



Tetana Viktorivna Halimelina, pictured with her son and extended family, is an internally displaced person from Ukraine's non-government-controlled territories. She received help from Caritas Ukraine to buy cows. *Photo courtesy of Mathieu Radoube/Caritas Ukraine*

Ukraine Crisis Response

CASE STUDY IDENTIFIES FACTORS THAT AIDED CARITAS UKRAINE'S RAPID GROWTH

Context

In late 2014, instability spread to Eastern Ukraine when the Russian Federation annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and armed separatists took control of the Donbas region following the evacuation of the then president, Viktor Yanukovich, who had fled after 4 months of protests in the capital of Kyiv. The violence led to displacement of more than 1.7 million people and the evacuation of an estimated 1.1 million to neighboring countries. About 3.8 million in Ukraine need humanitarian assistance.

In response to the escalating crisis, Caritas Ukraine, a national charitable foundation established in 1994, adapted and expanded its programming to assist internally displaced people and host community members affected by the conflict. Through this effort, Caritas Ukraine (CUA) became the largest national organization responding to the crisis, providing assistance to 400,000 people. CUA has partnered with several international humanitarian organizations, including Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Caritas Austria, Caritas Vienna, Caritas Germany and Caritas Europa. Through these partnerships, Caritas Ukraine received programmatic funding as well as capacity strengthening support for its overall organizational development and program quality.

In May 2017, CRS conducted a case study to identify the key factors that aided Caritas Ukraine in its rapid adjustment in organizational structures, policies, procedures and programming to respond to the growing needs. Drawing on interviews with the staff of CUA and international humanitarian organizations who partnered with Caritas Ukraine, the study illuminates lessons around capacity strengthening and partnership during an emergency response, and identifies ways international agencies can improve partnership initiatives in future responses.

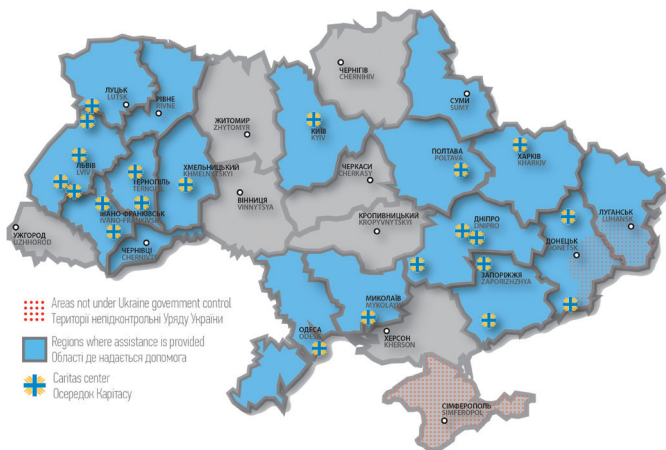
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“CRS brought new approaches and methodologies to Caritas Ukraine. CRS brought these ideas, presented them, proposed interventions, and then implemented them with Caritas Ukraine and local offices.”

Caritas Ukraine management team member

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Caritas Ukraine's areas of operation



CUA evolution	Pre-Crisis (2103)	Post-Crisis (2015)
No. of staff + volunteers	400	1,000
Total annual budget	€1.5 million	€13.7 million
Number of offices	12	28
Program locations	West > East	West < East

Key factors supporting Caritas Ukraine's growth during the crisis response

- **Quick start-up of operations in the east** thanks to the existing structures, community relationships and established networks of the Greek Catholic Church.
- **Established relationship with the government** (national and local).
- **Capacity strengthening support and flexible funding from international partner organizations.**
- **Support from international partners for writing proposals** to access emergency funding.
- **Hiring of greater numbers of professional staff with technical experience** – new human resources processes attracted highly experienced staff who brought fresh ideas and higher quality programming.

Recommendations for future responses

1. Establish clear communication and coordination protocols and mechanisms among all local/national and international partners.

- Hold weekly, monthly or quarterly calls/meetings between focal points of all agencies.
- The local/national organization should designate a staff member responsible for partnership and coordination at the local and/or national level, as relevant. This person would be responsible for leading and attending national and/or international partner, UN and government coordination meetings.
- Revise job descriptions to fit an emergency context, and share these with the local/national organization and partners for transparency, and to ensure an understanding of roles and responsibilities. Likewise, international partners should provide a scope of work for the support they will be providing.
- Limit staff turnover among international partners to alleviate inconsistencies and challenges in coordination and program focus.

2. Support local/national organizations in developing a long-term funding strategy.

- Local/national organizations develop a clear strategic vision for emergency programming and recovery/development. This should complement the funding outlook of key donors.
- International humanitarian partner organizations support development of local/national organization's cost-recovery policy, and advocate to public donors for coverage of these indirect costs as well as capacity building efforts within project budgets.

3. Emphasize partnership and capacity strengthening with local/national partners at the onset of an emergency response alongside delivery of humanitarian aid, instead of focusing on aid delivery alone.

- International partners should identify a staff member whose sole focus is providing, coordinating and/or organizing the capacity strengthening of the local/national partner.
- When possible, *before* an emergency, conduct an initial mapping of the capacity building needs of local/national partners.
- Accompany local/national partners during the response to provide on-the-job capacity strengthening.
- The international partners should conduct a comprehensive, coordinated and collaborative capacity strengthening effort for the local/national partner.
- Make capacity strengthening about the organization rather than the project.

4. Ensure international partner staff have prior partnership experience as well as appropriate emotional intelligence to support partners.

- Develop a roster of emergency team members with demonstrated experience working with local partners in emergency contexts who could be deployed during disasters.
- The Level 1 partnership training curriculum is available on CRS' [Institutional Capacity Strengthening website](#) and offers guidance on partnership principles and approaches.

5. Work through the existing local/national partner organizations' systems and structures instead of setting up parallel organizational structures during an emergency response.

“CUA's response to a recent increase in fighting shows that it is now a national organization acting on scale of an international NGO.”

CRS staff member