



# Ukraine Response Report

December 2022



# 01 Introduction



Prior to funding being received to support the Ukraine Crisis, Waterford Volunteer Centre supported partner organisations such as Waterford City & County Council and Waterford Area Partnership to answer the needs of the newly arrived displaced Ukrainians in the county. These supports were in the form of translators, volunteers for the Fáilte Isteach programme and volunteers to assist at rest centres and donation centres.

**“EVERY PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND EVERY PERSON SHOULD TRY.” – JOHN F. KENNEDY**

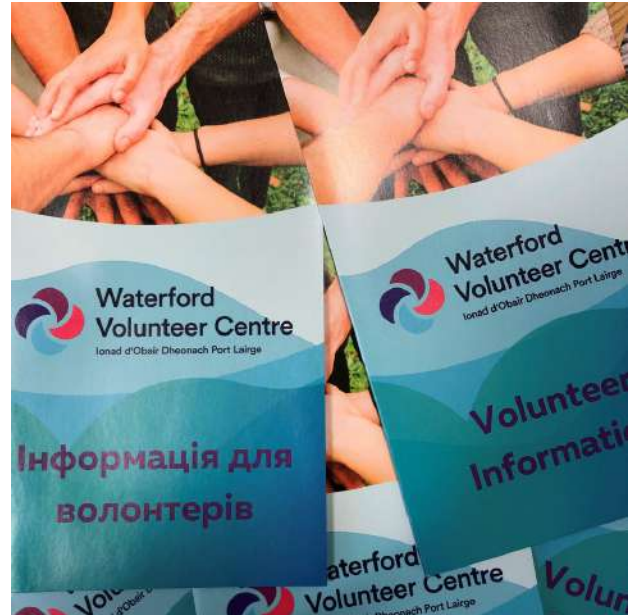
On receipt of the funding, we employed a Ukrainian Volunteer Outreach Worker (UVOW) on a 12 week contract, working 35 hours per week. Alina Kundukova started on September 26th and has had a huge impact on how we have been able to engage with the Ukrainian community. Her role involves creating awareness of volunteering and finding suitable volunteering opportunities for those new to the county.



# Spreading the word

# 02

With our Ukrainian Volunteer Outreach Worker on board, we began by translating information documents on volunteering and distributing these to rest centres and at local Red Cross meetings. Useful volunteering factsheets were also translated and shared through social media platforms. While volunteering is an important part of life in Ireland it is not the same in Ukraine and so providing information and education around volunteering became a priority.



Connections were quickly made through visits to the rest centres, Red Cross coffee mornings and outreach sessions in local libraries. Together with Ukrainian Support Workers from Waterford City & County Council and the SICAP Programme we were able to promote the benefits of volunteering.



# 03 Planting the seeds



Shortly before Alina took up her position with Waterford Volunteer Centre, we were asked to recruit volunteers for a Community Garden Project being run by Dunhill Multi Education Centre. This initiative would take place over ten weeks and a number of Ukrainian volunteers would work with locals to learn about gardening and how to harvest the produce.

**"THE GARDEN IS FAR REMOVED FROM THE HORRORS THEY HAVE WITNESSED AT HOME AND THEY ARE THRIVING IN BEING ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY" - SHARON HIGGINS, CENTRE MANAGER**

The project was a huge success. When Centre Manager, Sharon Higgins, visited the garden several weeks into the project, it was evident to see the positive effect it had had on all participants. Being able to switch-off and get away from the rest centre for a few hours was refreshing and reenergising. Volunteers also had the opportunity to cook something each week and share their traditions and stories from home.



# Finding Hope

# 04

The next volunteering opportunity to present itself was checking and packing shoe boxes for the annual Team Hope Christmas Shoe Box Appeal. Many Ukrainian volunteers took part in the checking and packing, each contributing around 20 hours of volunteering.



**“I LIKED TO PACK THE BOXES WITH CHRISTMAS SONGS ON IN THE BACKGROUND. I FELT MYSELF RELAXED AND CONCENTRATED.” – INNA CHUMACHENKO**



Waterford Volunteer Centre, in collaboration with Nathaniel Ademoye, Team Hope Co-ordinator, organised a 'thank you' event once the project had finished. Over 2800 boxes had been checked and packed are on their way children in Burkina Faso and Albania. It was heart-warming to see the connections that had been made between volunteers old and new. These opportunities to make friends while contributing in the community were relished by the Ukrainian volunteers who are always looking for ways to repay the kindness they have been shown in Ireland.



# 05 Christmas Connections



With Christmas approaching we decided to make one of our volunteer from home roles in-person, and invited volunteers in to make Christmas cards to send to local nursing homes.

Over two sessions, the volunteers had designed and written over 50 cards. This was also an opportunity to practice speaking English in an informal setting and focus on doing something for others.



These sessions originated from a previous session we ran with a focus on informal English lessons. One of the biggest barriers for Ukrainians is their limited English. While many are receiving structured tutoring, we wanted to do something informal and fun. The idea was to have a volunteer come in each week and do a workshop on a different topic; Irish Culture, cards and board games, music, books etc. These sessions have been well attended, especially by those who do not have any other social outlets.

# The numbers 07



These figures highlight the impact of having a dedicated worker to engage with those from the Ukrainian community. If further funding were to be made available our aim is to extend the role of the UVOW to include other migrants and International Protection Clients. Volunteering has been proven to have many benefits, and with integration into the community as a key component in migrants positive well-being we would welcome the opportunity to promote volunteering to all.

**“VOLUNTEERS DON’T GET PAID, NOT BECAUSE THEY’RE WORTHLESS, BUT BECAUSE THEY’RE PRICELESS.” – SHERRY ANDERSON**



# 08 Collaborations

Waterford Volunteer Centre has also collaborated with Waterford Integration Services, Waterford Area Partnership and Waterford City and County Council on a number of initiatives to engage Ukrainians through activities and volunteer opportunities.

One of the greatest challenges is finding opportunities that are suitable, engaging and fulfilling. Having Alina has been instrumental to seeking out opportunities and looking at ways we can support our migrant communities to integrate.



Olha Baschevanzhy, an Art teacher from Ukraine, giving art lessons to children at Dungarvan Library.



Collaboration with Waterford Integration Services to hold Energy Healing Workshops in Central Library, Waterford. These were delivered by volunteer Olha Krasnobaieva.



# Дякую

Thank you to the Department of Rural & Community Development for making this funding available and allowing us to experience the light that volunteering can shine on the darkest of situations.



**An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail**  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development



**Waterford  
Volunteer Centre**  
Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Port Láirge