



# Ukraine Crisis Response

CARITAS UKRAINE CASE STUDY | MAY 2017





## COVER

Tetana Viktorivna Halimelina, pictured with her son, is visited by Caritas Ukraine and CRS staff. She is an internally displaced person from Ukraine's non-government-controlled territories, has four children and an extended family of seven. She received help from Caritas Ukraine to buy cows.

*Photo courtesy of Mathieu Radoube/Caritas Ukraine*



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# Acronyms

<b>CI</b>	Caritas Internationalis
<b>MS</b>	Management Standards
<b>CRS</b>	Catholic Relief Services
<b>CST</b>	Catholic Social Teaching
<b>CUA</b>	Caritas Ukraine
<b>ICIP</b>	Internal Control Improvement Plans
<b>HIV and Aids</b>	human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome
<b>HR</b>	human resources
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Team
<b>ICT4D</b>	information and communications technology for development
<b>IDP</b>	internally displaced person
<b>MEAL</b>	monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
<b>MO</b>	member organization
<b>SRFMP</b>	Sub-Recipient Financial Management Policy
<b>UN</b>	United Nations



This bakery was started with Caritas Ukraine support and receives an employment grant to hire internally displaced people. Photo courtesy of Mathieu Radoube/Caritas Ukraine

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 affected local communities and infrastructure, and nearly 3 million people fled their homes. The vast majority fled the area from mid-2014, with most moving into the government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, as well as Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zaporizhia oblasts that surround the conflict zone. Others moved to cities further west such as Kyiv and Odessa.

More than 1.7 million people have been registered as internally displaced by the Government of Ukraine, while about 1.1 million have fled to neighboring countries, and 3.8 million in Ukraine are in need of humanitarian assistance. Some have begun returning to their homes close to the conflict zone due to a depletion of savings. These families often need to make repairs to their homes and deal with damaged infrastructure. Most families have chosen not to return due to the insecurity, and are struggling to integrate into their new communities, while securing livelihoods to meet their needs.

In response to the fighting, Caritas Ukraine (CUA), a national charitable foundation, responded by establishing 12 new offices, hiring 600 new staff, and expanding its programming portfolio by over €12 million (over \$14 million), with the support of partner INGOs. This has enabled CUA to meet the needs of 115,000 Ukrainians annually since 2014. To identify the main factors that aided Caritas Ukraine in rapidly adjusting to respond to the growing needs, this case study—undertaken by two international CRS staff members using qualitative data collection and analysis—draws on interviews with Caritas Ukraine employees, and staff of international humanitarian organizations who partnered with them throughout the crisis response. It also draws out lessons and identifies ways international partner organizations can improve partnership with Caritas Ukraine in future responses.

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# 3.8 million

PEOPLE IN UKRAINE ARE IN NEED OF  
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

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## RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

1. Create improved communication and coordination mechanisms both internally, and with and among Caritas Internationalis (CI) member organizations supporting local/national partners.
2. CI member organizations ensure partnership and capacity strengthening with local/national partners at the onset of an emergency response takes place in tandem with delivery of humanitarian aid, instead of primarily focusing on aid delivery and waiting to conduct capacity strengthening after the emergency phase.
3. CI member organizations ensure that their staff working with local and national partners have the right skill set, prior partnership experience and the appropriate emotional intelligence to work with and support partners throughout an emergency response.
4. CI member organizations (particularly CRS) embrace a one-agency approach and work through existing local offices instead of setting up their own offices and operations during an emergency response and operating separately.
5. Review and revise Caritas Ukraine strategy to increase the chances of securing future funding opportunities in emergency, recovery and development programming.

## OVERVIEW OF CARITAS UKRAINE

A national charitable foundation, Caritas Ukraine was established in 1994 and has provided social, psychological, humanitarian, and legal aid assistance to thousands of people in need in Ukraine regardless of their religion, social status, ethnic origin, sex or age.

Caritas Ukraine is a member of Caritas Internationalis; a humanitarian and development organization of the Catholic Church supporting the poor, vulnerable and excluded, with more than 160 national members operating in almost 200 countries. Caritas Ukraine coordinates the efforts of charitable organizations run by local Ukrainian Greek Catholic churches and is serving more than 115,000 beneficiaries annually through its 26 local offices, 2 national offices (one in Lviv and one in Kyiv) and more than 1,000 employees and volunteers.

In late 2014, in response to the humanitarian crisis and growing needs, Caritas Ukraine started assisting internally displaced people (IDPs) from Crimea and Donbas, and host community members who had been negatively affected by the conflict.

Since then, it has become the largest single national organization responding to the crisis, providing humanitarian assistance to more than 400,000 Ukrainians affected by the conflict in the areas of: livelihoods, food and in-kind distributions, potable water, medical support, small business development grants, rehabilitation and integration of internally displaced people, reconstruction of destroyed buildings, and education and psychosocial support for children.

### Caritas Ukraine's areas of operation

# 115,000

**BENEFICIARIES ARE REACHED ANNUALLY THROUGH CARITAS UKRAINE'S 26 LOCAL OFFICES, 2 NATIONAL OFFICES AND MORE THAN 1,000 EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS**



## CASE STUDY

### Purpose

The purpose of this case study is (1) to illuminate the main factors that aided Caritas Ukraine in rapidly adjusting to respond to the crisis in Ukraine; (2) to identify challenges faced during the expansion, the ways they were addressed and what could have been done differently; (3) to identify areas for ongoing development and improvement of Caritas Ukraine's programming, and provide recommendations to inform future emergency response operations in Ukraine as well as other countries; and (4) to elucidate learning among the Caritas Internationalis member organizations that supported Caritas Ukraine and identify ways they can improve partnership initiatives in future responses.

Research for the case study looked to answer the following three questions:

- **Research question 1: Capacity strengthening**  
How did Caritas Ukraine's capacity evolve to respond to the crisis?
  - *Operations*: Staffing, systems and structures
  - *Programming*: Quality of emergency programming
- **Research question 2: Partnership**  
How have Caritas Ukraine's partnerships evolved since the beginning of the crisis?
- **Research question 3: Sustainability**  
How prepared is Caritas Ukraine to continue its work beyond the crisis, and what continuing support will the organization need from its partners?

### Methodology

The case study was undertaken by two international staff members from CRS<sup>1</sup> using several qualitative data collection and analysis methodologies. These included:

- **Literature review** that examined the shifting emergency context, achievements, challenges and lessons learned in emergency project activities, organizational developments, and emerging/fluctuating strategies from the beginning of the crisis in 2014 until the beginning of 2017.<sup>2</sup>
- **Key informant interviews** were carried out with:
  - 15 Caritas Ukraine staff including 9 managers (including CUA president, secretary general, and local office directors) and 6 field staff from the Kyiv (7), Zaporizhia (1), Lviv (1), Kharkiv (5) and Kramatorsk (1) local offices
  - 10 CRS staff including the country manager, 3 program managers (based in the local offices of Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk), 1 Ukrainian finance officer, 3 members of the humanitarian response department, 2 Eurozone-level managers (including the country representative)
  - 6 staff from other CI MO organizations including: 3 with Caritas Germany (1 manager and 2 field officers), 2 with Caritas Vienna (1 manager and 1 field officer) and 1 with Caritas Vienna (organizational development consultant)
- **Focus group discussions** with 7 Caritas Kharkiv local field staff who worked on CRS-funded emergency programming.
- **Consultative workshop** in Kyiv to review, discuss and validate initial findings and recommendations from the case study data collection and analysis process to inform the first draft of the report.<sup>3</sup>

### Approach to confidentiality

It was agreed that it may be problematic to collect honest, unbiased feedback from Caritas Ukraine and other partner organization staff on Caritas Ukraine's performance during the crisis response if participants were required to go 'on record' with their feedback. For this reason, it was decided that quotes used from interviews would be anonymous.

1. Amanda Schweitzer, Emergency Capacity Strengthening Coordinator, Humanitarian Response Department, CRS; Caroline Millet, Program Quality Technical Advisor, Europe Zone, CRS  
2. Literature review documents included project documents (proposals and quarterly, annual, mid-term and final project reports), organizational strategy documents, situation reports, CRS' sub-recipient financial management organizational assessments (SRFMP), CRS' Internal Control Improvement Plans (ICIP), CI toolkit assessment findings  
3. Consultation workshop included participants from the following organizations: 5 Caritas Ukraine, 2 CRS, 1 Caritas Germany, 1 Caritas Austria, 1 Caritas Vienna

# FINDINGS: HOW DID CARITAS UKRAINE EVOLVE TO RESPOND TO THE CRISIS?

## Overview

Before the conflict, Caritas Ukraine staff spoke about the organization as a “family operation” where there was “no hurry to implement.” Most of the organizational policies were not written down, but the small number of staff had known each other for more than 10 years so the policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities of staff were tacitly understood. Staff hiring was based more on personal relationships and less on technical capacity and professional experience. The head office was in Lviv in Western Ukraine and, while there was a Church presence in the East of the country, Caritas Ukraine was not legally registered or operational there. Programming focused on home care, health care services (HIV and Aids), hospital palliative care, youth programs, and migration programs, and the organization had little experience working on humanitarian response. These programs received funding mainly from donations and European CI MOs, and less from more traditional public donors. Before 2013, the main goal for the organization was to build a model of social services that could possibly be funded by the Ukraine State budget, if/when that funding opportunity arose.

The Ukraine crisis triggered many changes within Caritas Ukraine. Since the start of the conflict, CUA has significantly expanded its activities, opening 12 new offices in the East of the country, close to the buffer zone, and broadening its programmatic focus towards humanitarian programs in shelter, livelihoods, social cohesion and peacebuilding, psychosocial support to children and youth, distribution of food and non-food items, and provision of multi-purpose cash grants. The increasing humanitarian needs and programmatic growth led to an expansion of

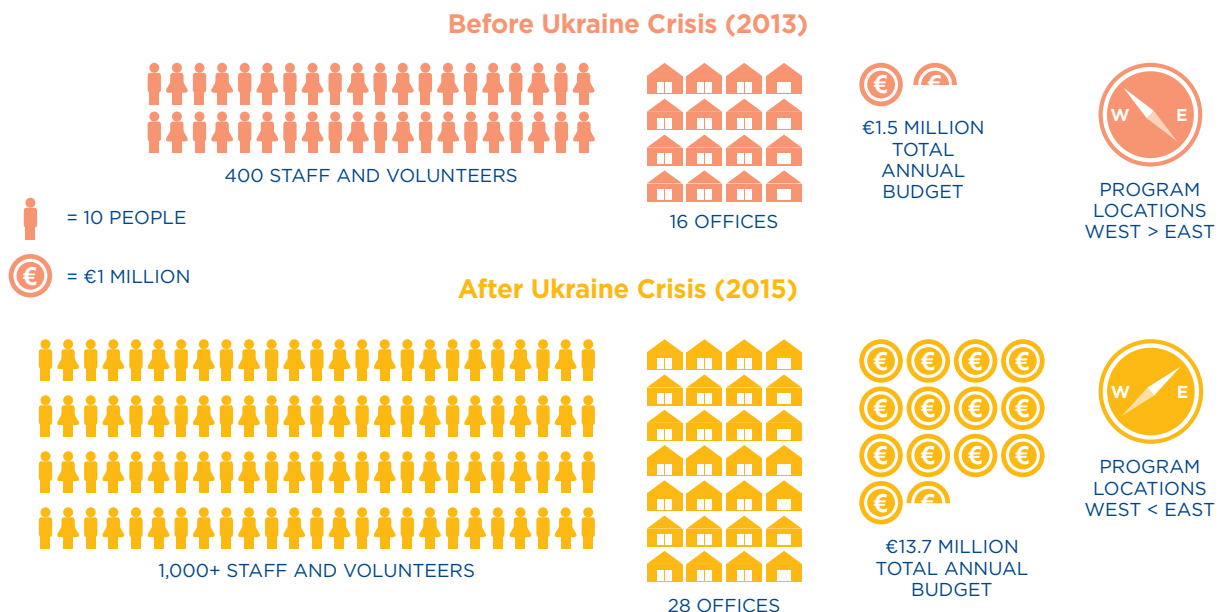
personnel and overall budget (See diagram below). During this period, most of the program value and beneficiaries shifted from the western third of the country, where the organization has its historical Greek Catholic base, to the eastern third, where there was almost no Greek Catholic presence or network. The new programming in the East made it difficult to lead the organization from the West, and the national office moved from Lviv to the capital of Kyiv for its central and strategic location closer to the programming, and to national government and most major donors providing humanitarian funding.

## The crisis brought new understanding of how to operate.

Caritas Ukraine national office senior staff member

The shift from a smaller, development-focused organization to a larger one with an emergency department was not easy. The initial decision to move the head office to Kyiv was described by one staff member as a “contentious issue creating two years of growing pains.” Tensions arose regarding how the organization should change, and a split developed between the Lviv and Kyiv offices, with one side feeling that the emergency programming was a distraction from the “real work” of the organization and the other believing it was critical to the mission. Despite these tensions and misunderstandings, there was a common understanding that change was needed and this required rapid development of organizational processes and procedures to manage the growing operations and ever-evolving public donor financial and programmatic requirements.

### Caritas Ukraine growth following humanitarian crisis





## Most critical changes

The case study research identified these areas as the largest and most critical changes that the organization had undergone both operationally and programmatically since the start of the crisis in 2014:

Type of change	Significance
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<p><b>Relocation of head office from Lviv to Kyiv</b></p>	<p>Initially it was very difficult to get payments processed and contracts approved in a timely manner, because Lviv was on the other side of the country. While moving the national office initially impacted CUA's compliance rating through CRS' sub-recipient financial management policy until their systems were completely up and running, building up a structure to support emergency programming greatly improved the efficiency, speed and transparency of operational transactions. This led to smoother payment processes and assisted the local offices in the East in providing more rapid humanitarian aid to communities in need.</p>
<p><b>Legal establishment of 12 new offices in East Ukraine</b></p>	<p>When the conflict started, while the Greek Catholic Church had a presence in the East, Caritas was not legally registered as a local organization to operate in these areas. Initially, humanitarian assistance was provided out of the churches, with legal and management responsibility for this programming being held by the national office in Kyiv, which slowed down operational functions of projects since all financial requests, management decisions and documentation had to first go through Kyiv.</p> <p>Legal establishment of Caritas offices in the East greatly enhanced CUA's local operations. Decentralizing financial operations from national office to local office and opening a local bank account streamlined processes, making them more efficient, and allowed programming teams to make their own critical decisions swiftly instead of waiting for directives from the national office.</p>
<p><b>Development of written policies and procedures in finance, human resources and procurement in line with <a href="#">Caritas Internationalis Management Standards (CI MS)</a></b></p>	<p>Before programming could start in the local Caritas Ukraine offices, each office conducted a self-assessment against the Caritas Internationalis Management Standards. Findings from these helped the national and local CUA offices identify specific organizational development areas that needed to be addressed to meet the standards. The development of written policies and procedures based on these findings have helped advance CUA's financial, procurement, and inventory systems, which are now built on the backbone of CI MS and are in line with several public donors' standards. It has also helped the organization to have greater internal controls and minimize risk.</p> <p>Additionally, program managers are better able to manage grants because of improved information provided by the finance team and faster operational transactions. A good example of this is that at the beginning of CUA's cash grant assistance activities it took 6 months for payment to arrive in IDPs' bank accounts, but now it takes about 2 weeks.</p>
<p><b>Creation of an HR department - principally developing a staffing structure and new hiring policies and procedures</b></p>	<p>CUA has established fair and transparent hiring procedures developed and managed by an HR department. CUA has developed a more competitive salary scale that has helped attract better qualified, professional staff. Hiring more technically experienced staff has helped improve the quality of programming and assistance to the communities being served. Reorganizing the staff and departmentalizing their work has helped clarify staff roles and responsibilities (although more work needs to be done in this area as discussed below) and allowed the operations and programming teams to more easily work together.</p>

<b>PROGRAM QUALITY</b>	
<p><b>Launch of emergency programming and involvement in UN Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)</b></p>	<p>The shift into implementation of emergency programming involved a significant expansion of public funds and allowed for the creation of CUA's first full-time emergency response unit as well as the hiring of a humanitarian director for the initial phase of the response. CUA's response to the Ukraine crisis was recognized by the UN and international donors as it was the only national organization member invited onto the UN Humanitarian Country Team.</p>
<p><b>Sphere Standards and Core Humanitarian Standard</b></p>	<p>Before the conflict, CUA had limited knowledge of the humanitarian standards, and the initial assistance provided to IDPs at the beginning of the conflict was similar to that it was providing through its social welfare programming, which was inappropriate in the emergency context. Introduction and use of Sphere standards and the Core Humanitarian Standard improved the quality of CUA's emergency programs and assisted the organization in properly adjusting its beneficiary selection process and approach.</p>
<p><b>Increased understanding and application by CUA staff of <a href="#">Catholic Social Teaching (CST)</a>, <a href="#">Caritas Internationalis Management Standards</a> and other humanitarian principles</b></p>	<p>At the beginning of the conflict, staff based in Lviv, in western Ukraine, were hesitant about whether Caritas Ukraine should respond to the needs of people in eastern Ukraine. This hesitance to start an emergency response program was coupled with a lack of understanding within the organization of the fundamental principles of Catholic Social Teaching, which highlight the importance of neutrality, impartiality and providing assistance based on need, regardless of political, religious or ethnic background. Throughout the response, CUA's knowledge and application of Catholic Social Teaching and Caritas Internationalis Management Standards, which require adherence to the Sphere humanitarian principles and code of conduct, increased tremendously. This was thanks in part to the capacity strengthening support of CI MOs working alongside CUA, and led to the large scale-up of emergency response programming in the East.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) systems and structures, including establishment of beneficiary registration systems and vulnerability targeting, and the use of mobile data collection technology</b></p>	<p>At the beginning of the response, MEAL was not seen as a priority and only projects managed by CRS had comprehensive MEAL included in them. Since then, CUA has ensured inclusion of MEAL in almost all their projects, hired MEAL positions in all local offices, designated a national MEAL manager who oversees MEAL throughout the country, designed a national accountability framework, and is in the process of developing a pilot project for a new feedback mechanism. In addition, staff in the field are using mobile data collection technology to collect monitoring and evaluation data as well as to register beneficiaries, which has made their work more effective.</p> <p>Because of the development of MEAL systems and structures, CUA staff are now able to learn as they go and adjust programming to fit new and identified needs on the ground.</p>

## The role of partnership in the crisis response

Through its CI affiliation, Caritas Ukraine has partnered with several CI organizations over its 24 years of operation. The most prominent Caritas Internationalis member organizations that have supported CUA throughout the Ukraine Crisis response are Catholic Relief Services, Caritas Austria, Caritas Vienna, and Caritas Germany. Through these partnerships, Caritas Ukraine received programmatic funding alongside capacity strengthening support both with its organizational development and program quality, including project implementation. As identified through case study interviews, throughout the response the partner organizations provided CUA with:

- **Capacity strengthening** of staff in both operations and programs, which predominantly included the areas of:
  - Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
  - Institutional strengthening (operations systems and structures) – particularly in human resources and finance
  - Development of a security framework and provision of security training
  - Introduction of internationally recognized standards, policies and procedures into operations and programming (Sphere standards, Core Humanitarian Standard, humanitarian principles).
- **Emergency experience** Since CI MO staff had responded to emergencies in the past and knew which steps needed to be taken, they could assist CUA local staff in quickly starting up emergency programming in the East.
- **Technical expertise** related to emergency response in different sectors, particularly shelter and market-based responses – including cash grants, protection mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation.
  - Of note was the technical assistance provided in establishment of information and communications technology for development (ICT4D) platforms to strengthen CUA's MEAL initiatives. This included training for CUA staff on use of electronic tablets, the iFormBuilder mobile data collection platform, and Zoho online tools for beneficiary registration and the monitoring of program activities.
- **Manpower** CI MOs placed staff on the ground in the national and local offices to directly support implementation of programming. Both operational and programming staff said the one-on-one support was critical to their first experience of implementing emergency programming on such a large scale. Having knowledgeable staff on the ground, allowed CUA staff to receive immediate responses to

critical, time-sensitive questions related to project implementation.

- **Help establishing CUA's first full-time emergency unit** in April 2014. Previously the organization had responded to emergencies (mostly floods) using existing development project staff on a short-term basis.
- **Flexible funding**, which allowed quick start-up of emergency programming before public donor funding could be secured, as well as financial support towards CUA's overhead costs. It is often difficult for national/local organizations to secure funding from public donors for their indirect costs because many of them do not have policies and procedures in place for recovery of these costs. Thus, as was the case with CUA, public donors are often hesitant to finance these costs until these policies and procedures are established, which can take time especially during an emergency response.

.....  
“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  
.....

CUA staff highly appreciated having CI MO counterparts in the field who had experience working in humanitarian response and knew what needed to be done and when. Most CUA staff interviewed agreed that the CI MOs played an important role in the emergency response and that without their backing CUA's involvement in the crisis could not have been as developed. CUA staff were especially complimentary of Catholic Relief Services' support. While some CI MOs and a contingent of CUA staff were disconcerted by CRS' initial entrance into the response due to its highly proactive, dominant approach, CUA interviewees agreed that CRS' hands-on approach had been essential for a rapid response.

.....  
“It was good that Caritas Internationalis member organizations committed to having people in country ... What CI MOs were doing, CUA could not have done. We are young here, we need skilled and professional partners to support us.”

CUA local director  
.....



Inna Yuskova, an employee in the charity store, The Cabinet of Goodness, in Kharkiv. A Caritas Ukraine grant enabled the store to hire two internally displaced people. *Photo courtesy of Mathieu Radoube/Caritas Ukraine*

**Capacity: How did Caritas Ukraine’s capacity evolve to respond to the crisis?**

Three recurrent themes around capacity strengthening throughout the interviews were:

- **Skill sets and experience of staff assigned to partnership roles within CI organizations**
- **The trade-off between a focus on program delivery and on capacity strengthening and partnership**
- **Challenges with local office decentralization**

While all the CI organizations were mentioned in discussions around these points, CRS was a more prominent subject. Several interviewees said CRS’ initial approach during the emergency response was to focus on delivering services using their own approaches instead of taking the time to fully understand the capacity of the local Caritas teams and their way of operating.

Overall, CUA staff highly appreciated CRS’ support throughout the crisis, particularly CRS’ high quality programming and rapid start-up of emergency operations and service delivery. Most interviewees said that, looking back, CRS’ delivery approach was warranted and critical at the beginning.

CI MO and CUA staff described how the amount of capacity strengthening support provided to CUA during the response could be highly personality driven and based on the level of comfort and experience of the CI MO staff in the country. For a few CI MO staff, working with CUA was their

first partnership experience, and for some their first emergency experience. While these staff members acknowledged that they could have done several things differently regarding capacity strengthening, they had also felt pressure to deliver quick results and reach project objectives. A few CI MO staff said they felt underprepared for the realities on the ground and were not sure exactly how to work with the partners.

.....  
**It is important for CRS to keep long-term relationships going during a crisis period, even when it is tempting to just focus specifically on delivering services. You have to take the time to nurture relationships with the Caritas team members and work with them to teach them about the emergency processes and procedures along the way.**  
 .....  
 CRS response team member  
 .....

Caritas Ukraine operates within a decentralized organizational framework; meaning local Caritas offices are each registered with the Ukrainian government as individual entities, such as, Caritas Kharkiv and Caritas Mariupol. Each local office receives support from the national Caritas office, based in Kyiv, but they are also authorized to operate independently of the national office, at times securing independent funding, which, in practice, happens more in the West of Ukraine with the

longstanding local offices. At the beginning of the conflict, Caritas offices did not exist in the East and had to be established out of the existing local Church entities. While the official registration process was underway, the emergency response was managed out of the national office in Kyiv, with field operations and activities run out of the local Church offices with oversight from local directors.<sup>4</sup>

When CRS first arrived in Ukraine to support the emergency response from the Eastern town of Kharkiv, instead of working out of the established local Church office in coordination with the local director, which is what other CI MOs were doing, a decision was made to establish a separate CRS office and directly hire staff to work on CRS-funded projects. While Ukrainian staff hired to work on CRS-funded projects were officially CUA staff members, during interviews these staff said the separate CRS office led most team members to identify themselves as CRS staff and not CUA staff.

.....  
**Looking back, we should not have tried to operate separately from the beginning and we should have met more and coordinated more with the local offices.**

**Caritas Ukraine local staff member working on CRS-funded project, Kharkiv**  
.....

After Caritas Kharkiv received its official government registration at the beginning of 2016, the decentralization process of transferring management responsibility for the emergency projects from the national office in Kyiv to the Caritas Kharkiv

.....  
**This [conflict between staff] could have been avoided had all programming staff been in one team from the beginning.**

**Interviewee**  
.....

office took time, and was initially opposed by CRS Ukraine staff who claimed the financial management standards of the Caritas Kharkiv office were not sufficient to manage a US-Government-funded project. Thus, CRS maintained its separate Kharkiv office for longer than was necessary, straining relations between the two organizations for a period. Once the national office in Kyiv pushed for the consolidation of all Kharkiv programming staff into one team under the supervision of the local director, the integration process was difficult. There was a lot of ill feeling between the teams, which was ongoing at the time of this study, as staff hired to work on CRS' projects saw themselves as CRS staff not Caritas Kharkiv staff.

Caritas Ukraine's senior management admit that as an organization they did not transfer management responsibility down to the local level quickly enough and should have started the process sooner. One key reason mentioned for the delay was miscommunication between CRS and the CUA national office and misunderstanding by CUA national office around CRS' financial management standards and criteria that must be in place before management can be moved locally. There wasn't clarity on this, which delayed movement of management to the local level. Interviewees said that this should be an important point of reflection for CRS and other CI MOs so that it is not replicated in future emergencies.

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## **Partnership: How have Caritas Ukraine's partnerships evolved since the beginning of the crisis?**

During the first year of the response, almost all support provided by CI MOs was channeled to CUA through an emergency appeals process initiated and managed by Caritas Europa. For the first three appeals, CRS coordinated with Caritas Europa and agreed that CRS would approve and transfer an initial 50 percent of the budget up front to jump-start the emergency response work without waiting for other member organizations to review, approve and transfer funds. Thus, the initial assistance provided by CI MOs to CUA for the Ukraine crisis response was well coordinated.

In October 2014, back donor funding became

substantially available for the response, resulting in more bilateral discussions between CUA and individual CI MOs outside the emergency appeal context as it related to specific donor-funded projects. Consequently, coordination between the CI MOs suffered and coordination between CI MOs and CUA throughout the crisis response became a significant pain point recognized by many interviewees.

While it was acknowledged that efforts in the previous 6 months by CUA and CI MOs had improved coordination, this was still an area for improvement. Main themes that arose out of the interviews around coordination are:

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4. Local directors were head parish priests from the existing Greek Catholic Churches.

- **Disorganized/absent coordination between CI MOs** particularly at the start of the response.
- **Diverse visions of response strategy and requests coming from CI MOs** often simultaneously, creating stress for CUA staff.
- **Capacity strengthening of CUA by CI MOs was more project specific than organization wide**, especially at the local office level.
- **Varied response modalities (cash/in-kind)** used by CI MOs required different operational systems and structures, staff knowledge and capacity, and time commitment from CUA.
- **Varying perspectives on management responsibility of coordination** among CI MOs and CUA, both internal (CI MOs/CUA) and external (UN Clusters, government, etc.)
- **Recurrent staff turnover among CI organizations made consistent coordination and program focus a challenge.** New staff brought new ideas, attention and personalities to the job, which required an adjustment period for CUA staff, particularly at the national office level. For example, within CRS, there were 4 different leaders in 1.5 years at the beginning of the crisis.

A consistent theme running through coordination discussions was roles and responsibilities for both internal and external coordination. Case study interviews illuminated varying opinions around

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**At the beginning, the three main partners were not coordinated at all and Caritas Ukraine had to deal with three different partners with different requests, different reporting, etc. It is difficult to deal with three partners who are not talking to each other.**  
 .....

External consultant working with one of the CI MOs  
 .....

whether the CI MOs should chair coordination meetings among themselves or if CUA should be responsible to lead and chair these. Several CI MO staff felt it was the role of CUA to chair and organize these, while CUA staff said the meetings should be between the CI MOs and that CUA should not have to attend. At the beginning of the response, the importance of coordination within the UN Cluster system and between CI MOs was not properly understood by CUA. While there were a few CUA staff who did understand its importance and actively participated in these meetings, once these individuals left the organization, CUA's coordination efforts were intermittent or halted. Furthermore, with no specific CI MO taking the lead for coordination throughout the response, it tended to be inconsistent and based on personalities and specific focus of in-country CI MO staff.



In the Caritas office in Kharkiv, young children take part in an educational activity with teachers Tamara Latushkina (left) and Iryna Karnaukhova, in a children's center supported by Caritas Poland. *Photo courtesy of Mathieu Radoube/Caritas Ukraine*

## Sustainability: How prepared is Caritas Ukraine to continue its work beyond the crisis?

At the end of January/early February 2017, CUA demonstrated its readiness and strengthened capacity to respond to crisis during an increase in fighting in Avdiivka, where CUA was the first organization on the ground providing immediate support to affected communities and assisting other organizations and the government with initial coordination efforts. “Is the crisis actually over?” was a comment shared by several interviewees who believed any planning beyond the crisis might be pre-emptive.

.....

**Caritas Ukraine’s response to the recent increase in fighting shows that it is a national organization acting on the scale of an international nongovernmental organization.**

CRS staff member

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Despite a sense that the crisis was far from over, other than the recent upsurge of conflict, it has largely been stalled for some time and a few donors have begun to reduce humanitarian allocations to Ukraine. Consequently, the question of sustainability is an important one for CUA. Key themes arose out of case study interviews on the question of CUA’s state of post-crisis response preparedness:

- **Returning to the status quo vs. continued growth** There is a general sense that CUA may miss out on the opportunity to move into new programming areas, such as livelihoods recovery, after the crisis and instead choose to return to the same social welfare programming it was doing before. If CUA wishes to grow into new programming areas and make the most of potential future funding opportunities, it will be critical for the organization to start positioning itself towards recovery programming soon.
- **Positioning CUA to receive local state government funding for social services** The Ukrainian government is reforming social services and CUA has a lobbying group in place working with the government on these reforms. If legislation goes through, local state governments could be looking for organizations to help them provide social services, such as home care and child services, and CUA wants to be well placed as an obvious government partner if this occurs.

- **Clarity of strategic programming vision** CUA recently underwent a strategy development process that included input from the local directors and national office staff. Interviewees said the strategy lacked detail, forward thinking and a shared vision. During the case study initial findings presentation, CUA staff said a lot more work was subsequently done on the strategy, including additional input from the field and CI MOs, and a newer, more detailed and development-focused version would be shared with the local offices.
- **Unprepared for imminent funding cuts** If international funds were reduced, interviewees felt that CUA was not prepared to substitute these losses with local funding. Additionally, CUA did not have a good exit strategy for projects and had difficulty forecasting its budget, particularly for the main office, a few years out.

Critical relationships that were identified by interviewees that should be maintained and/or cultivated in the future are:

- **Humanitarian coordination forums** During the initial period of the conflict, CUA had a humanitarian director who was actively involved in these forums. Following his departure, responsibility for regularly attending these was not delegated to a new CUA staff member. CUA should identify a staff member to take on this responsibility and re-engage with the forums, particularly with the UN Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), of which CUA is an invited member.
- **CI MOs** (existing and broader)
- **Ukraine Government** (national and local)
- **National and local offices** Cultivate more open, transparent relationships between them.

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**I think the big question for everyone is whether the Ukrainian government will partner directly with organizations and I think CUA has a better chance than any others to access this source of funding.**

CRS staff member

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# CHALLENGES, MISSED OPPORTUNITIES AND MAIN FACTORS SUPPORTING CARITAS UKRAINE'S GROWTH DURING THE CRISIS

## Challenges

Interviewees identified several challenges faced by Caritas Ukraine that will need to be addressed to ensure its sustainability:

- **Clarify the role of the national office vs. the local offices** What is the added value of the national office to the local Caritas offices? Should the national office lead the local diocese in programmatic decisions or should they support the needs of the local offices?
- **Further delineate national office staff roles and responsibilities** Job descriptions need to be developed for every CUA position, and roles and responsibilities of national office staff positions defined.
- **Budget forecast for upcoming fiscal year** CUA national office had difficulty developing its annual budget, making it difficult to make staffing, programming and operational decisions.
- **Identify consistent costs to include in overhead calculations vs direct programming budgets** After years of struggling to consistently meet overhead costs despite ever increasing annual programming values, the CI MOs assisted CUA in negotiating and developing a new overhead policy. While this policy has resulted in an improved situation, CUA still struggles to accurately identify costs to include in its overhead calculations vs. costs to charge directly to project budgets. This challenge could make it difficult for the organization to ensure future coverage of overhead costs.
- **Greater specificity of program strategy** Strategy should be more specific and CUA should identify if it is best to develop one overarching national strategy, individual strategies for each local office or both.
- **Donor/funding diversification** CUA is dependent on CI MO funding streams either through their private funding or relational access to public donors. CUA will need to identify local funding opportunities for its sustainability.
- **Capacity of priests as managers at local level in the East** Prior to the conflict, the local parish priests managing church relations in the East had no previous experience managing an office, a large number of staff and humanitarian programming. The decentralized nature of the organization means these priests are now placed in these management positions and require additional training on communication and general management.

## Missed opportunities

Interviewees identified areas in which, in hindsight, they would have acted differently:

- **Ensure CUA managers were consulted and joined the decision-making process for emergency strategy decisions from the beginning** Disagreement and miscommunication among CUA leadership hindered initial growth and project implementation, and could have been avoided through consultative processes. The initial response was very top-down in the East, and created ill feeling between local directors and the national office because they felt they were not properly consulted.
- **Capacity building of local office staff from the beginning** by both the CI MOs and the CUA national office.
- **Clarify leadership roles and responsibilities (CUA and CI MOs)** At beginning of the crisis it was unclear who among CUA staff could make which decisions (which delayed implementation) and what level of authority and decision-making power CI MO staff on the ground had (which was confusing for CUA staff).
- **Ensure better coordinated support from CI MOs in setting up local offices** More attention was focused on supporting the national office and on CI MOs' own programming than on providing coordinated support to improving capacity of local offices.
- **Mitigate and respond appropriately to high turnover of CI MO staff** There was a high turnover during the response, with each new staff member bringing in new ideas, processes and procedures. This made consistent coordination difficult and strategies moving forward.

## Main factors supporting CUA's growth

- **Existing structures and community relationships** of the Greek Catholic Church, along with established networks of local priests, enabled a quick start-up of emergency programming in the East.
- **Established relationship with the government** (national and local)
- **CI MOs support** Capacity strengthening and flexible funding from Caritas Europa and CI MOs helped with the immediate start-up of emergency programming and support for CUA's indirect administrative costs, while approval from public donors was awaited.
- **Availability of large amounts of funding** Growth would not have been possible without this funding, which was thanks to CI MOs' support with proposal writing and existing donor relations.
- **Hiring of more professional staff with technical experience** New human resources hiring procedures and increased salaries helped attract highly qualified staff who brought fresh ideas and facilitated higher quality programming.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on findings from the case study research:

Issue	Recommendation	Who
	<b>PARTNERSHIP</b>	
<b>Communication/ Coordination</b>	For improved coordination, the <a href="#">Caritas Internationalis Toolkit Manual</a> on emergency guidelines should be used by member organizations for improved coordination.	CI MOs
	Increase clarification of the role of the Caritas Ukraine national office vs its local offices. Review and revise job descriptions, particularly in the national office, and share these with local offices to enhance transparency of roles and responsibilities.	Caritas Ukraine national office senior management team and HR department
	Establish clear and regular communication channels and mechanisms between national and local offices. This could include monthly or quarterly calls between the secretary general (or another national staff member as determined by the management team) and the local directors or an internal quarterly newsletter providing updates of programming and structural changes.	Caritas Ukraine national office senior management team and local directors
	Improve overall coordination among the CI MOs, the UN Cluster system, and national/local government by designating a specific CUA staff member responsible for coordination and partnership, and leading CI coordination meetings.	Caritas Ukraine national office senior management team
<b>Capacity building in tandem with delivery and response</b>	Start capacity strengthening initiatives with CUA staff, particularly in the local offices, early in a response. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of specific staff members whose sole focus is to provide and coordinate capacity strengthening for the local Caritas (or non-Caritas) partner(s)</li> <li>• Mapping of local Caritas' capacity building needs alongside the expertise and experience of CI MOs on the ground</li> <li>• Inclusion of more CI MO staff on the ground during a response to ensure a dual focus on response and capacity strengthening</li> <li>• Stronger focus by CI MOs on coaching and accompaniment with local CI organization throughout the response</li> </ul> Conduct a comprehensive, coordinated, collaborative capacity strengthening effort instead of separate project-specific capacity strengthening.	CI MOs
	Ongoing capacity strengthening particularly for the local Caritas offices in the East. Specific areas identified for ongoing support include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal design/development<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Communication and management training for local directors</li> <li>• Finance, with focus on fraud prevention</li> <li>• MEAL, with focus on accountability and systematic learning</li> </ul>	CI MOs

5. In July 2017, CRS conducted proposal design and development training for CUA national staff in Kyiv. Step-down trainings to the local CUA offices will be conducted toward the end of 2017 and early in 2018.

Issue	Recommendation	Who
<b>Staff partnership experience and skills</b>	<p>Ensure staff working in partnership have the appropriate skill set and prior experience and/or training in adult learning, capacity building, institutional strengthening, etc. They should also have the emotional intelligence to work with and support people of different cultures, religious backgrounds, ethnicities, etc.</p> <p>Develop a roster of emergency team members with demonstrated experience working with partners in emergency contexts who could be deployed in future disasters.</p> <p>Complete the online Level 1 partnership training curriculum available on CRS' <a href="#">ICS website</a>, which provides a foundation on partnership principles and approaches.</p>	CI MOs
<b>One-agency response</b>	<p>Avoid setting up parallel organizational structures and offices outside of the local organization.</p> <p>Coordinate support to partner offices and ensure local staff are also coordinating with one another to ensure complementarity of programming.</p>	CI MOs
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>		
<b>Strategy and future funding opportunities</b>	<p>Develop a clear strategic vision<sup>6</sup> for the country shared by all staff that focuses on a continuation of emergency programming along with recovery and development activities. Each local office should also develop its own strategy, building on the national strategy, and tailored to their context.</p> <p>The national strategy should include donor capture planning to ensure it is complementary to key donors' funding outlooks.</p>	Caritas Ukraine national office senior management team and local directors
	<p>Support the development of a cost-recovery policy for CUA as well as advocate public donors for their full coverage within project budgets of CUA's and other local Caritas groups' indirect costs and capacity building efforts.</p> <p>Continue to provide flexible funding to cover (1) CUA's ongoing indirect costs in case it continues to be difficult to obtain funding from public donors; and (2) develop/ implement recovery and development pilot projects that could attract new funding opportunities.</p>	CI MOs

6. A revised, more comprehensive development-focused strategy has been finalized by CUA and will be shared with staff at the local offices for their feedback.



A Caritas Ukraine grant enables a tire business in Kharkiv to employ these internally displaced people. *Photo courtesy of Mathieu Radoube/Caritas Ukraine*



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