

Ukrainian Refugee Aid in Moldova

Feb 25th, 2022 - Dec 5th, 2022

coordinated by

Active Commons e.V. (Germany)

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active-commons.org/ukraine-hilfe-2022/



Report on activities in 2022

Update, Dec 2nd, 2022:

Unfortunately, this is not a final report. The Russian aggression continues and even worse, it now affects more and more Ukrainian civilians as Russia targets the infrastructures, needed to live in urban areas, especially in winter times like heating system and electricity support. Due to the conventions of Genf, these are war crimes. One effect is that starting from October more Ukrainians (especially women with children) leave to Moldova as the provision with energy looks a little more promising here.

We want to contribute with our help to a human-scaled, direct aid to people that look for shelter and help in Moldova and we will continue doing so. Right now, we stopped with constructions but we support people by paying their energy bills: The price fo gas is 5 times higher than one year ago. A connection to the gas system feels like a trap. Electricity has tripled and wood is already hard to find on regular markets - and this might not be the end of the scale. Hence, life is getting complicated and frustrating in Moldova as well and it feels good to see some direct international aid. With this report we want to pay back to our supporters, to be accountable of what we have reached so far. We are thankful to our supporters for their patience with us. In these special times it was difficult to report in time.

The basic structure of our work in 2022 consisted of:

1. Support of housing for refugees from Ukraine in 7 villages and Chisinau
 - a. supporting Moldovan host families with money and house inventory
 - b. renovating empty houses to become shelters
2. Organization of aid transport from Germany to Moldova
3. Leisure time activities, educational programs

Here, we will try to tell as many stories as possible because we have understood that this has become the essence of our work: To create and tell stories. We are trying to be a part of the Moldovan success story in helping Ukrainians + we try to bring these stories to Germany to help to keep empathy for Ukrainians high. Thanks to you, reader and supporter, for being part of this story!

Overview on financial support:

A project money/ grants by institutional partners:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. SHL - Schüler helfen Leben (Berlin/Hamburg)
schueler-helfen-leben.de | 35.250 € |
| 2. trust for mutual understanding (New York)
tmuny.org | 30.000 € |
| 3. MitOst e.V. (Berlin)
mitost.org/ukraine | 25.000 € |
| 4. Zughafen Erfurt, Netzwerk Kulturbahnhof e.V.
zughafen.de | 8.000 € |
| 5. iac - international alumni center (Berlin)
www.iac-berlin.org | 6.000 € |
| 6. Eberhard Schöck Stiftung - inkind contributions in construction work
eberhard-schoeck-stiftung.de | |

TOTAL **104.250 €**

Plus an amazing number of private donations from friends from Germany of:

106.283,09 € !!!

Total income to Active Commons e.V. up to Dec 5th, 2022: **210.533,09 €**

Spent up to Dec 5th, 2022: 194.300,83 €

1. Support of housing for refugees from Ukraine in 7 villages and Chisinau

Right at Feb 24th thousands of people were queuing up at the border of Palanca (south-east Moldova, half way between Chisinau and Odessa). Everybody was in shock. It was not clear in the first weeks what the Kremlin would go for and how fast they would progress. Most of the people were trying to have a save and quiet place to wait until the situation would settle and make plans. Most of the ca. 750.000 refugees that entered Moldova would stay only a few nights, heading forward to Germany, Italy or anywhere else. About 250.000 stayed longer (on roughly 2,5 Mio Moldovans!). Many went back to Ukraine on Easter at the end of April. That was also the time when things became more relaxed. Nowadays about 80.000 Ukrainians fled from the war are still in the country.

In the first weeks Moldova absorbed the refugees in private houses. People opened their houses and gave a guest room to strangers or relatives or friends of relatives. Still, the gas bills for higher consumptions were high, places to sleep were lacking and the host families needed support to keep inner peace in the houses. We rapidly identified villages where we had good contacts and existing trust structures from previous collaborations. In total we helped about 3.000 refugees. At one point in March we gave a save and warm place to stay to 670 refugees. Most of them stayed only a few days in the host families we supported or in the houses we were preparing. From May on we have a stable number of about 200 refugees hosted in “our” houses. Here we want to present some representative examples from the seven Moldovan villages where we were active:

1. Riscova
 2. Hirtop
 3. Cociulia
 4. Volintiri
 5. Floreni
 6. Zubresti
 7. Colonita
- plus: Chisinau

1.1 Riscova

coordination: Valeriu Istrati, Anna Maslova

In Riscova (raion Criuleni) ecovisio has been active since 2015. Here stands the Environmental Training center and before the pandemic we’ve built up a network of host families that were trained and used to host guests. This experience helped to build up an aid structure quickly. Here the most vulnerable cases were placed as up to May we provided the meals a day in our center, plus medical and psychological care.

“Hala Riscova”



In March we quickly had to react and find a save space for the help we received from Germany: beds, mattresses, cloths, kitchen utilities, furniture and so on. In total five trucks with second hand stuff from Germany. Valeriu reacted quickly and offered to make the “Hala” in Riscova fit for storage. Until now there was straw and hew for the horses and a training space for the 5 horses. We had to invest to make the hala rainproof and adjust the space to be able to work and store

there comfortably. Until November 2022 this was our storage space. In November we switched to Floreni as our storage place for aid.

Riscova, Casa Aurica



Aurica and her family are one of the hosting families that we used as guest houses also before the war for educational training at the EcoVisio Training Center. Therefore, not much work or preparation was needed, only some support for energy costs and food. Until May three Ukrainian mothers with 5 kids were hosted here.

Riscova, Casa Eugenia



Eugenia has been another host for seminar participants since 2016. We helped to adjust the rooms and two families had the chance to find shelter here for a few weeks.

Riscova, Casa Alexandru



Alexandru gave his house for refugees. An elderly couple from Mariupol found a new home for four months here. Support was needed with some furnitures and energy costs in the winter months.

Riscova, Casa Ecaterina



Ecaterina (left in left picture) has been a frequent host for the guest of the Training Center before the war. For long-term visitors the problem was always that guests had to pass through her room to enter the bathroom. We managed to install a second bathroom next to her guest room.

1.2 Hirtop

coordination: Rusanda Curca

Rusanda didn't take long to decide that she as a local cultural manager will coordinate help for refugees in her native village. Hirtop once had 4.000 inhabitants. With 1000 left in 2022 it was clear that here the focus in Hirtop would be renovating existing empty houses for refugees. Rusanda often organizes artists retreats and never had the chance to host guests in her village even though that was the demand. After the refugees she will have spaces to host her guests that many times come from outside of Moldova and would like a real rural experience. For renovating houses we put a cap of max. 3.000 € investment from our side per house. The rest had to come from the owner. We experienced that prices grew over the year and therefore did exceptions of max 5.000 € if it was well argued.

Hirtop, Casa Varvara



This house was not in use for the past five years. Rusanda would use this for hosting future artists residences in Hirtop. It was in an ok shape. After furnituring it we could host refugees from Ukraine right away from March. While construction works took place Alona from Odessa with 4 children stayed here until September when another family moved in.

Hirtop, Casa de pe deal



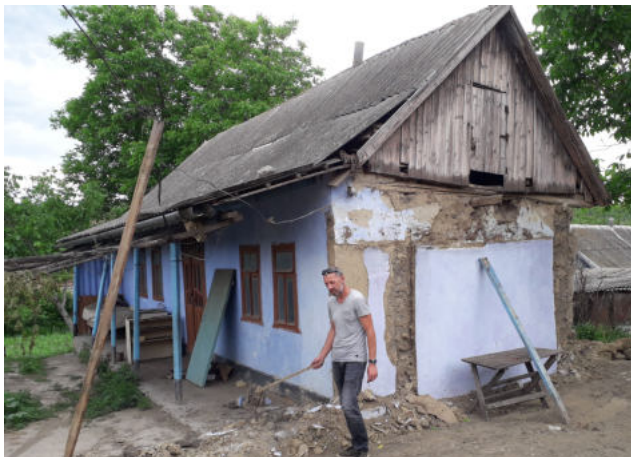
Just a few weeks before the war started Rusanda bought herself this house to gradually convert it into a guest house for her residences. We quickly decided to make changes properly and start with renovating the roof with the help of the Eberhard-Schöck-Foundation. Furnitures helped that starting already from April 2022 we could use this house for hosting refugees.

Hirtop, Casa Frunze



This house needed a bigger amount of repair works to make it suitable to host refugees. We started with the heating system and some electricity works. The owner couldn't afford to pay more here, so we had to stop the works in late summer 2022. This house is on hold. If the demand for sleeping places grows again drastically, we could continue to invest.

Hirtop, Casa Albastra



The "Blue house" wasn't used for two years and the conditions were tough. The Eberhard Schöck Stiftung helped us to change the roof and we had to basically redo the house. Only in November 2022 we started to use it. In the end of the year a family from Kyiv moved in.

Hirtop, Casa Laur



This house was in a good shape and just needed to be furnished and the electricity needed to be renewed. The Schöck Foundation helped painting the building. Since March 2022 a 4 people family from Odesa has its home here.

1.3 Cociulia

coordination: Martin Deshayes, Alina Perju
in the south of Moldova

Martin is originally from the Normandie and came to Moldova in 2017 to start a village life together with his Moldovan wife in the south of Moldova. Education, sustainable live styles and community building has always been the core elements of their life. The war gave a boost for their initiatives. They stopped the construction of their own house and put all efforts in constructing a new community center. A part of the school building which has not been in use for 10 years as number of school children declined, became the educational community center. The mayors office supported the initiative, even financially and is ok that as long as the war is going on, Ukrainian refugees and projects around that topic have priority. For this construction we needed a different frame as investments would be around 50.000 €. Luckily we found partners in the German associations Schüler-helfen-Leben and in the Zughafen Erfurt that organized a solidarity concert.



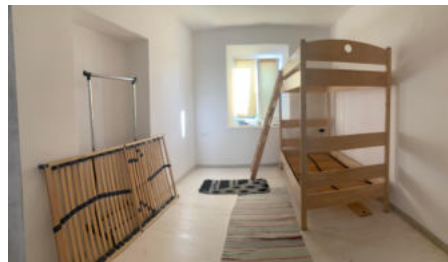
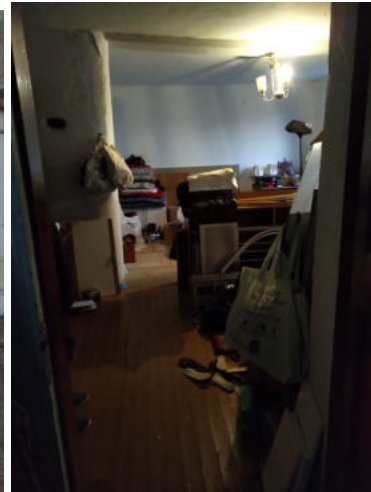


To Cociulia only few refugees arrived. It is far away from the border and not on the main road toward Romania. Those refugees that came, stayed with their relatives. Our newly inaugurated center was used from June on for summer camps for Ukrainian children and teenagers that arrived to Moldova.

If you want to see more about the center you can have a look here:

<https://youtu.be/WiaAVt40dnk>

Cociulia, Casa Alic and Liliana



Here one family hosted relatives from Ukraine. Alic and Liliana Perju have agreed to renovate the second house on their property to accommodate Ukrainian refugee families in the best possible conditions. The financial and material assistance provided by Active Commons and other organizations covered half of the total cost of the project. They agreed to take the risk of investing the little of their savings and taking out a loan to finance the second part of the costs. The project lasted 2 and a half months and the result exceeded expectations. The very good reception conditions (human and material) have attracted several Sducrainian families who have always left satisfied with their stay at home. This renovation, worth around 10,000 euros, was able to accommodate 10 Ukrainians for a total of 30 days of accommodation. The success of this solidarity action lies in the durability of this renovated house. Indeed, as long as the war lasts, the refugees will be able to benefit from this accommodation as a priority. But later, Alic and Liliana want to make this house a small country hotel to welcome tourists, always curious to get to know foreigners and to be able to offer a warm welcome.

1.4 Volintiri

coordination: Ina Hincu

Volintiri is 60 km away from Palanca, the main entry border point from southern Ukraine to Moldova. Together with the capital Chisinau this region had the most refugees and by far per capita in Moldova. Most of them stayed only a few weeks to make further plans. In peak times in March this village (2.500 inhabitants) had to cover up to 400 refugees. Good that we had Ina as a local there. Before the war she participated in many educational courses offered by EcoVisio. Her husband Igor is the mayor. This fact most of the time helped for quick and efficient impact

reports on the work in Volintiri:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MPvf5D-uhM> (start at 8:35)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL32DkLKnNQ> (Ina at 1:35)

Volintiri, Casa 1

This is the house of Liuba Muntean, where her mother lived until the war. But once the war started they offered the house to Ukrainians fleeing the war. 6 people live here, who came since February 26. They are the mother, father, daughter and son-in-law and their two children. In March, the young couple went to Germany with their child, because the second child was about to be born and Catea had health problems. In August the young family returned with the new born child and now there are 6 people in this house. This house had a problem from the beginning that the walls were moldy and it smelled strongly of mold. That is why the project invested in cleaning the walls of mold and applying wallpaper and plastering the walls. After the repair the smell disappeared. Hired to do the work were the guests from Ukraine, Larisa and Andrei who still live in this house. A refrigerator and washing machine were purchased. A small cot for the baby and chairs were brought.



Volintiri, Casa 2

In this house, the bathroom was built and the old one from a room where there was nothing. Water was connected to the kitchen. The rest of the rooms were whitewashed and the windows and floors were painted. 4 people have been living here since June 26. Parents and two children. A refrigerator and a washing machine were purchased here.



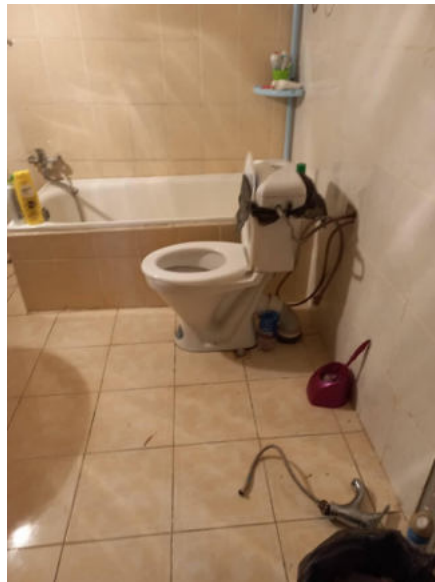
Volintiri, Casa 3

A room was set up here that was like a warehouse and is now a bathroom. Water was drawn, sewerage was built, a washing machine was bought and two comfortable beds were brought for the hosts. The rooms have been repaired a little. The entrance stairs were slightly renovated. Since April, 4 people have been living here. But recently the 99-year-old grandmother died and there are 3 people left.



Volintiri, Casa 6

This is the house from Copceac. A Roma family lived here. In the beginning there were 9 people, but from May 10 to October, 5 people lived there. At the moment we are looking for other people who will be accommodated. Here, the sanitary block in the bathroom was renovated and a wardrobe was added.



Volintiri, Casa 7

Here, a wall was built in one part of the room and a shower, toilet, water and sewage system were installed. We bought a washing machine and a refrigerator. The windows have been changed. The ceiling and floors were renovated. One more bed is needed. 3 people lived here for 2 weeks, then one person came and stayed for 3 weeks. Now, there is no one, but a Ukrainian family asked us to wait for them for a few days and they will come to live.



Volintiri, Casa 9

Here a bathroom was made from a room with a shower and toilet, water was drawn into the house, to the bathroom and to the kitchen. A bed was brought from the donations. We bought a washing machine. The entrance door and the kitchen window have been changed. And the walls in the rooms were renovated. 3 people have been living here since July 1. The husband, the wife and a friend.



Volintiri, Casa 10

A person has been living here for a week. The water basin was renovated, we changed a window in the corridor, the shower and the old things in the house were repaired. The floors were painted and the walls whitewashed. Here we also need a table, a bed and chairs.



Volintiri, Casa 11

The water basin was repaired here, we changed the broken bathtub in the bathroom to the shower cabin, the water basin, which was leaking, was repaired. A family of 4 people who came to Agusut lived here. Then they left the things and went to Odessa for a period of time. After that they came and had a conflict with the hosts because they burned some belongings of the hosts. They left and after that the owners don't want to host any more, but we were thinking of removing the shower cabin and giving it to other people who host refugees.



Volintiri, Casa 14

Here is the separate house in the same garden as the host. The host is the grandfather, and the Moldovan grandson married to a Ukrainian woman and the children have come to Volintiri since April. In August, the eldest daughter and grandson returned to Ukraine, and the parents and the younger sister went to Germany to work. They said they would come back in the winter. They drew water, built a shower room and installed a boiler and a toilet. They also contributed personally with financial sources to finish the works.



Volintiri, Casa Coroi Maria

Maria is the grandmother who hosted 2 granddaughters from Ukraine. The father is a Ukrainian soldier, and the mother is from the village. Grandma asked for money for a faucet to heat her water and paint to paint the walls.



1.5 Floreni

coordination: Igor Hancu, Victoria Novak

Igor and Victoria live with their children in Floreni, 15 km east of Chisinau. The small distance to the capital made the place attractive to refugees, especially when Chisinau was fully booked in March and April. Igor is originally from Floreni. With their social business [Edujoc](#) they make wooden toys for kids and invite groups of children to their atelier. In Floreni we supported many hosting families. In two houses we started more serious repair activities.

Floreni, Casa 1 Crețu

The house is spacious with 4 bedrooms and a living room, We made and fitted out the kitchen and bathroom, it has a wood burning stove that heats 3 rooms, a new boiler and internet connection. For now, it is inhabited by a family of 3 people. The house was visited by the German actress Katja Riemann (see picture to the left).



As Igor (right side in the picture to the right) is well connected to media and quite a figure in the region, the activities in Floreni were in the media quite often:

<https://protv.md/actualitate/mai-multi-voluntari-au-renovat-o-casa-pentru-o-familie-de-refugiati-ucraieni-care-riscau-sa-ramana-fara-acoperis-la-floreni-sunt-atat-de-multumita-imi-place-video---2616153.html>

Floreni, Casa 2 “Old house”

The house has 3 bedrooms, we converted one of the bedrooms into a bathroom and kitchen, we brought water and electricity, the house has a gas connection, for now it does not have a heating system and no one lives there, we are planning to make a fireplace or install a boiler gas heating.



Video report in Ukrainian

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0aPhCBfdiUUpn1xwL9tr4wQNBFRKgwmHxrgWXUzp4bcydViiS7wsTvgP1Vx61htMel&id=1437635448&mibextid=Nif5oz

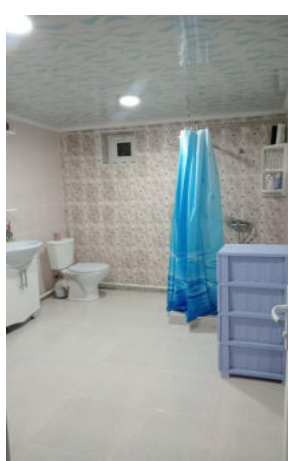
1.6 Zubresti

coordination: Svetlana Galusca

In Zubresti we had good connection to the mayors office, especially with the very active mayor Maria Manoli. Zubresti is not on the main roads and a little hidden but pittoresque and a good place. Svetlana coordinated the support for hosting families and some houses with repair work needs.

Zubresti, Casa 1

The mother with two children lives in this house. Because there are three rooms, she wanted to give one room to refugees from Ukraine. But the house had not finished the bathroom nor the kitchen. Money was allocated for finishing the bathroom.



Zubresti, Casa 2

This house belongs to the parents of Olga Iachimciuc, after their death, she offered the house to refugees from Ukraine. It hosted three refugee families from April to November.



Zubresti, Casa 3

At the house of Mrs. Olesia Harti, repairs were made in two rooms and a bathroom. She was reserved by a refugee family but they did not show up. At the moment this house is free.



Zubresti, Casa 5

This house belongs to Mr. Gheorghe Neagu. He hosted a family of refugees from Ukraine and only wanted us to buy firewood.



Zubresti, Casa 6

This house belongs to Mr. Gheorghe Tunicovschi. He hosted two families of refugees from Ukraine and only wanted us to buy firewood. Now they still have a family of refugees and we keep on taking over their energy costs.



1.7 Colonita

coordination: Vica Diavor

In this village we managed to help host families and refugees with money for their bills and commodities, specially during the winter and beginning of spring 2022, there were more than 160 refugees only in Colonita.

Colonita, Casa Natalia

a washing machine was bought and delivered to that house

Colonita, Casa Tamara

they received money for bills, blankets and clothes from the donation received, and the washing machine they used before was repaired.

Colonita, Casa Victor

a very critical Situation, from the beginning of war in this “house” were living 9 persons (3 women refugees and 2 kids) and the brother (Moldavian citizen) with his family (2 girls, one of them with disabilities). This house was half destroyed, and during the summer we started renovating it. We managed to completely change the roof with the help of the Schöck foundation. We rebuilt the house’s foundation and we bought the heating equipment. During autumn we worked to receive the documentation to connect the house to water and sanitation. There are still problems with electricity.



8. Chisinau

Although our main focus was on support in rural areas, we could not stop to help in Chisinau as well, especially in the first weeks of the war. Chisinau is the capital of Moldova with about 700.000 inhabitants. It is estimated that in some days in March there were about 150.000 from Ukraine additionally in the city. As most of the refugees came from cities like Odesa, Mariupol or Charkiw there were also looking for more urban life in Moldova. Rural life in Moldova often still means no running water, firewood for heating and cooking and a lot of work in the garden and fields. That was obviously not for everybody.

We rented some apartments when that was still possible (rents unfortunately doubled and tripled in March) and brought extra furniture to the apartments. Many people needed just some days to arrange their plans.



The arrival center at Moldexpo, Feb 27th. From here we took away some of our refugees. After some days Julian was already contacted frequently and didn't need to "look for refugees" in these centers.



Many African students that were studying (mostly medicine) in Odesa were rejected at the EU-border and needed to contact their embassy first. Julian's home was full of mattresses for the first three weeks of the war.



Lulia (right) offered her apartment in Chisinau and went to her village earlier in the year than normally. Olena (an English professor from Odesa) found shelter in Chisinau with her father and her ex-husband who both needed medical care. We paid the rent, brought furniture and organized a laptop so that Olena could keep on working.



Younger Ukrainians together with some ecovisio activists organized constant protests in front of the Russian Embassy in Chisinau. Each Sunday at 6pm we invited this crowd for a dinner and a game evening. It became a routine and is still a meeting point for the protesting community in Chisinau.



End of February and March we rented 8 apartments. The one from Olga (left in the picture) seems to be a long-term rent. Svetlana with her two daughters (one of them pregnant) flew from Kharkiv and found shelter in Chisinau. We took over their rent and some utilities until they find jobs to self-sustain themselves.

In this building the ecovisio member Valentin had a free apartment end of February and gave it for free. We helped to furnish it and created a safe space for a family from Odesa with 5 people and a dog for several weeks.



The apartment below the ecovisio office was also given to short term refugees in the first weeks. In June Levon and Angela, two stateless Armenians from Odesa moved in. Levon serves as a volunteer until he will get his documents and passport.



Vica, another ecovisio member, gave us the keys of her parents' apartment in Chisinau. For a small rent we used it to host short-term refugees in the first weeks.

2. Organization of aid transport from Germany to Moldova

After some days of hosting refugees it was clear that we needed furniture. In first hand, mattresses, beds, blankets, pillows. Secondly, tables, chairs, kitchen material and toys for kids. We could have bought everything in Moldova. But these products were highly demanded in March/April in Moldova and the quality is often quite low. Additionally, it is also a question of resources if in other parts of Europe exactly the same things are ready to be given away second hand. In Germany we had many friends who were ready to help and to collect furniture, cloths etc.

We organized 5 transports:

From Stuttgart, group around Johannes Zeller: March 18th (10 t) and April 2nd (9t)

From Wedel (Hamburg), group around Ingrid Holzwarth: March 24th (5t) and Nov 5th (5t)

From Eberswalde, group Ingo Frost: March 22rd (600kg)

We stored these 30 tons of stuff from Germany at first in Riscova in our “hala”. Our village coordinators came with bigger cars to take away stuff they needed in their villages. In November we switched to a winter-proof storage in Floreni and gave away the last items in December 2022.



Bringing these trucks officially over the EU border and through Moldovan customs was not an easy task. A big thank here to our partners from ecovisio, Lucia Ioncu and Vladimit Ternavski!



collecting and packing stuff in Stuttgart with many volunteers



packing the truck is like playing Tetris, only a lot heavier.



magic hand made all these things fit into the car in Wedel.



Unpacking is a little easier but not so much. Team Valeriu Istrati in Riscova.



Katja Riemann visited our storage place in Riscova.



Cars of our coordinators came to pick up things for “their” refugees, here two full cars for Volintiri.



We have tons of happy people that were touched by the donations and efforts taken to help them.



Like here Valeriu from Volintiri many hosting families received furniture, fridges,



Martin (coordinator in Cociulia) and Ana (coordinator in Riscova) arrange the

toys, cloths etc.	incoming aid from Germany
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Purely economically this effort can also be seen critically. We had to take about 4.000 € per full truck just for transport. For customs and storage we needed additional resources. Still, we are convinced that this part of the project had its wonderful impact by uniting people from West and East and by saving resources. People in Moldova heard that people in Germany gave away their (good) things to help them to show that they stand aside. Whenever asked where all these good vibration came from we answered “by friends from Germany”. We believe these small signs of solidarity are very important and will gain hearts and maybe even wars. We thank all volunteers and donors in and around Stuttgart, in and around Wedel and Eberswalde for their volunteering work.

3. Leisure time activities, educational programs



a: 20 community building events by cooking and celebrating together

The longer the refugees stayed in their new home villages, the higher was the need for community events. We needed to bring old and new inhabitants together in a non-formal manner. One response was food: Between June and October In 20 events the food truck

“GustoHora” united villagers, asked them to use their favourite and most common recipes and to celebrate diversity in the center of a village. Additionally to cooking and eating Igor brought part of his wood atelier and made toys with kids and games were offered. The project was led by Igor Hancu and well covered by media who was looking for uniting and positive stories in difficult times.



Mereni, July 2nd



Cociulia, July 9th



Volintiri, Oct 13th



Hirtop, Oct 14th



Riscova



Katja Riemann visited the event in Volintiri

Orhei, 9th of June

The event at which we had the largest number of participants! Among the participants we had 42 Ukrainian refugees, plus 23 locals. The event took place in a private space equipped with a park and swimming pool, and for several hours the participants of GustoHora relaxed and enjoyed the dishes prepared during the event.

The event also enjoyed interest from the mass media, one of the most important televisions filmed a report, then we had an appearance on the news. We had a local partner organization that helped us identify and reserve the location, but also organized a performance by a local band, so that the participants could taste the local traditions and customs.

- [Hincu Igor - GustoHora cu bunatati internationale... Dacă... | Facebook](#)
- [Hincu Igor - #GustoHora este despre solidaritate, emoții.... | Facebook](#)
- [Marina Rusu - 🍷 Niciodată nu aş fi crezut că am să descoper... | Facebook](#)
- [Sergiu Aga - Timp de recunoştinţă, pentru GustoHora Mai... | Facebook](#)
- https://www.jurnaltv.md/news/d0e4e79361ceba8e/dupa-trei-luni-istovitoare-si-pierderi-imp-ortante-mai-multi-refugiati-din-ucraina-au-avut-parte-de-putina-odihna.html?fbclid=IwAR3TQ_D0Z-w3wVUWOvki0aeyaw3WJ_o5Z_kfT32ARtvS-D8yt81iiNyeoml

Hîrtop, 14th of June

At Hîrtop we were met by 37 participants, Ukrainians and locals, with whom we organized a soulful event. We also organized the cooking masterclass and educational toy crafting workshops, which were attended by both children and adults. In the team we had two international volunteers, Andre from the USA and Amanda from New Zealand, who is also a journalist. Amanda cooked food with the refugees but also took pictures and interviews for an article that will be published in New Zealand and Great Britain.

- [Hincu Igor - Amanda este din Noua Zeelandă, lucrează la... | Facebook](#)

Floreni, 18th of June

Although more than 56 refugees from Ukraine are accommodated in the village of Floreni, only 23 Ukrainians came to the event, the remaining 11 people were locals, and this happened because the refugees are shy and feel uncomfortable taking part in the relaxation event, we will continue to keep in touch with the refugees. We managed to make a group on viber to organize a follow up event, to give them the opportunity to get to know each other and enjoy the local traditions of Moldova. It was for the first time that when the refugees requested ingredients to prepare pirozhki, everyone was delighted with the traditional Ukrainian, Moldavian, Japanese, and Irish dishes.

Mereni, 2nd of July

We had the joy of having more than 38 refugees at the event. The refugees from Ukraine were delighted that they will have the opportunity to cook and demonstrate their culinary skills. Together we prepared 30 liters of borscht, forshmac, minestrone soup, ice cream, Japanese wok

and traditional pancakes. Even though we had over 50 liters of soup, the mayor invited the children from the village school to the event who ate all the food prepared, it was fantastic, all the cooks were happy that the food was appreciated and enjoyed.

The event culminated with an artistic program, the local authorities invited a band that sang us Moldovan and Ukrainian songs, another joy was the guitar and voice performance by Iulia, a refugee from Ukraine.

Since we had a record number of local children, we decided that the toy-making workshop would be organized the next day, where more than 20 children participated, who made wooden toys and cards for their loved ones.

Cociulia, 9th of July

It was the furthest location we reached with GustoHora, the village of Cociulia, Cantemir district, we traveled by van for 2.5 hours to get there and another 2.5 hours back. There we participated in an opening event of a community center for Ukrainian refugees, GustoHora started at 12.00 and more than 34 participants joined, together we prepared traditional Moldovan and Ukrainian dishes and enjoyed a fairytale atmosphere. Starting at 4:00 p.m., we had the wooden toy making workshop, and after the official opening of the center, we danced a dance of the unity of the nations. The local organization invited the local authorities and a music band. Everyone was delighted with the participation and involvement in the GustoHora event.

- https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02RHZwzxHX9VCmjZTuz98pQBoryTihqEoSpm5NuFsAUKREbaA5XaWQdxkMeB57wpeQI&id=100000800482227
- https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0WFZEVNnGrPPX5WcrUDbpjs3MgyBSaD5J3WeHTr36UqNUYKCUxbJsWLKJHsMojoAtl&id=1437635448

Copceac, September 30

The village near the border with Ukraine where we walked on roads that were not in the GPS. It is a locality where very few organizations reach and where people came to our event like a big celebration. 2 refugee families also came, they were the only ones there at the time. There was a lot of fun and positive energy, music, and a good mood, I felt that they were some of the most joyful and grateful.

Volintiri, October 13

We are at Volintiri for the second time and we were warmly welcomed by the refugees and the locals who started cooking as soon as we opened the door of the food truck. There were with us 2 volunteers from CCHR Maura and Sofia (they worked at the IOC) and also a delegation from the International Rescue Committee. We couldn't play music because there were funerals in the village, but anyway, our event attracted a lot of curious people, we also prepared natural coffee, and the mayor brought us his home wine, we also had a small incident, 2 volunteers firefighters

put oil in the cauldron and forgot about it, then it caught fire after they sprinkled it with cold water, the cauldron cracked, but the coordinator brought the cauldron from home and we were able to cook mamaliga.

Hirtop, October 14

Only 3 refugee families remained in Hartop who participated in the event and prepared Ukrainian borscht and icra, a pot of grilled vegetables. We had a delegation of actors who filmed during the course of the event, they are also the ones who produce Lost in Moldova, a very good and current film about Moldova.

Gura Galbenei, October 16

The event gathered the most elderly people. More than 10 grandmothers and grandfathers participated in the event with their children and grandchildren, there were only a few Ukrainians because most of them went to complete their documents. The grandmothers lovingly cooked peppers stuffed with rice, coltunasi, pasta and 3 kinds of salads plus mamaliga, and the children pancakes, popcorn and ice cream. We had a sunny and warm day, at the end the grandmothers declared that they had never had such an experience and that they would love to cook again at another such event, because usually they only cook for the family and do not have the opportunity to -show off her talent and skills as cooks and housewives.

Bulboaca, October 22

The coordinator is a teacher at the school and she took care to bring us over 100 children and over 20 mothers who prepared the dishes with great love, the children had fun and danced, we had an exceptional show created by the children , who prepared intensively for this event, we also had 3 volunteers, 2 from Germany and 1 from Austria, who prepared traditional dishes.

Chisinau, October 23

GustoHora in the valley of the mills park in Chisinau, where the iarmareco event took place, was an event that gathered an extremely large number of people and in which we were exhausted, burned out, we decided with the team that we will not go to such events again for that it is very complicated to talk to people and involve them in activities, they have many options within these events and I felt that we were not the center and the main attraction of the event.

Tudora, October 26

We had over 125 children, it was the autumn vacation period, and the local coordinators took care to invite all the children from the village, both refugees and locals, the housewives cooked the tastiest borscht I've ever eaten, as well as other goodies, like so that all the over 160

participants went home in a good mood and with full bellies, it was one of the most intense and beautiful events at the same time.

Palanca, October 27

Only 6 refugee families and about 50 Ukrainian and local children participated here, the local coordinator provided us with everything we needed, but she did not take part in the event because she was busy with the debts from the town hall, the event took place right in the town hall park, 3 km away from the border crossing point. We had 2 volunteers, one from Germany and another from Spain, together with the refugees we prepared many culinary delights.

Chetrosu, October 29

Here we had over 100 participants, there were also 3 men who participated in the preparation and serving of the dishes, the mayor and his wife cooked pancakes and the villagers also insisted on making another row of pancakes (usually we only make one portion) so that at 5 p.m. pancakes were still being served, and the local coordinator was very involved, she invited all the refugees, some of whom she brought by car, they invited a DJ with professional equipment so that the villagers, but especially the children, enjoyed a great event cultural.

Ghelăuza, October 30

We had about 60 participants, of which 1/3 were refugees from Ukraine, they cooked french fries, collard greens, 2 salads and grilled vegetables, the children learned to make ice cream, pancakes and popcorn, the mayor had another event on the same day, which is why he was absent for a few hours, but at the end of the event he was actively involved in preparing pancakes and washing dishes.

We organized for more than 250 Ukrainians (mothers, grandmothers and children) ECO attitude training trips and initiation into the craft of toys, groups of 50 people were brought by coach to the workshop to show them where ecological toys are produced .

The EduJoc workshop is located in s.Floreni, Anenii Noi at a distance of approx. 25km from Chisinau, here visitors have a unique experience and an exciting trip in a real workshop, with real tools and instruments for making wooden toys.

The guests had the opportunity to see how a toy appears from the sketch stage to the final stage, but also to make an eco toy personalized with their name that they took home.

The guests also had a lunch prepared with ingredients grown on their own farm and huge pancakes, popcorn, ice cream.

The children developed their creative and cognitive skills as well as their dexterity in the field of conceptualizing and creating toys.

Also in this workshop, for 30 days we organized activities for the young Ukrainians and those from the village of Floreni, the carpentry and woodworking camp, during which the young people contributed to the creation and crafting of games for refugee children, we made 30 puzzles of the map of Ukraine, 120 toys with elastic in the colors of the Ukrainian flag and 20 sets of giant jenga bricks, all the created items were donated to refugee centers in Moldova, the young people were assisted by a craftsman, they learned to operate the drilling machine, CNC, Laser cutting machine, compressor and other instruments, and for their effort they received salary.

3.2 summer activities for children and teenagers

In some villages we organized excursions for the children of refugees to give a rest to the parents and to show in what kind of region the children are living now. We also invited local children to mix the group and give them a chance to learn each other's languages (Romanian and Ukrainian) even though Russian was the language of common understanding. Especially in Volintiri where we had many mothers with younger children this offer was very appreciated. We mostly used the existing network and visited each other. We also bought several board games and organized board game and other workshops afternoons in community centers.

In Cociulia we used our center and invited Ukrainian children from Chisinau to spend a small holiday in the village together with the local children. Martin and his team prepared 5-days-summer-programs between July 25th and Aug 26th.



pottery workshop, Volintiri, Apr 26th



excursion to Floreni, toy making atelier at EduJoc, July 15th,

more: https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0Z7n3AUxxi2bp7rnEPS6dyJRmymqc8F54U7osg6QyMoEPfSNMFvDyU3yGtWTD02hql&id=1437635448



Board game afternoons at bad weather day in March in Volintiri. Here we decided to buy some more inspiring board games like Catan :)



Art workshops in Hirtop with a painting teacher, April. Many of these recreational gatherings were also therapy.



Natalia (on the right) coordinated many activities with kids and teenagers from Volintiri -



here: Circus visit in Chisinau for kids from Volintiri, Oct 2nd



Play dough activities in the Volintiri community center, April 2022



Play dough activities and others in the Volintiri community center, April 2022



In Cociulia we organized 2 five-days-summer camps in our newly built center



Cociulia summer camp for kids, teenagers from Ukraine - here beekeeping workshop



Cociulia summer camps had programs of 5 days: between end July and end August we had 5 summer camps.



When the weather was not perfect, we stayed inside and painted. Some kids used the occasion to express some feelings on the war.

Resume

We are very thankful that people that trusted us made it possible for us to act where we saw it was necessary. We couldn't write activity plans for weeks ahead as the situation was too dynamic and too urgent, especially in the first weeks after Feb 24th. It was a blessing for all of us coordinators that we could act and help. We all found this work very rewarding and a good sort of therapy for ourselves as well. In such a situation of crises you just want to help and many even need to help. All our donors made it possible that we could help in the way we saw and felt it was the right way to help. We couldn't present

all the stories we've created with the help of your donations. We've just picked a few. But here is another learning: We created stories and humans need stories. In 2023 we'll focus more on sharing between East and West the stories we are creating.

With the beginning of May the situation improved and we could plan better. Now, in winter 2022/23 most families in Moldova (refugees from Ukraine or locals) face the energy crises and have a hard time to pay the bills for electricity or gas (raised by 5 times). We all hope that the aggression from the Moscow against our neighbors will stop soon. Like Olena from Odesa said, we believe that after this crises we'll have a stronger, more united and more empathetic Europe and a good base for rebuilding a beautiful Ukraine.