





On February 24 2022 at 4 am in the morning, Russia launched a 'special military operation'. That morning, a war began in the heart of XXI century Europe. The Ukrainian capital was the first to come under attack, followed by Odessa, Mariupol and Lviv.





## THE CONTEXT

The war in Ukraine has forced millions of families to leave their homes in search of refuge, protection and support. Since the beginning of the conflict, **an estimated 17 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance** and protection throughout Ukraine. Civilian infrastructure has been severely impacted, buildings destroyed in urban centers and thousands of homes damaged or demolished across the country.

According to UNHCR, 8 million **refugees** from Ukraine have been registered throughout Europe (as of January 2023). Most have fled to neighboring countries such as Moldova, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia. In addition, there are millions of **internally displaced people**, most of them women, children and elderly people, who have reached the western parts of the country in search of a safe place to stay.

Entire families have abandoned their homes and all their belongings overnight, in the hope of returning soon. Unfortunately, **a year after the beginning of the conflict, many are still forced to live in reception centers or temporary shelters** because their home towns are still under military attack. Most people know they will never get back what they left behind because the war has destroyed their houses, schools and it has taken everything they had.



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*“In the center, during the day there is no electricity for 15 hours, it is dark and cold. It has become almost impossible for us to attend school online.”* David, his little brother Eduard and their family are from Mykolaiv and have been living in an accommodation center in an industrial area of Lviv for months. With the arrival of winter, life has become very hard.

David, 11 years old, December 2022, collective shelter in Lviv



©Giovanni Diffidenti/WeWorld



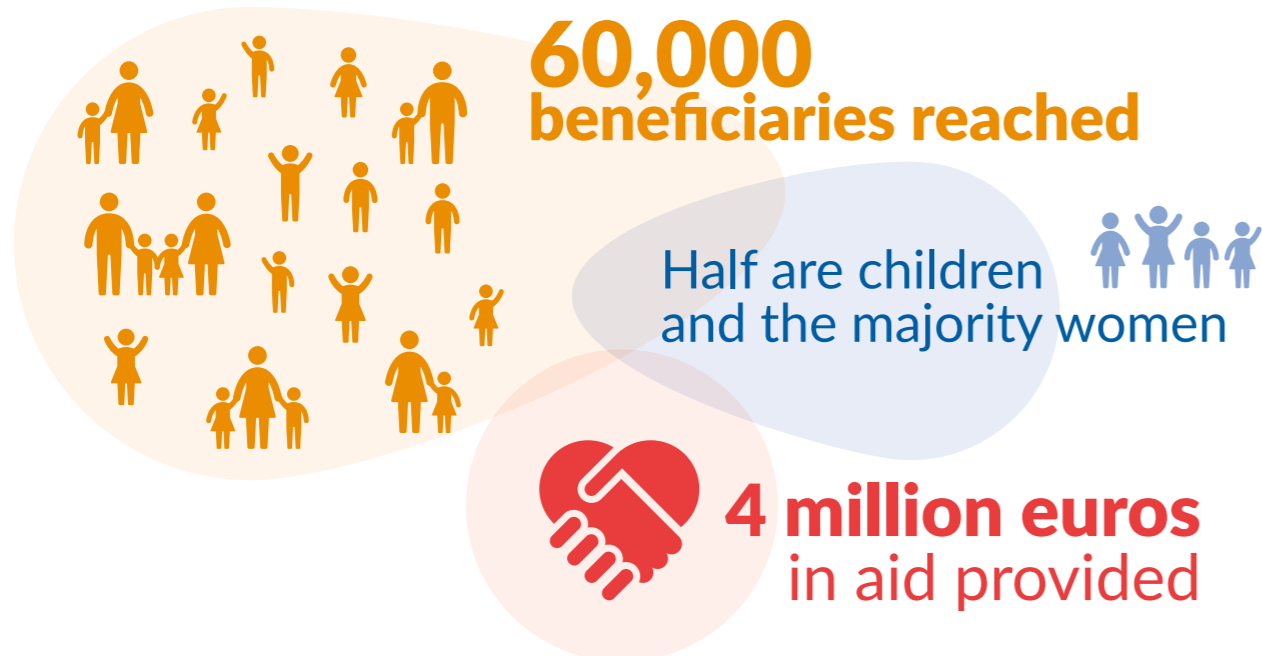
**Refugees** = people forced to leave their usual place of residence to seek refuge elsewhere outside their country of origin.

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** = people forced to flee war or persecution. Unlike refugees, they do not cross a border but remain within their country of origin.

**Persons in need of humanitarian aid** = those who, following natural disasters or armed conflicts, although they have not lost their homes and have not had to flee their place of origin, need economic, material, logistical or psychological support.



## WEWORLD'S INTERVENTION



**7** international staff   **20** local staff   **9** local partners



### MAIN DONORS

UHF-OCHA, Italian Cooperation (AICS), Spanish Cooperation (AECID), Emilia-Romagna Region, Educo, ChildFund Deutschland, ChildFund Korea, ChildFund Australia, ChildFund New Zealand, ChildFund Japan, Italian Local Authorities, Legacoop and its member cooperatives and private companies.

WeWorld, together with ChildFund Alliance, took immediate action to provide humanitarian aid to people displaced from the eastern areas of the country, providing support to cope with the emergency and activating partners on the ground since the first moments of war. In a matter of days, **two emergency teams reached Ukraine and Moldova**, later replaced by expatriate and local staff, establishing a stable aid response. WeWorld intervened by drawing up a Regional Response Plan and actively participating in the UN-led Humanitarian Coordination for the Ukraine crisis.

WeWorld works alongside those who, despite the conflict, have decided to stay, those who have returned after abandoning their homes under attack and those displaced from the east of the country. WeWorld supports children and their families by providing food, shelter, medications, basic needs and access to education and psychosocial services. To date, WeWorld has supported 60,000 people, half of whom are children.



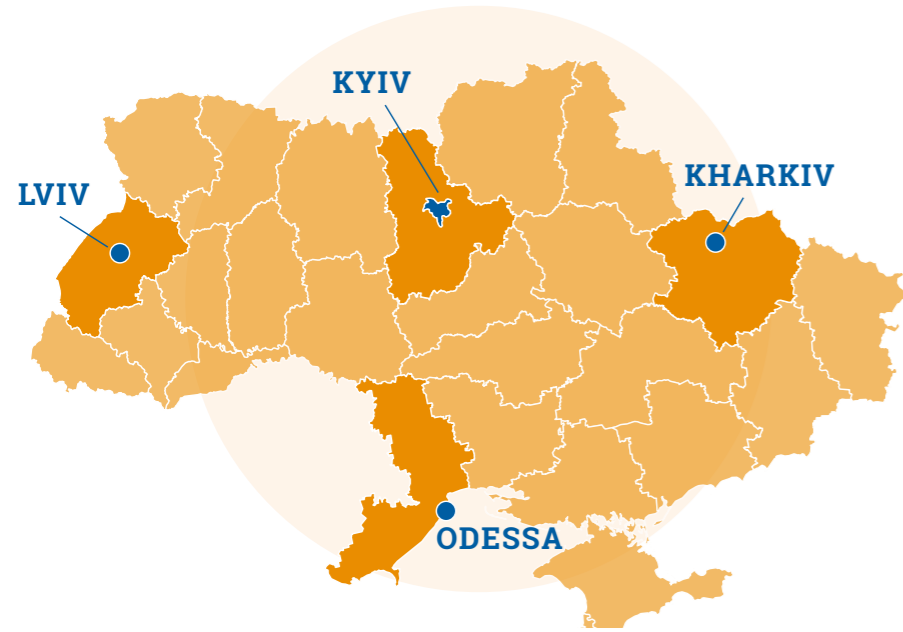




Winter kits - ©Filippo Mancini/WeWorld



# WEWORLD IN UKRAINE



**36,000** beneficiaries reached in 1 year



**6 Child Friendly spaces**

**17,500** participations in sessions of **psychosocial support**, 80% of which for children



**4,100** people receive **cash assistance** for the purchase of basic goods

**5,300 food parcels** distributed



more than **7,000** distributions of **food and non-food items**

**5,000 winterkits** distributed



## Lviv

In Lviv, **WeWorld** provides **integrated assistance to cover the basic needs of displaced people** from the east of the country, who are currently housed in informal reception centers throughout the region: there are 10 collective centers in the Lviv region where WeWorld operates.

The integrated assistance includes the **distribution of food and non-food items, including medications and hygiene kits, to reach over 11,000 people in the centers.** In addition, cash assistance is provided as direct economic support to more than 2,000 people, and 17,500 participations in sessions of **psychosocial support** are held in the region, 14,000 of which are for women and children alone. Psychological support is a component that accompanies all WeWorld's interventions, and which is fundamental to the health of women and children who are experiencing the trauma of a conflict. It is also for this reason that 6 child-friendly spaces have been set up for children to safely play and find a moment of normality.

**Child Friendly spaces and psychosocial support:** privileged observation areas where it is possible to catch any sign of discomfort in the child and to engage in a dialogue with the mother for her own well-being and that of her children, particularly concerning the violence suffered or witnessed. They are spaces for social interaction where children can play, draw and have a good time.



*"My name is Sveta. I moved here in April with my mother and this girl: her name is Angelina, she is 12 years old, and she is an orphan. The conditions when we moved in were terrible, there was a lot of noise of alarms and bombing, now the situation is a bit better. We are considering going home, but the fact that we have Angelina in foster care does not allow us to return, it is still too dangerous."*

Sveta, November 2022, collective shelter in Lviv



## Kyiv

WeWorld's office in Kyiv operates multi-purpose cash assistance activities throughout the region and is responding to the winter emergency with the distribution of stoves, blankets and coats; so far, 3,000 **winter kits** have been distributed. After more than 1 million people returned to the Kyiv region following its liberation, WeWorld started a mitigation intervention with a special focus in Irpin. In the area, the organization offers **economic support for the purchase of medications and food** to more than 2,800 people whose houses have been damaged or destroyed by the conflict.

**Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA):** consists of unrestricted cash transfers that people affected by the crisis can use to cover their basic needs. By its very nature, MPCA is the type of assistance that offers people the greatest level of choice, flexibility and dignity, as well as fulfilling multiple needs such as food, rent, water and bus tickets.



*"Yana is a young woman from Irpin, she has no children and is very attached to her land and her community, which she tried to support even during the worst times. She only left the city for five days at the end of March, when it was under siege and continuous bombing. She lost everything and she thanked me and hugged me so much. I realized how heavy blankets and a stove are more than essential goods for a person who is facing a winter under the snow at -7 for three quarters of the day, without electricity and heating."*

Stefania Piccinelli, International Programmes Manager, Kyiv - December 2022





At the beginning of December, President Marco Chiesara and Stefania Piccinelli, Head of International Programmes, travelled to Kyiv for a field mission. Together with other WeWorld operators, they distributed thermal kits to people to cope with the harsh winter, which in the most eastern areas drops to -20 °C.

*“The situation is much worse than I imagined, between those who still live in their homes and do not know how to heat them and those who live in informal shelters and have nothing left, often not even a jacket to repair themselves with. Damaged or non-functioning water, electricity and gas supply systems make the situation even more difficult.. Support through cash assistance remains one of the main needs of the affected population, without forgetting other basic needs such as receiving food, hygiene kits, medications and alternative ways to heat and light their homes.”*

Marco Chiesara, WeWorld President, Kyiv - December 2022



Marco Chiesara and Stefania Piccinelli together with WeWorld Team in Kyiv Office - ©WeWorld

## Kharkiv

In Kharkiv and newly liberated areas, the situation is even more difficult. **The buildings destroyed by bombings do not provide any protection from the cold and it is essential to provide basic needs and food for the families who have remained in or have returned to the area.** There is a lack of electricity and many houses have been damaged. In Kharkiv, WeWorld is providing winter response assistance, with the distribution of non-food items to over 1,500 people.

**Non-Food Items (NFI) kits** can take different forms depending on the context and on the needs. Common kits are family kits, hygiene kits, baby kits, dignity kits and winter or summer kits. Kits include water containers, hygiene items, clothing, bedding, kitchen sets, cooking fuel and any context-specific items. They are designed to satisfy immediate personal needs.



A destroyed building in Kharkiv - ©Giovanni Diffidenti/WeWorld



## Odessa

In the province of Odessa, WeWorld has also taken action and, with the crucial help of local organizations, is supporting displaced people near the border with Moldova, in the districts of Izmail and Reni, mainly hosted in the houses abandoned by those who fled the country. These houses often lack the most basic living conditions.

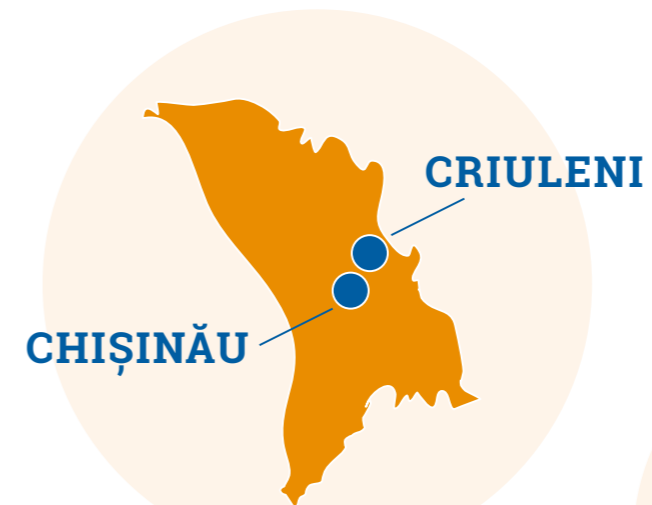


Larissa comes from Mykolaiv. She is 51 years old and arrived at the center on March 13. Larissa is the head of her family. Her partner, her daughter's husband and her son (who is a paramedic) are all fighting. Before escaping from Mykolaiv, there were 14 days of tank attacks. Larissa and her family spent 16 days in the basement, waiting and hiding. When they arrived in Izmail, she initially wanted to live in a house of her own with her family. However, at the center she saw the value of social interaction, of sharing fears and of helping each other out, and she decided it would be better to stay there.

Larissa, Izmail, March 2022



## WEWORLD IN MOLDOVA



**24,000** beneficiaries reached in 1 year



### MAIN DONORS

AECID, ChildFund Australia, ChildFund Japan, ChildFund Korea, ChildFund New Zealand, Educo, Emilia-Romagna Region.



**5,000 people** received psychosocial support, of which **3,000 children**

**6,000** personalized hygiene kits distributed



**350 families** receive **food parcels** every day for a total of **13,000 people reached**

**Language courses** and awareness-raising **campaigns**





WeWorld has been working since the beginning of the conflict in Moldova as well, by providing shelter and support for thousands of people forced to leave Ukraine, especially thanks to the support of ChildFund Alliance<sup>1</sup> members. In Moldova, interventions aim to bring families back to a situation of normality, especially children who had to leave their homes and suffer the traumas of the conflict.

Moldova is one of the hottest borders on the southern front of the war in Ukraine and the country has become a place of hospitality for families, elderly people and children. It has a population of 2.6 million and is the poorest country in Europe. Nevertheless, Moldavians have made great efforts to accommodate people fleeing the war.

Millions of children have fled with their mothers, leaving everything behind: a safe home, their school and friends to play with. In Moldova, WeWorld and ChildFund Alliance members are working to restore a sense of normality and to encourage the socialization of children and teenagers who were forced to leave their schools, which in many cases were destroyed by bombing.



*“When we meet among Ukrainians, we do not say hello to each other, but we ask directly “how are you”. People who have arrived in Moldova in the last year need help, they have no strength left. If I had not met the staff of WeWorld I would not be working here, and this work has given me the mental strength to go on. To understand that we are not alone in our pain, that other people understand and support us is a huge help and it gives us hope for tomorrow, even if we do not know what the future will hold.”*

Oksana, Ukrainian citizen who fled to Moldova, and Communication Coordinator for WeWorld in Moldova

1 ChildFund Australia, ChildFund Korea, ChildFund Japan, ChildFund New Zealand, Educo



WeWorld Staff distributing kits – Chisinau – ©WeWorld

Every day, WeWorld distributes food parcels to 350 Ukrainian refugee families, reaching 13,000 people among the guests of the Refugees Accommodation Centers and people who have found or rented accommodations in the districts of Chisinau and Criuleni. These distributions turn into a moment of celebration and sharing, to regain some lightness and normality.

WeWorld's distribution activities also respond to hygiene needs, with the distribution of hygiene kits customized by gender and age groups. They have reached 6,000 people so far. WeWorld also provides psychosocial support to people who have experienced the traumas of the conflict. 5,000 adults, adolescents and children have been reached by these activities in Chisinau and Criuleni. Moreover, the response also includes the organization of 2 child-friendly spaces. Adopting an approach that takes into consideration both the needs of the refugee population and of the host communities is crucial for interventions in areas impacted in such a strong and sudden way. It is why WeWorld combines humanitarian aid activities with language courses and awareness-raising campaigns and focuses on strengthening economic inclusion and access to basic services for refugee people. All WeWorld activities aim towards social cohesion between refugee and host communities.





Portrait of Tania and her son – ©Michele Lapini/WeWorld



“My city was beautiful before the Russian invasion, but now it is destroyed by bombing. They also hit the schools and there are many unexploded missiles along the streets and in the parks. I still haven’t found the courage to ask if my house is still there or if it has been destroyed by the bombs”.

Tania, Ukrainian refugee in Chisinău

## WEWORLD WOMEN SPACES IN ITALY

WeWorld supports Ukrainian refugee women in Italy and their children, thanks to several Women Spaces throughout in different regions. According to the latest data from the Ministry of the Interior (January 2023), of all Ukrainian refugee persons, almost 175,000 have arrived in Italy. More than 140,000 are women and minors and they arrive mainly in the cities of Milan, Bologna, Rome and Naples.

The thought of single women on the run together with their children instantly made WeWorld adapt it’s activities and provide Women Spaces. They are designed for listening, support and to promote empowerment, today they welcome women and children fleeing the war in order to start thinking that a future “after” is possible.



Ukrainian refugees in WeWorld Women Spaces in Milan – ©WeWorld



**Spazi Donna (Women Spaces)** - Safe places where specialized women staff make it possible to create a place of welcome and aggregation where relationships of trust can be built and women's awareness can be raised, through interventions capable of restoring self-esteem, planning and autonomy. The proposed activities are free of charge, with specific attention paid to the mother/child relationship and to youngest children, through a dedicated service.

Spazio Donna  
WeWorld



The profile of the people who have turned to WeWorld covers the age range between 25 and 40. They have fled alone or with their children, have a high level of schooling and medium-high professional profiles.

WeWorld's work alongside Ukrainian women includes various services, among which linguistic and cultural mediation, either in person or online; the possibility of attending Italian or job orientation courses and the possibility to receive psychological support. The aim is for Ukrainian women to regain their social and economic autonomy. In fact, for more than 75% of these women, looking for a job is a priority need that overcomes finding an accommodation. While their mothers are busy, the youngest children are taken care of in the Child Care area designed to allow children to play in a protected dimension.

## Child Care for children

Children's first place of learning is school. Children must go to school<sup>2</sup>: WeWorld complements the formal activities of schools attended with individual sessions for personal skills development, activities in Italian, socializing games and activities, and post-trauma psychosocial support.

<sup>2</sup> A small percentage of children do not attend Italian schools because their mothers or guardians (often grandparents or close relatives) are convinced that they will return to Ukraine soon. A WeWorld survey of women attending Women Spaces shows that 10% intend to return to Ukraine as soon as possible, 20% do not intend to return, the rest are uncertain.

## Nataliia's testimony

Nataliia arrived in Italy with her children, and they were hosted in WeWorld's Women Space in Milan. Since she has been in Italy, she has chosen to help other Ukrainian women in distress by working as a linguistic-cultural mediator in the Corvetto's Woman Space in Milan. It is thanks to people like Natalia that become part of our staff that today we can be a point of contact for many other women in the same situation.



*"I moved here from Ukraine with my 8-year-old son. The first days of Italian school were difficult for him. He met so many new people and children, new rules, a new environment, a new language. He cried. He often told me that he did not understand what they were telling him and that was why he wanted to stay home. I explained to him that it is important to go on and study. My parents decided to stay in Ukraine, I call them every morning to find out how they are. They often hear alarms and have to take refuge in the basement. I try hard not to think about the war, I will use this moment as an opportunity to make a new life for myself."*

Nataliia Kavetska, Welcoming operator and linguistic-cultural mediator for WeWorld Women Space in Corvetto, Milan.





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WeWorld is an Italian independent organization committed for over 50 years to guarantee the rights of women and children in 27 countries, including Italy.

WeWorld works in **129 projects** reaching over **8,1 million direct beneficiaries** and **55,6 million indirect beneficiaries**.

We operate in: **Italy, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Libya, Tunisia, Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mali, Niger, Bolivia, Brazil, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Haiti, Cuba, Peru, India, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, Ukraine, Moldova.**

Children, women and youth, actors of change in every community, are the protagonists of WeWorld projects and campaigns in the following fields of intervention: **human rights** (gender equality, prevention and contrast of violence against women and children, migrations), **humanitarian aid** (prevention, aid and rehabilitation), **food security, water and sanitation, health, education and learning, socio-economic development, environmental protection, global citizenship education and international volunteering.**

## Mission

We work for girls, boys, women and youth, actors of change in every community for a fairer and more inclusive world. We support people overcoming emergencies and we guarantee a life with dignity, opportunities and a better future through human and economic development programs (in the framework of the 2030 Agenda).

## Vision

We strive for a better world where everyone, especially women and children, must have equal opportunities and rights, access to resources, to health, to education and to decent work. A world in which the environment is a common good to be respected and preserved; in which war, violence and exploitation are banned. A world where nobody is left behind.