

Protecting children in war

Life-saving support for children amid the chaos, **Ukraine, Romania and Moldova**

Ukraine's orphans are some of the most vulnerable victims caught up in this horrific war. As a result of the conflict, thousands more children are now at risk of displacement and family separation. Hope and Homes for Children provides emergency support to children in Ukrainian orphanages and unaccompanied refugee children entering Romania and Moldova.

The problem

There are 100,000 children confined in harmful institutions across an estate of 700 buildings throughout Ukraine. These children routinely suffer violence and live with neglect that has lifelong consequences for them. The actual buildings they are confined in are already caught up in the conflict.

Staff are no longer turning up to work because of the risk, leaving many children to their own devices. In some circumstances, young children are having to care for babies. This large population are overlooked, left behind, very frightened and in the line of fire.

A major additional challenge is the number of refugees already now stationed in Moldova and Romania and the likely long term support children within this population is going to require surviving and as well as require to limit disruption to their education.

The partner

Hope and Homes for Children was born out of the Balkans Conflict 30 years ago. It is a leading organization working with national partners in nine countries to eliminate orphanages by preventing the separation of children from their families in the first place, reuniting them where this is possible, and by developing alternative forms of family and community-based care arrangements when it is not. Hope and Homes for Children have been working together for more than 6 years to advocate for and implement family-based care reform in South Africa, Rwanda, Uganda, Nepal, and the EU.

The philanthropic solution

Hope and Homes for Children's response has four dimensions:

- Life-saving support for children and vulnerable families in the second largest Oblast in the country – Dnipropetrovsk. Hope and Homes for Children is providing, food, water, and protection for children without parental care, displaced children and families in rural areas that have no access to support.
- Capacity building of professionals and local authorities to develop and provide social services and local advocacy.
- Practical help for unaccompanied refugee children entering Romania and Moldova. These children are especially vulnerable to sexual violence and to being exploited or trafficked. The organization is also ensuring that refugee children are not placed in orphanages but placed in properly supported and monitored emergency family care. In Moldova they will establish an emergency reception center and offer similar support to Romania based on best practices and its experience with vulnerable children.
- Advocacy work seeking to ensure that children are placed at the center of the humanitarian response.

The evidence

Hope and Homes for Children has been present in Ukraine for nearly 25 years where it has been offering practical solutions to keep struggling families together, and moving children out of orphanages and into loving family environments. The organization has also led the reduction of children confined in the orphanage system in Romania from over 100,000 to less than 4,000 and making similar progress in Moldova.

The impact

The support of Hope and Homes for Children will ensure children in orphanages are provided with emergency aid and unaccompanied refugee children in Romania and Moldova are protected from harm.

All programmatic data provided by Hope and Homes for Children. The UBS Optimus Foundation is a grant-making foundation that offers UBS clients a platform to use their wealth to drive positive social and environmental change. The Foundation selects programs that improve children's health, education and protection, ones that have the potential to be transformative, scalable and sustainable as well as programs tackling environmental and climate issues.

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