



SPECIAL REPORT

Crisis in Ukraine

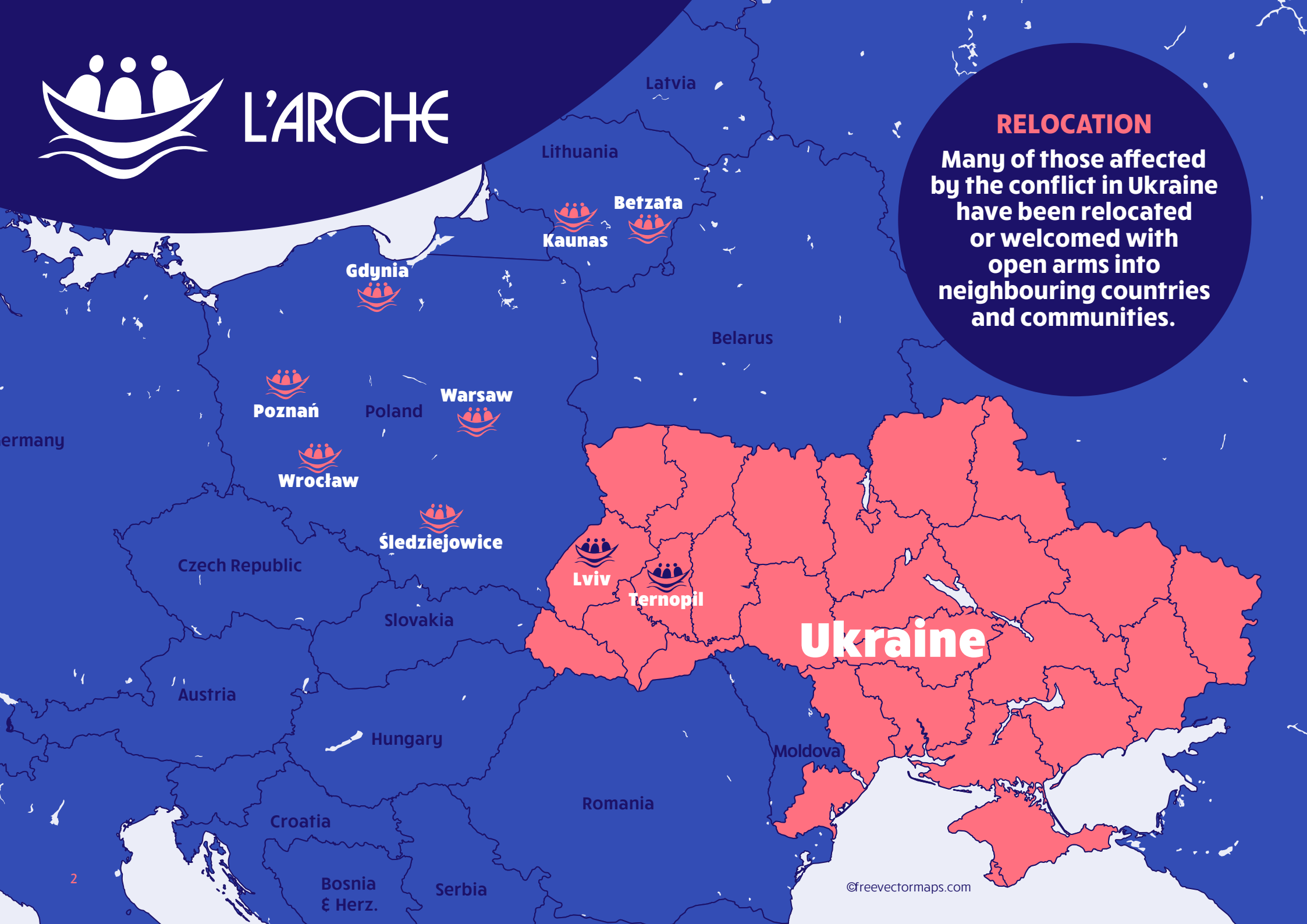




L'ARCHE

RELOCATION

Many of those affected by the conflict in Ukraine have been relocated or welcomed with open arms into neighbouring countries and communities.





October 2022

A Federation of Support:

The wider Federation of L'Arche and our global friends have shown tremendous solidarity over the past nine months towards our friends, colleagues and communities in Ukraine.

L'Arche communities represent networks of relationships that extend into the local neighborhoods and families, transforming the perception of people with intellectual disabilities.

This is the profound work of building peace: daily life that fosters relationships and recognizes the intrinsic value of every human life. And never is this work more obviously needed, than in times of war. Approximately one third of the population of the Ukraine has been displaced, and 7.5 million people have fled the country*.

For many people with intellectual disabilities and their families, managing this volatile context is extremely challenging, and nearly impossible without good support.

L'Arche communities in the Ukraine are located in Lviv and Ternopil – areas that, while a distance from the worst of the hostilities, continue to hear and feel the war every day. L'Arche communities in Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania have all taken action to respond to the very real, and often overlooked, need for people with disabilities and their families.

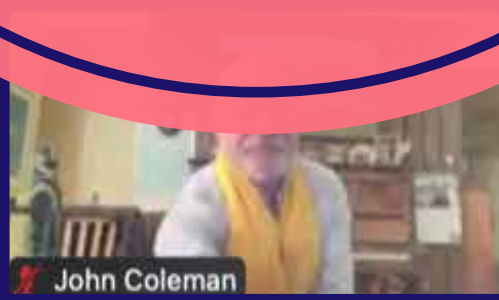
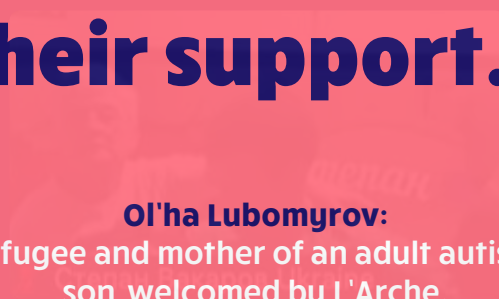
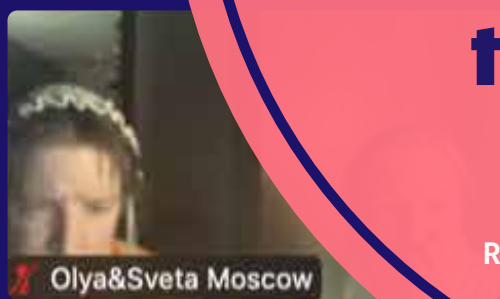
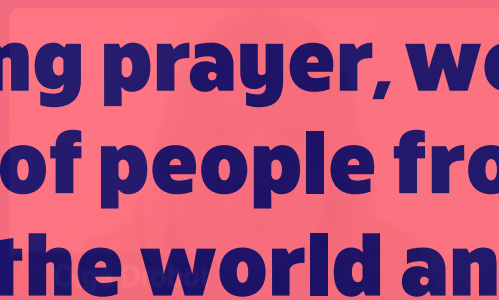
*SOURCE: www.data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine

A heartfelt "thank you" to all who joined the twice a week time of praying together on Zoom. It has been immensely encouraging and helpful.

“Every day we look forward to our evening prayer, we meet a lot of people from all over the world and feel their support ... It is the main event of our day.”

OI'ha Lubomyrov:

Refugee and mother of an adult autistic son, welcomed by L'Arche



“Every day we look forward to our evening prayer, we meet a lot of people from all over the world and feel their support...”

Ol'ha Lubomyrov:
Refugee and mother of an adult autistic son, welcomed by L'Arche.

An incredible gift:

When a crisis hits you look around and with all your heart desire to make sure your loved ones are safe, and their basic physical and emotional needs are met.

The generous financial support of L'Arche members, friends and partners have allowed hundreds of families to satisfy that deep desire to care for the basic needs of their loved ones. L'Arche communities across Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania transformed nearly overnight to welcome a steady stream of people seeking refuge.

“I never imagined that people can be so good, so helpful, in another country.”

Khrystyna Bila (pictured left):
Mother of two taking refuge in L'Arche Kaunas, Lithuania



Emergency funds have allowed local L'Arche communities to:

- Meet basic daily needs of food, medicine, accommodation and transportation for people with intellectual disabilities and their families, whether members of L'Arche or refugees fleeing another part of the Ukraine.
- Respond to the emotional needs for security, kindness, care and support.
- Retain and build the capacity of L'Arche staff to see and respond to the needs as they are presented.
- Establish pathways of communication and connection, where members with intellectual disabilities are living outside of a L'Arche home.



Making Ukrainian themed candles





Myron and Dmytro
L'Arche Kovcheg

Basic daily needs:

Since the war broke out in February, basic needs like food and medication can either be difficult to supply, or extraordinarily expensive.

Your support has made sure no one known to L'Arche has suffered for lack of food or medication.

The L'Arche Emergency Fund sustains deliveries of critical supplies from Poland to L'Arche Lviv and Ternopil. The L'Arche Poznan community van shuttles materials to a rendezvous point just inside Ukrainian border, from where a van from L'Arche Kovcheh, Lviv delivers them to those in need.

“From the first day we were surrounded by care and attention.”

Victoria Lysenko: Mother of a son with autism



“I want to thank you for the great support, which is very, very necessary and important for us now, in the time of war. My husband lost his job in May .. so the support with food and household goods has helped our family a lot. Thank you for caring for core members and for their families, too, for not leaving us alone with our difficulties. May God bless you all with all His graces.”

Mother (left) of a long-term L'Arche member in Kovcheh



Transportation:

Many refugees fleeing Eastern Ukraine found their way to Lviv or Ternopil but were heading on to Poland or Lithuania. This type of movement during war time is difficult and risky for anyone, but individuals with disabilities often have unique transportation needs.

Viktoria Lysenko's son Andrei experiences autism and as a result has intense sensory needs. Travelling with large crowds via public transportation through police check points was overwhelming. But once they made it to Lviv, they found L'Arche - a community of people that completely understood Andrei's needs. L'Arche helped Viktoria and Andrei to reach safety in Poland, making the trip as smooth as possible for them.

Story continues on the next page ...



Transportation

... continued

Situations like this affirmed that there was a growing need for L'Arche to provide safe, reliable and properly adapted transportation vehicles for refugees with a disability, and for transporting supplies.

Vans are also needed daily to transport members / participants to the daytime meetings, as public transportation is no longer considered safe. L'Arche Kovcheg, Lviv had just one van that is old and unreliable, but still serving more than 65 core members, assistants, and the growing number of refugees.

Both communities are extremely grateful for the financial support to purchase safe and reliable vehicles. As a result, L'Arche Kovcheg has already secured one second hand vehicle. The accessible vans are very difficult to source in the local market, but both Ukrainian L'Arche communities hope to secure an accessible van as soon as possible.

Mobility adaptations:

The L'Arche communities of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania have all chosen to welcome refugees without hesitation, both within the L'Arche buildings and in their own homes.

But sometimes even the L'Arche buildings were not properly adapted to the needs of the individuals coming as refugees, and some renovations were necessary for their dignity and basic needs.

Igor's (below) experience is now dramatically improved because of the bathroom renovation and his new electrified wheelchair.



Getting established:

L'Arche is also supporting refugee families to get established on their own in Poland or Lithuania, by helping with costs that can often be a barrier, like the first month's rent and bills, while they establish a source of income.

This support can make a huge difference for families who need to find a place of their own for the sake of the emotional well-being of their children and is a very important initiative to prevent homelessness.

Overall, since the beginning of the war, and through your support, L'Arche has supported over 700 people, approximately 350 of whom have received intensive, ongoing support.



Emotional support

L'Arche looks at more than just the physical needs. We recognize that building relationships of belonging across differences is a powerful movement towards peace in the world, and this is particularly relevant in times of war.

Both the long-term members of L'Arche and the refugees that have recently found L'Arche are experiencing the power of community during this otherwise lonely and terrifying experience.



“You understand that it is somehow scarier alone, and when there are more people, there is a sense of peace through unity.”

Ania:

Long-term assistant L'Arche Kovcheh

“It's a miracle that I'm here [in L'Arche ...] I'm treated like a human being, not an invalid.”

Igor:

Refugee from Western Ukraine

“With the beginning of the war, I had a feeling that a great darkness was approaching. But fate showed that there is room for light, goodness and joy in our world.”

Mother of a child with a disability:

Taking refuge in L'Arche

Reclaiming hope

Through L'Arche daytime meetings and programs, many are reclaiming the hope and goodness that comes from relationships of belonging.

As early as April 2022 L'Arche Kovcheh in Lviv, Ukraine made the difficult decision to re-open their center for daytime activities. Because many members began to feel intense loneliness and isolation, escalated by feelings of fear and vulnerability.



Homemade Food

One very practical activity is making Ukrainian dumplings (see left and right) to share with those who need food. Before the war L'Arche Kovcheh was preparing to launch a dumpling social entrepreneurship, so they had all of the necessary equipment on hand and ready to go.

“ We have chosen the two safest places, which are partially basement and classified in our reality as a shelter ... Our minibus takes a safe route around the city, bringing core members to the workshops. They love to ride the bus, so they enjoy this innovation ... when the sirens go off, we use the time for prayer and for personal sharing. ”

Olesia Larikova: Community Leader of L'Arche Kovcheg, Lviv

“ There are friends here, there is work, you can sort out the beads, help in the kitchen, there is a place for everyone here. ”

Dmytro Kryzanovskiy: L'Arche member

Over in Poland, L'Arche communities have joined other local organizations to craft a tapestry of services aimed at supporting people with disabilities and their caregivers, which is often their families.

“ L'Arche Śledziejowice, Patchwork and Ognisko have created a system of support for 75 families in the Cracow area. The scope of activities includes support to find short-term apartment rentals, rehabilitation, and in-kind assistance from specialists in the field of social integration. ”

Agnieszka Karolak: L'Arche Poland National Leader

L'Arche, which has for many years been affectionately referred to as a “university of the heart” has applied its decades long experience of the transformative power of relationships to bring light and hope to many during an otherwise emotionally devastating experience.



Staff retention and capacity - supplement staff salaries

None of the beautiful and important work described above could be accomplished without the role of the **Community Leaders and Assistants (staff) in the community.**

These L'Arche members are highly committed and have gone above and beyond in this time of crisis. L'Arche pivoted quickly and became an emergency response organization overnight.

It is essential that we can support the conservative salaries of our dedicated members on the ground, so that staying with L'Arche is an option for staff who also need to think about providing for the needs of their families.

“ I am incredibly grateful to everyone who contributed to help for us in general as a community, and for me and my family in particular. ”

Natalia: L'Arche Kovcheg



New assistant Andriy (Centre) L'Arche Lviv



Natalia (far right) has worked for L'Arche for ten years



Anja (centre) has worked for L'Arche for seven years

Keeping the lines of communication and connection open through technology

As described above, one of the most important ways of preserving the health and mental well-being of L'Arche members and refugees they are serving during this time of crisis, is staying connected and supporting one another.

The provision of smartphones, tablets and computers have allowed the community to stay connected with each other, day or night, even when the alarm sirens force them to stay home. Thank you for making this possible.





Thank You!

Because of your generous support and initiative no one known to L'Arche has gone hungry, homeless, or emotionally isolated during this time of war. Thank you. Your generosity has touched countless lives and helped to bring light and joy into a dark situation.



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THIS PAGE

L'Arche Kovchek have been busy making aptly named 'Ukraigels'. These lovingly handpainted decorations are on sale to raise funds for their work. For more information: bit.ly/ukraigels