



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

partnership

Your generosity
in action

Spring 2022



Your generous support has enabled our partners in the region to provide food, shelter and emergency supplies to Ukrainian families who had to flee their homes.

Thank you — your support is saving lives!



Dear friends,

In the years before our 75th anniversary in 2021, we had the privilege of hearing many of your stories. Stories of how your family came to Canada. And of course, so many of the stories of Lutherans in Canada have in common the backdrop of Europe at war—a Europe where families are fleeing their homes, leaving everything behind, desperate for safety. As you told us your stories, we also heard about how those stories motivated you to act today. We heard your great empathy for people in places like Syria and Afghanistan who have gone through similar crises in recent years. It's that empathy and conviction that have propelled this movement for 75 years.

But even as we listened to your stories, I don't think any of us expected that just a couple years later, we would see full-scale war in Europe again.

For many of us, the images and stories from Ukraine have been painfully familiar. The Russian assault on Ukraine—and the suffering felt by millions—reminds us so closely of our own stories.

When families in Europe faced crisis 75 years ago, a community of believers responded. Lutherans in Canada welcomed thousands of

refugees, and rushed hundreds of thousands of pounds of emergency food, clothing, and relief supplies to those in need. When things seemed so bleak, a stranger across the seas provided hope.

Today, as millions look for hope, the Lutheran community in Canada has responded again. And what inspires me most is that your commitment is not only to those in Ukraine. Though the crisis in Europe has moved us all, our commitment to you is to not forget any of those who face hunger, disaster or the horrors of war. And you have kept that same commitment, through your incredible generosity in giving to support all those we serve around the world. Enclosed you'll find just a few stories of what a difference that support makes.

Your partnership will be needed this year. The prospects for a historic hunger crisis are deeply concerning—we will share more about this soon. But for now, I want you to take deep encouragement, because your partnership is making a very real difference and offering hope just where someone was looking for it.

Deepest blessings,

Karin Achtelstetter, Executive Director

We're always ready to tell you more about how your gift is making a difference!

Contact our office any time at 1-800-661-2597

Ukraine | Emergency support for families fleeing crisis

The war in Ukraine has caused death and suffering on a dramatic scale and has left millions of people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

The conflict has caused the world's fastest growing displacement crisis since World War II, with more than 14 million people uprooted over the past three months. So far, around 6 million Ukrainian refugees have crossed into neighbouring countries, while 8 million are internally displaced.

Your generous support has enabled CLWR to respond to the crisis as part of a coalition of churches and faith-based organizations. Lutheran World Federation and our partners in the ACT Alliance were among the first aid organizations to reach affected areas and are continuing to provide life-saving humanitarian aid.

To date, our partners have provided food packages, emergency supplies and medical equipment, and have established Refugee Support Points, Child Friendly Spaces and Transitional Shelters.

Your gifts have provided shelter and food to hundreds of families like Irina's (cover).

Irina was forced to flee her home in the Donetsk region of Ukraine with her two young children when the crisis began. "When we saw the neighbours' building destroyed... I made the decision that I had to leave with my children – but my parents stayed."

The family took refuge at a shelter in Transcarpathia operated by CLWR partner Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA). They now have access to three meals a day, hot and cold running water, mattresses, and blankets as well as hygiene products.

Your generous gifts are saving lives - thank you!

Cover Image: Irina and her children, Tapolina and Mathou, pictured here at the HIA shelter in Transcarpathia, Ukraine. (Photo: Fekete Dániel/HIA-Hungary)



Several years ago, drought forced Woday Gelaye, a small-scale farmer in Ethiopia, to sell his oxen to feed his large family. (Photo: LWF/Hannah Mornement)

Ethiopia | Initiating an integrated approach

The impact of drought in the Horn of Africa has been severe on vulnerable populations already struggling as a result of poverty, insecurity, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The humanitarian crisis caused by this historic drought is compounded by disruptions in food supply chains resulting from the crisis in Ukraine.

In Ethiopia – one of the countries impacted by the drought – your donations over the past few years have enabled us to provide emergency support to thousands of families displaced by conflict.

Previously, our focus was on improving food security for vulnerable farmers and providing basic necessities and clean water to displaced families in Ethiopia.

This year, we are expanding our efforts in the country in order to address both immediate as well as longer-term needs. Our new project will adopt a “nexus” approach that integrates humanitarian and development solutions.

With your continued support, as well as the support of the Canadian government, our partner Lutheran World Federation – Ethiopia will not only provide vulnerable refugee families access to clean water, shelter, and basic supplies to get through the immediate crisis, but also help get them on the path to sustainability by supporting livelihoods and providing farming inputs and protection for women and girls at risk of gender-based violence.

Thank you for being a critical part of these life-saving efforts.

Uganda | Working toward a brighter future

Joyce Angeyo’s family of twelve was forced to flee when war came to their community in South Sudan. Her parents were small-scale farmers who grew crops to help their ten children pay school fees. The conflict made it impossible for them to transport their crops, and soldiers regularly disrupted Joyce’s studies when they showed up at her school. The family fled to neighbouring Uganda and took refuge in the Palabek settlement when Joyce was in fifth grade. One of her brothers was killed on the way.

With your support, CLWR has been working in partnership with Lutheran World Federation – Uganda to provide emergency protection and livelihood assistance to refugees and their host communities in Uganda. The project also offers vocational training to refugee youth.

Joyce, now 18 years old, is an active participant in many of the trainings offered. “The trainers at the youth centre taught us how to make liquid soap and cake, and my family members benefit because I share with them the skills I get from here... my mother buys ingredients, and we make cakes at home. She learns, and even our neighbours come and learn from us,” she said, “...I used to beg my parents to buy educational materials like books, but with this project, I have the skills to make liquid soap to purchase scholastic materials and clothes.”

Your support is helping girls like Joyce build a better future. Thank you!

Joyce attending a training on gender-based violence at the youth centre. (Photo: LWF Uganda)



Refugee Resettlement Story | Salmon Arm, BC

Since 2016, the Deo Lutheran Church in Salmon Arm, B.C., together with other churches, community groups, and individuals, have sponsored a total of 70 Syrian refugees to Canada.

“We knew we couldn’t sponsor refugees on our own,” said Erik Bjorgan, pastor of Deo Lutheran, which had a pre-pandemic attendance of 50–60 people.

So they decided to call a meeting in 2016 to invite others in the community to join them; over 40 people showed up and the Salmon Arm Refugee Coalition was born. “We knew we were on to something after that,” Bjorgan said.

Since that time other local churches—Baptist, United, Free Methodist, Catholic, Christian Reformed, and independent congregations—along with community groups like the Rotary Club, businesses, and individuals, have joined in to bring refugees to the interior B.C. community of about 20,000 people.

“All we did was provide an invitation,” said Bjorgan. “We just lit the fuse for something that the community wanted to see happen. The community really stepped up. It was very humbling to be a part of it.”

George Zorn is a member of the church and involved in the refugee sponsorship work. “So many people wanted to do something,” he said, adding “it’s the most ecumenical thing I’ve ever done.”

For community member Sandrina Harwood, the experience was gratifying. “We had a common purpose, so it was easy to work together,” she said, noting Deo Lutheran provided the nucleus for the effort, including its relationship with CLWR. “It provided the push to go ahead,” she said. “After that, community momentum took over.”

Different groups and individuals brought their gifts to the table. Community member Helen Stoddart used to own an antique store. She coordinated the effort to find furniture for the refugee families, often going to garage sales to buy items. “When people heard what it was for, they often reduced the price or gave it to me for free,” she said, adding a local business provided free warehouse space.

The United Church provided space for Muslim worship, while Deo Lutheran let the Syrian refugees use their space for special religious celebrations. They also hosted community fundraising suppers in 2016 and 2019 to raise money to for English language instruction and to reunite family members of the refugees. “If there was a need, someone stepped up to say, ‘we can do that,’” said Zorn. “There was lots of kindness and goodwill.”

In the end, “it was like a snowball rolling down a hill,” said Bjorgan. “The appetite to help was there.” The lesson for church members is when faced with a huge need. “We don’t have to do it alone,” he said.

The effort was also good for Deo Lutheran and the other churches. “It brought the churches and the community close together. It revealed what we could do together when a community is at its best.”

Thinking of the refugees who came to Salmon Arm, Zorn said “The community as a whole is richer for these new Canadians being here. They are a gift to us.”



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