by the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), **The Response - Ukraine Special Task Force (TRUST)** is coordinating efforts with evangelical churches in Ukraine and neighboring countries to serve the immediate and long-term needs of those affected by the war.

What's the latest situation?

- 7 million** internally displaced people¹
- 7.2 million** refugees in European countries²
- 13 million** stranded in affected areas³

• Fighting and shelling continue in eastern and southern Ukraine, and strikes in other areas have caused additional destruction of civilian infrastructure and a large number

What are the needs?

Humanitarian needs⁶

- 9.3 million people** need food and livelihood assistance
- 14.5 million people** need health assistance
- 11.2 million people** need shelter and non-food items

Mobilising the church: Response priorities

Our partner alliances, denominations and church and ministry networks across Ukraine and neighboring countries are mobilizing to focus on the following interventions to serve people affected by the war:

- Basic aid, including food, clothing, first aid and medicine**

THE CHURCH IN RUSSIA CARES

Pavel Kolesnikov

EDITORIAL NOTE *Vista has always sought to provide a breadth of perspectives on the issues under consideration. We have also committed to representing our authors fairly and not to censor the content. That is why we include our disclaimer at the end: "The views expressed in Vista are those of the authors of each article and do not necessarily reflect the position of the editorial team." Most of the articles in this edition of Vista could be understood as being written "from the Ukrainian side". The following article gives a Russian perspective on the response of the Russian Evangelical Protestant Churches to the refugee crisis. By what it says, and what it does not say, Vista readers can appreciate something of how they might pray for Russian Evangelicals in these dark days for our continent.*

Life after February 24th changed all over the world. One can think a lot, guess, speculate or ask: "Why? How?". But God still exists, we believe in Him and we have hope even in times of grief, suffering, and misunderstanding.

God created the world and gave us a command through Jesus Christ: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

The Russian Federation is a country of 145 million people with approximately 1.5 million Protestants. As of 2021, there are 14,500 Protestant churches in Russia.

We love our country, we are citizens of our country, we are Christians, and we are here and now working for the salvation of the nation. We are called by God to be in our country, and we ask for His wisdom and strength to fulfill God's plan here in Russia. "Whatever your hand can do, do according to your strength." (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Evangelical churches in Russia have been praying for peace and ministering to those in need right now for 6 months in cities such as Taganrog, Bryansk, Donetsk, Lugansk, Mariupol, Severodonetsk and others. Here are a few stories:

Mariupol

The pastor of an Evangelical church tells me: "Last weekend we once again took part in a charity trip to Mariupol and Volnovakha. Every day teams travelled to churches in Mariupol and held children's parties at their sites. They played games with the children, gave them sweets, school kits, and gave away lots of clothes and shoes. Words cannot describe the children's emotions!

While the organisers were getting ready for the festivities, the rest of the team went around the neighborhood inviting children and adults to the festivities. And during the holiday, everyone who was not directly involved in the event went to distribute food packages to the most devastated areas. People there were in particular need of help. Their highrise blocks are nothing but embers, but they don't leave because their papers are burned and they have nowhere to go. They continue to live in the remains of these apartments with no water, no electricity and no gas - in very great need. We gave them humanitarian aid and tried to speak the Gospel.

Up to five pastors go to Mariupol with the team on every such trip. I was asked a question: "Why? Why would pastors leave their flock and go to the affected cities? Why isn't it enough to just send a team of volunteers from the church?"

Pastors go because there is a need there. There is a type of ministry that only ministers can fulfill. The pastoral help is needed by the team of brothers and sisters themselves - it is spiritual support and encouragement for them. When people have their ministers with them, it helps them. Pastors also serve as a source of encouragement and instruction for local churches. Many churches were left without ministers, because when they had the chance, they left town.

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Ministries are now performed by ordinary church members and they themselves need pastoral care. The churches are scattered, and though they belong to different associations, those ties are now severed. Our pastors help to build inter-church relationships and they, along with the rest of the team, of course do whatever else is required during the trip.

Severodonetsk

A team from Rostov-on-Don and Bryansk have travelled to serve the ordinary people who live in Severodonetsk. There are those who lived there during the hostilities, and those who returned after the hostilities. Most of them are elderly, but there are young people, teenagers and children too.

A few statistics about the teams ministry there: lunches for 150 people; food kits for 150 people; hygiene kits for 150 people; baby food for 2 families; medicines for 150 people and people with disabilities; a girl with cancer always asks for sweets, we bring them to her individually.

The main need is for housing repairs, which can't be met. Also, food and hygiene kits and medicines are only partially replenished. We ask for prayer for the restoration of infrastructure: electricity, gas and water. People have fear of the approaching cold weather.

Taganrog

There is round-the-clock assistance by non-believers at the TAC (Temporary Accommodation Center) in Taganrog. During the last few months through the combined efforts of the churches for the refugees of Ukraine, 62,624 rubles were raised. All of this amount was spent on volunteer trips to the city of Taganrog, where temporary refugee shelters have now been set up.

Between 200 and 400 people arrive at the TACs per day, so there is a constant purchase of humanitarian aid, from food to clothing and personal hygiene products. The entire amount collected by these churches has been spent on these purchases. The need is unending and is growing each day, so all of the churches in Krasnodar and the Krasnodar region are actively involved in the work of refugee ministry, not only financially, but also physically.

Groups of volunteers have been working around the clock for more than a month, sharing God's love and care with the suffering people! Thank you for your participation in our common work for the Glory of God!

“we urge you to pray for the Christians in Russia, we need God's wisdom, strength and joy with which to go to those who have lost it.”

More from Taganrog:

"We met Tatiana the first day we arrived in Taganrog. She and her husband came to the TAC from Mariupol, and all that time they were in the city, hiding in basements. Then a shell flew into their apartment. Of all the entrances in the house, only their entrance was hit and the apartment burned down completely. They were still in town for a while despite not having electricity, water, or gas.

At the first opportunity they decided to go to Russia to survive. They themselves are very modest. Although they weren't very talkative, we chatted a little with them for two days, while they were waiting for the train to be assigned to them. The day came when the train was scheduled and volunteers escorted refugees to buses and to the station.

I ended up next to Tanya and I asked her how she was feeling. She said so childishly and openly: "I'm scared, we don't know what awaits us, we have nothing and we have no idea what's next."

I inwardly prayed that God would give me the right words. I said, "God saved you, you were under bombardment for such a long time, but you are healthy, alive and safe now, God will not leave you." Then Tanya started crying and said, "It is so important to know that we are not forgotten."

We stood there hugging for a while. And then she asked: "Where do all you guys come from, all these kind and

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compassionate volunteers?" God told me to share, and I said: "We are from the church, almost all the volunteers here are believers, and all the good things in us are from God, He takes care of you through us." And then Tanya said, "Aren't you Pentecostal?" Then I thought to myself, "I think she's on to something." I answered that I go to an evangelical church.

And then she said, "I went to a charismatic church for a little while, and then I stopped quickly, but a guy from our church often writes to me to say that he prays for me, prays that I would meet people who would help me, and here you are!"

Here I was already so surprised at God's work myself. We talked some more with her about God, His love, and the hope they needed so much. I suggested that Tanya pray, and she replied, "Can you?" We stood in the midst of a large crowd, I prayed for Tanya, cried with her, and I had this feeling inside that this was the moment I needed to be in Taganrog.

We exchanged numbers and are now in touch. I believe that God will continue to carry their family in His arms.

Pray for us!

God calls us to love, to bless, to serve. We are His instrument on this earth. This is the time in history when we must be united as Christians as we confess one God and work for one kingdom.

We pray for peace and work in His Name! And we urge you to pray for the Christians in Russia, we need God's wisdom, strength and joy with which to go to those who have lost it.

Pavel Kolesnikov is senior pastor of Zelenograd Baptist Church and Regional Director for Eurasia for the Lausanne Movement

CHRISTIAN UKRAINE COLLABORATION

Matt Paschall and Jim Memory

On 19th and 20th May 2022, 72 Christian leaders from 22 European countries, including 15 from Ukraine gathered for 24 hours in Krakow to consider the Ukraine war and refugee crisis. They were called together by a platform called Christian Ukraine Collaboration that had emerged during the early weeks of the war as leaders of Evangelical mission agencies sought collaborative responses to the situation.

Christian Ukrainian Collaboration seeks to enable organisations, denominations, and churches to collaborate for the benefit of serving, supporting and reaching Ukrainian people. The desired outcome of the Krakow gathering was to serve as a catalyst for long-term collaboration enabling a wider sharing of resources, experience, and success. The core team desired to see greater unity and partnerships developed for managing the challenges of the current crisis and to clarify sustainable long-term needs into the future. The core team involved leaders from Lausanne Europe, European Christian Mission, Greater Europe Mission, Josiah Venture, Forum Wiedenest, PROEM and Refugee Highway Partnership.

Why did we hold the Christian Ukraine Collaboration gathering?

During the early weeks of the crisis, mission agencies and churches were responding mainly through denominational and organisational structures, but greater collaboration was needed to handle the complexity and scope of the massive humanitarian crisis. In addition, the majority of the funding and energy was reactively responding to short-term relief, rather than pro-actively preparing for long-term needs.

“The desired outcome of the Krakow gathering was to serve as a catalyst for long-term collaboration enabling a wider sharing of resources, experience, and success”



This strategic meeting was initiated to build trust and vision for sustainable long-term collaboration. The top five countries receiving the majority of refugees, Poland, Romania, Moldova, Hungary and Slovakia, were at the time overwhelmed and leaders admitted they had surpassed their capacity for handling the flow of mostly women and children with high levels of trauma. They had an honest plea:

“There is a need for an umbrella to gather our resources and experiences so we can collaborate. In Poland, we have realised how the task is too big. Our Polish resources are over and our people are on the edge of exhaustion. Financially, we are at our limit. The work that we are doing is just a drop in the bucket. If we don’t cooperate in Poland and on a much larger level, we will not be able to meet the task ahead of us. Creating a national platform for cooperation and an international platform is the next step. We see the need and we are truly asking for your help! We don’t want to compete with each other, but we want to be good stewards of what resources you can bring, from your countries, your churches.” (Rafał Piekarski, PROEM Ministries)

“A vital part of the gathering was hearing the perspective of the Ukrainian leaders”

The current crisis demands a multi-disciplinary network capable of ministering to the multi-layered needs of individuals, families, community and nation. For this reason, the Christian Ukraine Collaboration invited to the Krakow gathering leaders from the business and financial world, educational specialists, anti-human trafficking advocates, mental health care professionals, church planters as well as pastoral and theological leaders to represent these sectors and to encourage local churches and Christian charities to consider sharing their experiences and resources.

Focus and Outcomes of the Gathering

Many of the leaders attending the Krakow Christian Ukraine Collaboration gathering had never met before, even within the same country as geographical, organisational and denominational differences previously prevented some groups from

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cooperation. A vital part of the gathering was hearing the perspectives of the Ukrainian leaders and enabling their connection to the European and Western evangelical world.

The programme for the gathering had multiple opportunities to explore the possibilities of collaboration by countries and regions and by areas of special interest. The 72 participants were asked to select one of five core ministry areas based on their experience and interest, to develop strategies for sharing resources regionally:

1. **Relief and Rebuilding:** coordinating and prioritising resources (financial and humanitarian) to be wisely shared among churches, ministries and leaders in Europe and Ukraine for short and long-term needs.
2. **Emotional Well Being and Families:** equipping mental health care training and trauma care for families among churches and Ukrainian leaders in Europe.
3. **Establishing Community and Integration within the Local Church:** developing healthy models of community within existing churches and Ukrainian communities.
4. **Empowering & Equipping Leadership:** developing resources for Ukrainian leaders to restart and resume ministry and mission inside and outside of Ukraine.
5. **Communication & Coordinating Partnership:** establishing a network with key resources for core ministries needed for serving, supporting, and reaching Ukraine.

Within each of the five Core Areas, Working Groups were formed to break these areas into manageable sub-groups. The Communication and Partnership group was tasked with connecting the other four core areas and working groups together into a meaningful platform.

Conclusion

The Christian Ukraine Collaboration gathering in Krakow achieved the desired outcomes, but even more importantly, it fulfilled most of the expectations expressed by participants prior to the Krakow meeting. These included: (1) building new partnerships and friendships built on trust, (2) networking for receiving and sharing resources, (3) finding financial sources and funding for sustainability, (4) identifying specialised training, (5) discovering and discerning long-term strategy, (6) joining collaborative groups with action steps and ongoing work, and (7) seeing the beginning of a new collaborative movement/network in Europe.

In the months following the gathering, it has become clear that the greatest priority is a digital platform to facilitate communication and collaboration, and this is currently under development. Three Ukrainians have also joined the core group to strengthen the voice of those inside the country in future initiatives. A follow-up event for Ukrainian-based ministries is being planned for November 2022.

Matt Paschall is European Director of Refugee Highway Partnership

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Please note: The views expressed in Vista are those of the authors of each article and do not necessarily reflect the position of the editorial team.