

## Belarus

### Update on the context and situation of children

The year 2022 continued with a migrant crisis at the Belarus-Poland border which resulted in approximately 2,000 irregular migrants housed at a logistical centre near the border where basic shelter and food were provided. The migration pattern became more complex with the Ukrainian refugee response. As of 27 December, more than 76,300 refugees had entered Belarus with approximately 20,300 registering for temporary status or asylum. Approximately 28% [1] of the refugees were estimated to be children, who with their families often had multiple needs for additional resources, information on services, or psychological support. In both crises, the Government has led the social protection response, with Presidential Order #326 that amended the 2014 Presidential Order #420, extending to all Ukraine citizens access to health, education, and employment, while UNICEF provided “niche” support in child protection responses.

While COVID-19 continued to be present in 2022, attention shifted to developing ‘new norms’ and focusing on prevention through promotion of vaccines. As of November 14, approximately 70% of the adult population were fully vaccinated. In December 2021, the Government introduced vaccination for children of age 12-17, and later in August 2022 for children 5 years and older. By mid-December 2022, only 16% children aged 5-17 had received two doses of Sinopharm vaccine [2]. Circumstances of the pandemic continued to affect children’s and adolescents’ mental health, manifested through high personal and situational anxiety, sleep disorders and maladaptation.

These factors contributed to cascading emergencies that influenced the country’s overall socio-economic situation. For January-November 2022, real GDP declined by 4.6% as exports continued to fall and domestic demand weakened. The consumer price index grew by 15.4%, including food inflation which rose to 24.3% or almost doubled compared to 2021. Consumer price growth, coupled with real disposable income decline (-3.9% in January-October 2022) [3], increased risks for vulnerable populations such as large families, single-parent households, people with disabilities and people without higher education to fall into poverty. Poverty among the general population was at 3.9% [4], yet for children and adolescents the rate is double at 9% [5].

Experiences from COVID-19 and the greater shift to online activities and services highlighted the importance of cybersafety for children. With enhancement of online interaction, cyberbullying has actively disseminated across social media and Internet messengers. Approximately 95% children use the Internet, of which 70% use mobile applications, making them particularly vulnerable to different forms of violence including cyberbullying and sexual violence. Ministry of Interior data reflects these dangers, in which over the first six months of 2022, there were 98 crimes related to child pornography which was a 157% increase from similar cases in 2021.

Important progress was made in education with the passing of a new Code of Education that strengthened inclusive frameworks by establishing legal definitions that advance a transition from a medical approach to disability to a functional approach. The Government’s national consultations for the UN Transforming Education Summit (TES) underscored commitment to enhance responses for children with special education needs (comprising 9.47% of the child population), calling for social inclusion where special education methodologies are integrated into mainstream schools. The Council of Ministers’ 21 November 2022 endorsement also strengthened social inclusion, requiring that people with disabilities have access to social, transport and industrial infrastructure, vehicles and services.

At the same time, TES consultations underscored COVID-19 learning regarding children’s transitional skills, calling for formation of students’ competencies necessary to conduct innovative, entrepreneurial activities that can transfer their knowledge to marketable skills. TES consultations highlighted the need for increased digital literacy among children and youth through introduction of teaching practices that

use digital technologies in the primary and secondary education systems as well as in additional education.

Protection measures for children were enhanced through legislative developments such as the amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code in late 2021 that allowed mediation to be used in criminal cases. This development provided the basis for building restorative measures for children in conflict with the law, enabling use of mediation to be used rather than court procedures. Revision of the Law on Crime Prevention in January 2022 also created a provision to address better domestic violence cases where intersectoral collaboration was improved through expansion of the definition of potential victims and implementation of more efficient procedures for issuing protection orders and preventive work with domestic violence perpetrators.

At the same time, the working space for CSOs continued to shrink with more than 1000 CSOs closing by end 2022. These closures disrupted provision of specialized services for vulnerable groups, to whom civil society has had traditionally greater access and outreach. The growing complications of the operational environment also made it more difficult to deliver effectively for children, causing risks to the office business continuity. The office in collaboration with other UN agencies had to find effective solutions to address the cash liquidity crisis, SWIFT ban on the major Belarusian banks, travel, transportation and mail delivery restrictions.

In summer 2022, Belarus presented its second voluntary national review on SDG implementation. Approaching the mid-point to 2030, the Government rated its level of progress towards SDG implementation at almost 80%, but also noted that the current level of restrictive measures against the country makes full SDG achievement challenging. Assessment of Belarus state programmes revealed that 24 of the 27 programmes include indicators comparable with SDG indicators, with 60% of these programme interventions being aligned with SDG targets. SDG directions that required more targeted integration in national strategies and programmes include SDGs 1, 5, 10 and 16.

[1] Ministry of Internal Affairs data, <https://www.mvd.gov.by/ru/page/departament-po-grazhdanstvu-i-migraci>

[2] Belarus Ministry of Health Press Service data; <https://t.me/minzdravbelarus/6544>

[3] National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Belstat; [https://www.belstat.gov.by/upload-belstat/upload-belstat-excel/Oficial\\_statistika/2022/express\\_info-2211.xlsx](https://www.belstat.gov.by/upload-belstat/upload-belstat-excel/Oficial_statistika/2022/express_info-2211.xlsx)

[4] National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Belstat, <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/Indicators/Preview?key=128959>

[5] National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Belstat, <http://www.childrenportal.belstat.gov.by/#/page/7/987>

## Major contributions and drivers of results

In 2022, UNICEF's programming advanced protective and inclusive environments, contributing to the 2030 SDG Agenda, and UNICEF's Strategic Plan Goals and Humanitarian Response.

Challenges triggered by COVID-19 and followed by deteriorating economic conditions affected children and families in Belarus. The country office (CO) stayed agile in programming approaches and remained politically impartial while upholding human rights principles. The migrant and refugee crises mandated increased programme coordination for humanitarian and development responses to remain relevant to children's changing needs.

### **Goal 1: Every Child Survives and Thrives**

*Strengthening ECD Systems:*

Over 2022, the CO advocated for legislative developments to institutionalize service responses for vulnerable children.

Based on 2021 piloting of online early childhood intervention services (e-ECI), a normative package on e-ECI was approved by the Ministry of Health (MOH) in 2022, making e-ECI responses a standard intervention in ECI services. In the pilot stage, implementation of e-ECI services increased access to overall ECI responses by 15% for children at-risk of stopping services. This approach enabled ECI teams across the country to extend ECI services for children from the most remote districts.

Likewise, advocacy to the MOH to revitalize the baby-friendly hospital initiative (BFHI) programme resulted in a MOH order on re-certification of BFHs which was included under the State Programme Health of Nation and Demographic Security. Following WHO/UNICEF BFHI Guidelines, a baseline was established to identify maternity hospitals' readiness to confirm their BFH status, accrediting 31 in total as baby-friendly. A team of 56 healthcare specialists were trained on BFHI criteria, with some of them becoming members of the certification committee to promote further baby-friendly practices in healthcare facilities.

### *Advancing Nutrition in Early Childhood*

The CO enhanced ECI centre's capacities with development of a methodological package on nutrition and feeding for vulnerable children, including children with disabilities, children living with HIV, and children under three years with special nutritional and feeding needs. The State Institution Republican Scientific and Practical Centre "Mother and Child," and the Republican Public Association of Parents with Premature Babies "RANO," provided recommendations for these resources. Approximately 150 specialists gained skills on nutrition and feeding practices through this remote training package.

### *Nurturing Parenting Practices:*

The CO's strategy to empower caregivers focused on information outreach and behavioral change communication through the mobile application-"BEBBO" that reached 12,000 parents in the first six months of its launch. Through BEBBO, caregivers gain 24/7 access to critical information with practical tips on health and nutrition, education and development, parent-child relationships and mental health. BEBBO promotion among caregivers also increased the visibility of UNICEF's work among opinion makers and civil society, enhancing practical feedback and messages that resonated strongly with parents.

### *Enhancing Mental Health Outreach:*

COVID-19 experiences revealed adolescents' needs for better tailored online counselling services. Addressing this need, the CO with the Republican Centre of Psychological Assistance launched the online platform, 'Talk2OK.by,' offering free and confidential psychological counselling for adolescents tackling mental health issues. The platform also serves as an information source on mental health for both adolescents and parents. With the platform launched in October, by end December there were 267 users registered and 137 consultations. Adolescents' feedback showed that the online format of confidential counselling motivated young people to ask for help without fearing stigmatization.

To enhance specialists' capacities to support adolescents' psychological well-being and coping mechanisms, the CO with partners piloted in 40 schools the accredited elective course for 8th -11th grade students, "My psychological well-being and peer support in crisis situations". Testing results showed students' improved communication with peers and enhanced conflict resolution skills, as well as prevention of bullying and suicidal behaviour. Complementing this elective course, Academy of Postgraduate Education experts designed 2 continued learning courses, tested among 56 psychologists, social pedagogues and teachers. Course supervision was provided through group webinars and individual online sessions, ensuring a quality feedback mechanism for revisions identified.

### *Strengthening Primary Healthcare Responses:*

The office finalized procurement of 5,000,000 pairs of gloves and 2,000 oxygen concentrators (total value \$1,708,508.48) under the MOH's World Bank funded project. Greater attention turned to promoting vaccines both for COVID-19 and catch-up of regular immunization. Successful cooperation with BelMAPO resulted in capacity development of more than 2,500 health professionals, who applied new skills in consultations with more than 10,000 families with children and adolescents on violence prevention, overcoming crisis conditions, and vaccination promotion.

## **Goal 2: Every Child Learns and Acquires Skills**

### *Assessing Quality & Inclusive Learning Opportunities:*

While Belarus has reached universal coverage of education for boys and girls, the country has not yet reached the SDG standards for inclusive education where all children can learn in their community schools. Inclusive education is a critical strategy for social inclusion of vulnerable children, especially children with disabilities.

Critical steps to meet SDG standards were initiated with the three-year inclusive education project among national partners, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MOE). Collaborating with four national stakeholders and the MOE, 2022 activities focused on legislative development and strengthening of the education system's capacity to prepare educators on inclusive practices.

Under the National Institute of Education's (NIO) leadership, a national strategy for inclusive education was drafted, defining staffing models for pre-schools, schools, special education institutions, and centres for correctional and developmental education and rehabilitation to implement inclusive education practices. Standard regulations were drafted to reprofile functions of Oblast Centres for Rehabilitation and Education Development, establishing regional 'inclusive education resource centres' that integrate expertise from special education facilities into mainstream schools. In 2023, a dialogue on the strategy will be advanced to gain a common vision among professionals on steps towards inclusive education.

Complementing these policy developments, a roadmap for pre- and in-service teacher training was developed that includes educators from mainstream schools and those in the defined IE resource centres. New training programme standards for pedagogical universities and post-graduation institutions were drafted to prepare educators from pre-school through higher education to adapt teaching plans to meet each child's unique learning needs.

### *Advancing Skills, Participation & Engagement:*

Lessons from COVID-19 underscored the importance for education systems to respond to fast digitalization and labour markets transformations.

In 2022, the CO with the MOE and key partners developed a national concept and action plan to define steps for integrating 21st century skills into the education system. Co-created among key stakeholders and adolescents, these documents incorporate definitions of 21st century skills, strategic directions, and resources needed for integration of 21st century skills in the education system. National consultations for the UN Transforming Education Summit with adolescents and young people stressed the importance for children's and adolescents' involvement in schools' design of universal skills development, digitalization, and improving employment opportunities.

To foster adolescents' roles in co-creation of child rights initiatives, the CO enhanced the tool, "U-Platform," enabling adolescents' participation in online training sessions, volunteer activities, as well as learning about and engaging in activities of Resource Centres of Youth Initiatives and Youth Parliaments. As of December, the U-Platform had a total of 57,430 visitors and 790 registered adolescents.

In collaboration with the Republic Volunteer Centre, the CO supported adolescents and young people to engage in child rights through volunteering. Under the "Volunteer Navigator" project, 85 university students gained skills on project management and handling group dynamics among peers. With these skills, volunteer coordinators will conduct in 2023 sessions on volunteering opportunities for schoolchildren from at least 150-200 schools. Volunteers engaged in more than 30 programme activities, including info-volunteering and testing of UNICEF online-resources, 14 fundraising

campaigns, support in the emergency responses, and providing lessons on ecological topics and SDGs 13-15 for approximately 100 schoolchildren.

### **Goal 3: Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation**

#### *System Strengthening for Family-based Care:*

With the leadership of the MOE, there has been an increasing shift to family-based care approaches by local authorities. In 2021, the CO together with the NGO “Supporting Children Together” and the Gomel Oblast Executive Committee developed a case management model that contributed to a 35% reduction of children in the Gomel baby home. Advocacy and technical assistance by the CO in 2022, resulted in the Vitebsk Executive Committee’s agreement to apply this good practice to 9 districts and 4 residential care institutions, with plans to reduce children in institutions and support at least 700 families raising children with disabilities. This project is supported under the “Family for Every Child” Campaign, jointly developed with Prior Bank. At the same time, the Gomel Oblast Executive Committee passed an order in May 2022 to create a palliative unit in the oblast baby home, strengthening the institution’s capacity as a palliative resource center for the whole oblast. This decision represents important steps to reprofile residential care institutions to community-based services that can support families and children.

#### *Enhancing Restorative Practices:*

Following 2021 legislative developments on mediation, the CO advocated with the Republican Union of Lawyers and Ministry of Interior to establish a taskforce for drafting methodological recommendations to use mediation in criminal cases. This action provides the first steps in advancing restorative practices for children in conflict with the law.

Together with the NGO “World without Borders” and social-pedagogical centres, the CO conducted supervision of restorative services developed in selected communities, as well as delivered case management training sessions for 60 pedagogues-psychologists working in territorial social-pedagogical centres. With the Minsk State Institute on Development of Education, the CO established an in-service training curriculum for pedagogues and psychologists on restorative practices based on case management to institutionalize these services into Minsk’s 9 social-pedagogical centres. The CO has also gained commitment of regions affected by the refugee crisis to scale up this practice. With the Republican Association of Barristers, the CO continued to advance free online legal consultations for children and parents through the chatbot, @kids\_lawyer\_bot. To ensure consultations upheld ethical and child protection standards, the CO supported a training series for 30 barristers on communication skills for working with different vulnerable child groups. This work enhanced legal professionals’ capacities on communication and rapport building with children facing or witnessing violence.

#### *Building System Responses for Prevention of Violence:*

Piloting of the “Safe and enabling environment in schools” (SEES) model was expanded from 26 to 30 schools in 2022, uniting almost 20,000 children across Belarus to develop anti-bullying and peer violence responses in their schools and communities. With the Belarusian State Pedagogical University (BSPU), the CO arranged a 3-day retreat for 300 children and teachers, empowering children to draft a constitution for “bullying-free” schools.

In partnership with mobile operator, MTS, the CO enriched the SEES model with an online safety component. The joint UNICEF-MTS #InternetWithoutBullying campaign continued with production of a workbook and webinars, reaching thousands of children throughout Belarus with anti-bullying messages.

Complementing the SEES model, the Republican Centre on Psychological Assistance adapted the psycho-social support programme, “Safe Spaces” in school settings with MOE accreditation received end December. The model focuses on mindfulness approaches in classrooms and implementation of

basic psycho-social responses to help children cope with stresses. In 2023, the model will be piloted in schools, including those representing regions affected by the refugee crisis.

### *Responding to Refugee Children's Protection needs*

For Ukraine refugees, Belarus served both as a transit and final destination. Many refugees integrated into communities, yet had experiences of trauma and vulnerabilities that required child protection responses.

In developing broader protection responses, the CO with Brest and Gomel Oblast partners established multi-sectoral specialist groups for case management to assess the needs of more than 300 refugee families with children and refer them to available services. The 'Safe Spaces' model served as the foundation for psychological first aid to over 600 refugee children. In partnership with the Belarus Red Cross (BRC) and Brest and Gomel Social-Pedagogical Centres, the office established 12 child-friendly spaces providing sustainable protective environments for all vulnerable children, where PSS services were delivered to more than 2,130 individuals, including 1,383 children.

The refugee crisis also created an impetus to expand frontline workers' capacities: 220 social workers, BRC volunteers, and psychologists representing Grodno, Brest and Gomel Oblasts gained skills on gender-based violence identification and referrals, psycho-social support, and case management. With BelMAPO, more than 700 pediatricians and psychologists, as well as 116 BRC workers learned about steps for prevention and identification of violence among refugee children.

Through the migrant and refugee crises, the Office identified a legislative gap affecting unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), where protection measures were not defined when the child did not have an official 'status'. In collaboration with UNHCR and IOM, the office advocated with the Ministry of Interior's Civil Migration Department and obtained agreement to develop a working group for legislation drafting as well as establish interim measures that respond to immediate needs of existing UASCs.

## **Goal 4: Every Child lives in a Safe and Sustainable Climate & Environment**

### *Adolescent Voices for Climate Change*

Recognizing the importance of the climate change agenda for adolescents and young people, the CO prioritized this issue. To build adolescents' awareness and create advocacy opportunities, the CO cooperated with the Republican Centre of Ecology in an eco-marathon. Adolescents designed social innovation projects on issues such as minimization of air pollution, recycling, and rational consumption of resources. Twelve projects were financed for implementation and/or further research, with most teams continuing project development in 2023. The office also designed an online course on eco-friendliness for adolescents available on U-Platform.by, and a booklet for parents with advice on creating an ecologically safe environment covering nutrition, toys, clothes, the use of household chemicals and developing positive eco-habits in their children.

## **Goal 5: Every Child has Access to Inclusive Social Protection & Lives Free from Poverty**

### *Budgets for Children & Reducing Child Poverty*

Under the child- and adolescent-friendly cities platform, the CO collaborated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Research Institute of Labour, and local governments to define 'child budgets', making allocated finances more transparent and enabling assessment of funding capacities for existing services for families. This child-focused public expenditure measurement was piloted in 4 child-friendly cities with results discussed among stakeholders at the municipal level.

The CO is conducting the Commitment to Equity for Children research, including a multidimensional child poverty measurement and fiscal policy recommendations for a national definition of multidimensional child poverty. In 2023, the CO will work with national partners to apply this

evidence to the development of Belarus' multi-dimensional poverty measurement.

### *Access to Inclusive Social Protection*

With BRC, the office established two information points, supplied with critical information and basic supplies. In early December, one point turned into a "Blue Dot" at the Brest border in coordination with UNHCR and BRC. This Blue Dot provides critical information and a protective space for refugee families and children to gain respite and immediate psychological first aid.

For those families with children planning to stay more long-term, additional resources were required. More than 680 pre-school and school age children received vouchers for school preparation. The office's signed in December with the Belarus Post office and BRC an agreement to deliver one-time, targeted cash support for more than 600 vulnerable refugee families with children, including over 2,500 individuals of which 1,500 children located in the most remote areas.

## UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

Over 2022, UNICEF built partnerships among various communities to leverage resources and raise awareness for children's rights.

To strengthen system coherence, UNICEF collaborated with other UN agencies in responses to COVID-19 as well as the migrant and refugee crises. UNICEF finalized procurement of \$ 1,708,580.48 under a World Bank project for the MOH, providing 10,000,000 gloves and 2,000 oxygen concentrators. With the leadership of the Government and the Belarus Red Cross (BRC), responses to the migrant and refugee crises were coordinated across the UN agencies, with IOM and UNCHR leading in the Belarus-Poland border crisis and with UNCHR coordinating the Ukraine refugee response. Close collaboration with the Government and among the UN agencies enabled synergies of individual agencies' mandates to address needs of migrant and refugee children. UN agencies also jointly leveraged resources for critical issues such as SDGs and more long-term responses to the impact of COVID-19.

While the country office (CO) has regularly developed annual workplans with line ministries, over 2022 the CO initiated development of workplans with oblast administrations to enhance coordination and communication with oblasts and local administrations on services and information outreach for children, including refugee children. CO colleagues held consultations with partners from the education, health and social protection departments to agree on actions, with a 2022-2023 workplan signed with the Brest Administration and plans to expand this piloting with other oblasts in 2023. Strategic partnerships were also leveraged to enhance emergency preparedness and expand overall outreach capacity. A strategic partnership was initiated with Ministry of Emergency, focusing on emergency preparedness that could also provide cascade emergency preparedness for other agencies such as Belarus Red Cross and/or local authorities. The CO's leadership in identifying and signing a partnership with BelPotcha resulted in using the largest distribution network in the country, with more than 3000 offices. This partnership will support the CO to guarantee access to the most remote areas for cash transfers to refugees.

The CO expanded partnerships in the private sector to deliver results for children. Collaboration with 11 businesses and 2 sports organizations not only leveraged resources but also increased outreach on child rights to a broader portion of society, reaching over 150,000 people on different child rights issues such as social inclusion, family support and cybersafety.

Another partnership strengthened was volunteers, with 558 volunteers registered with UNICEF and 195 (166 females, 29 males) regularly active, mostly comprising adolescents and young people (14-24 years). With the Republican Volunteer Centre, the CO trained 85 volunteer coordinators on project management, presentations skills, managing group dynamics and resolving differences in working with peers, to enable them to conduct sessions for schoolchildren on volunteering. Volunteers continued to be integrated into programme activities such as: info-volunteers to share information on social media about advocacy campaigns; testing UNICEF's digital platforms; supporting fundraising campaigns and emergency responses.

## Lessons Learned and Innovations

From end 2021 through 2022, Belarus faced migrant and refugee crises that pushed the systems to respond to heightened vulnerabilities of children and families. Responses from upper middle-income countries like Belarus underscored the nexus between humanitarian and development interventions and the opportunities that can be taken to strengthen the overall systems.

In both the Belarus-Poland border migrant crisis and the Ukraine refugee response, the Government has led actions with the Office's role being to share good practices from humanitarian contexts and scale up existing protection responses with national and local partners to strengthen the system's overall responses for children.



- **Strengthening the system’s ability to protect children**

The migration crisis and refugee response to Ukraine created opportunities for enhanced cooperation with the Government and especially with regions most affected. The increased number of vulnerable children produced the momentum to scale up existing protection models such as case management and psycho-social responses. Through collaboration with the Grodno administration and Grodno Social-Pedagogical Centre, the PSS approach developed in the “Safe Space” model was applied to provide timely responses to migrant children in the ‘Bruzgi’ logistics centre. Likewise, through partnership with BRC and Brest and Gomel Social-Pedagogical Centres, the office established 12 child-friendly spaces (CFS) that provided PSS services to more than 300 children. CFS serve as sustainable protective environments for all vulnerable children living in Belarus.

The increased number of vulnerable children highlighted protection issues that are not as visible during ‘regular’ times. For example, experiences from the Belarus-Poland migrant crisis as well as Ukraine refugee response highlighted legislation gaps in protective mechanisms for unaccompanied or separated children (UASC) not seeking asylum, where they didn’t have an official ‘status.’ With support from UNICEF and other UN agencies, the Department of Migration and Citizenship under the Ministry of Internal Affairs has established a taskforce to assess the normative framework and develop intersectoral mechanisms on identification and referral of UASC.

These conditions also established the impetus to expand frontline workers’ capacities. Increased protection needs among children enabled professionals to fine-tune their skills. Increased need matched with additional resources for capacity building on issues such as GBV identification, trauma responses, and prevention and identification of violence among refugee children enhanced these professionals’ overall capacities. With skills strengthened during the emergency period, specialists’ capacities have increased for the longer term to ensure greater protective interventions for all children in Belarus.

- **Enhancing existing and building new partnerships for better outreach and targeted social protection**

The humanitarian situation also has created opportunities for expanding partnerships that can enable greater reach and expansion of social protection schemes to refugee families with children based in Belarus . For example, the CO’s signed a three-party partnership with the Belarus Red Cross and Belarus Post Office (BelPotcha) in delivery of one-time cash transfers, which provides a venue to expand outreach to families with children in remote areas. BelPotcha has the largest distribution network in Belarus with more than 3000 offices throughout the country

While the office has always worked with all regions in Belarus, the emergency circumstances created the opportunity to expand and formalize collaboration with state authorities at subnational level. The CO signed a workplan with Brest Oblast, containing a scope of activities aimed to strengthen system responses for child protection at the local level and at the same time supporting the emergency preparedness and response connecting humanitarian and development nexus. Furthermore, the Office is in consultation with Gomel and Grodno oblasts to expand collaboration in 2023. Results and lessons learned from these collaborations will provide evidence and strong ground to advocate for scaling the process across Belarus.

- **Building momentum for Solidarity among Society**

The emergency also established momentum for solidarity among society, expanding the space for a dialogue on child rights and protective measures. To complement government responses, volunteers gained opportunities to actively support the humanitarian response for Ukraine children and families, assembling more than 4,500 hygiene kits and organizing recreational and educational activities in 7 summer camps for approximately 90 refugee children. At the same time, communities also enhanced support through donations, with resources from individuals almost tripling in amount on the Global Giving Platform connected to CO website; approximately \$300,000 was raised for the Ukraine

emergency response and regular programme activities.