

UKRAINE

Shelter Repair Cash Grants for Conflict-Damaged Homes



HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE CASE STUDY 39

CRS
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Country: Ukraine

Project location: Donetsk Oblast

Conflict: Separatist conflict

Conflict date: April 2014 – present
(Conflict ongoing as of Sept. 2018)

Project timescale: 2 years

Target Population: 908 conflict-affected households with shelter damage as a result of war

Project Budget (USD): \$3,214,556

Cost per household (USD): variable, from \$200 to \$2000

Donors: USAID/OFDA, CRS Private Funds

Partner: Caritas Ukraine (CUA)



What did CRS do?

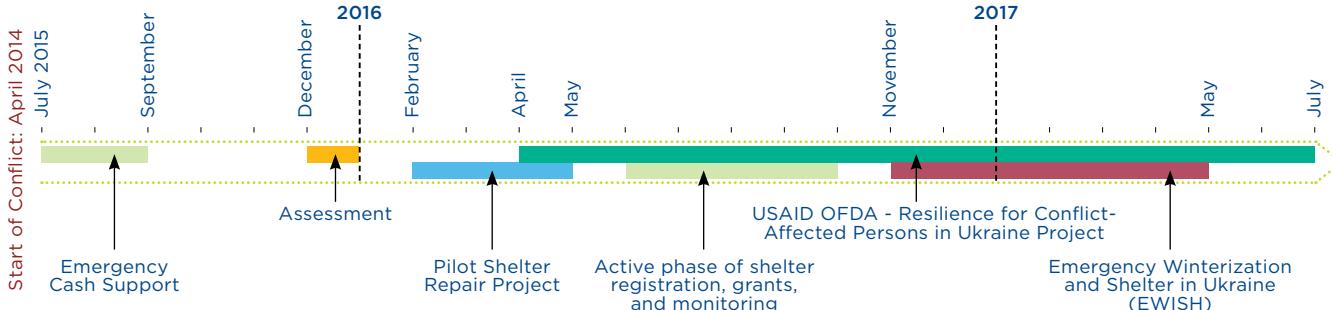
Over a period of one and a half years, CRS and partner Caritas Ukraine provided cash grants and technical assistance to 908 families to repair their homes that had been damaged during conflict. Minor repairs allowed families to have at least one warm, dry room in line with Sphere standards.

Background

In late 2014, instability spread to Eastern Ukraine when the Russian Federation annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and armed separatists took control of the Donbas region following the evacuation of the then president, Viktor Yanukovych, who had fled after 4 months of protests in the capital of Kyiv. Fighting between the Ukrainian government and separatist forces along the 400km frontline was largely defined by the regular use of shells up to 120 mm caliber and other heavy weaponry which inflicted significant damage to infrastructure and residences in villages and towns in the buffer zone, extending approximately 20 km on each side of the contact line.

More than 2.5 million people in the Crimean and Donbas regions of Eastern Ukraine fled their homes as a result. The Government of Ukraine (GOU) registered over 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), and 3.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Those displaced mostly moved into government-controlled areas (GCAs) surrounding the conflict zone. In particular need were the 800,000 people living along the contact line. Civilians in this area were most directly affected by the conflict, which led to insecurity, severe movement constraints, loss of livelihoods, absence of rule of law, protection concerns and very limited access to basic services.

Project Timeline



Project Process

Cash grants for shelter repair

CRS and Caritas Ukraine (CUA) began implementing a cash for shelter repair project in spring 2016, supporting 700 households in the buffer zone of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (administrative districts).

Following the identification of homes in need of repair, CUA conducted on-site damage assessments to determine the repairs necessary, and discuss with each family the costs needed to complete the repairs.. Repair materials were available in local markets. In cases where a person would have to travel elsewhere to obtain the materials, the value of the cash grant was adjusted to cover the transportation cost. An agreement was then made with the homeowner specifying and scheduling the works to be completed.

The value of CRS/CUA cash grants ranged from US\$200 to a maximum of US\$1,000. US\$200 was enough for light repairs, such as window replacements. A grant of US\$1,000 was adequate for partial replacement of a damaged roof. Grants of \$500 or less were made in single tranches, while larger grants were split, with second tranches authorized following a verification of progress visit from CUA. Cash grants were made directly to program participants' bank accounts.

Technical Assistance

CUA provided technical assistance and oversight throughout the repairs, to ensure that they were completed on schedule and met appropriate standards such as Sphere which requires a safe, private, and fully insulated living space of at least 3.5 square meters per person. As shelter repairs targeted vulnerable families - including single-headed households, and those with a family member who was elderly, living with a disability or chronically ill - the cash grant value was adjusted to include the cost of tradesmen and businesses hired to complete the repairs. CUA's pre-established list of pre-qualified tradesmen was made available to families to contract for the completion of repairs. This ensured they had the appropriate skills. For vulnerable families unable to manage this process on their own, CUA provided oversight of the contracting, and acted as an agent on behalf of the family when necessary. The use of local companies and labor helped to support the local market, ensured that locally appropriate repairs were used, and strengthened the accountability of contractors to the participating families.

Outputs

Grant	USAID OFDA - Resilience for Conflict-Affected Persons in Ukraine Project	Emergency Cash Support for Conflict Affected Households in Eastern Ukraine (CRS funds 1550)	Emergency Winterization and Shelter in Ukraine (EWISH)	Totals
Dates	April 2016 - July 2017	July 2015 - September 2017	November 2016 - May 2017	2 years
# Grants made	344	343	221	908
# Participants	814	787	568	2,169
Grants total value (USD)	\$133,308	\$119,000	\$79,000	\$331,308
Other activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NFI distributions• Unconditional cash grants• Business grants• Employment consultations• Child Friendly Spaces• School renovation		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printed material on shelter repair: US\$200• Unconditional cash grants for winterization to 750 households valued at US\$300	
Total Budget (USD)	\$2,414,716	\$399,840	\$400,000	\$3,214,556

Coordination

CRS/CUA coordinated efforts with other actors active in the buffer zone in Eastern Ukraine, contributing to Shelter Cluster and Cash Working Group meetings and other relevant coordination meetings. Other actors included informal groups of volunteers or small NGOs who were helping to provide food, clothing, and shelter support. This coordination facilitated effective targeting of assistance and avoided duplication of efforts thanks to clearly established areas of responsibility and verification of participant lists.

Monitoring and Evaluation, Accountability, Quality Control

CUA conducted post-distribution monitoring via telephone 3-5 weeks after distribution. In addition the families had opportunity to feedback through email or write and leave hand written notes. Feedback was tracked in a project log and was analyzed by project management on a weekly basis to support evidence-based management decisions about any changes needed in the methodological approach.

CRS/CUA conducted market monitoring in areas where cash interventions were delivered, in order to ensure that disruption to local markets was minimized.

Assessment activities showed that cash grants had been effective in helping families to repair their homes and bring them up to Sphere standards, and that 81% of families had completed the repairs to their homes. The rest indicated that they planned to complete repairs, but circumstances such as poor weather had delayed them, although no shortage of materials or labor had been experienced. Most families (86%) used their cash grant to hire a local contractor to manage all aspects of the repair - e.g. measurements, ordering and transporting materials, and performing the repairs.

Most families (78%) reported that following the repairs, they had at least one warm, dry room. Among those who reported they did not have one warm, dry room, the reasons were largely non-repair related, such as a poorly or non-functional communal heating system, or lack of heating material (firewood, coal, or gas). Overall, 97% of beneficiaries reported being satisfied with the CRS/CUA shelter repair program.



New windows in Popasnaya. Before receiving assistance, the house was non-heat-efficient and cold. At the moment, Alexander Vasilievich feels much more comfortable, thanks to the opportunity to restore the heat in his home.

Photo: Caritas Ukraine

Participant Selection

Families selected for winterization and shelter repair were among those most vulnerable from the target area. They were identified using the Ministry of Social Policy (MoSP) and State Emergency Services (SES), lists which CRS/CUA then assessed against the following targeting criteria:

- Female-headed households.
- Families with members suffering from chronic illnesses.
- Families with elderly or disabled members.
- Families with more than 3 children.
- Families with pregnant or breastfeeding women.
- Families with no monthly income.
- Families that had been displaced due to the damage to their home.
- Families that had recently returned from displacement to damaged homes.

Preference in selecting families was given to those meeting the most of the above, which was assessed in visits by social workers and in consideration of other stress factors they were experiencing.

Learnings & Recommendations

- Word-of-mouth recommendations for trusted contractors was vital to families undertaking repairs on their homes. The abundance of providers in the market meant that CRS/CUA had little direct engagement with contractors; beneficiaries could make their own arrangements.
- Distribution of grants through electronic bank transfers was fast and affordable, and meant that CUA did not have to organize distributions. However, the banks did not always alert program participants that a transfer had been received, so CUA officers made follow-up calls after transfers were made, to ensure families were aware they could access their grant.
- The weather and seasons influenced when beneficiaries were more likely to complete repairs. Cold weather was often a reason given for not installing windows and doors, for fear that the material would not set properly. Villages are also harder for contractors and vendors to access during icy or snowy weather, which is the norm during Ukrainian winters.

Family Story

Maria Ivanovna, her two daughters, and her grandson, Klim, lived a relatively peaceful life in their small apartment in Mironivsky, a small town in Donetsk oblast in eastern Ukraine. That calm was shattered on January 22, 2015, when Mironivsky experienced severe shelling that damaged hundreds of homes. Their small town had become caught in the crossfire of the conflict in east Ukraine that has claimed over 10,000 lives and displaced over 2 million people. The windows of Ivanovna's apartment were blown out by the shelling while everyone was inside, including Klim, who was four months old at the time.

"We immediately packed up and left on the same day – you should have seen what was going on here," says Ivanovna. The family fled to western Ukraine for a few months, until calm was restored in Mironivsky. When they returned, they stayed in their brother's apartment with several other relatives, unable to return to their own due to the damage.

In 2016, Maria received a cash grant of 6,000 UAH (approximately 250 USD) from CRS and Caritas Ukraine for her to replace her windows and allow her family to return home. Ivanovna used her cash grant to pay a local contractor to measure and install new windows, which were manufactured in a nearby town.

While Mironivsky has been spared further shelling, the family continues to experience stress knowing that the war is not so far away.

"Recently there was a nearby shelling in the afternoon, and Klim was outside playing in the sandbox," says Ivanovna. "He had a tantrum and we could not calm him down. He just kept crying. Probably, he still remembers the shelling last winter."

Nevertheless, being back in her home with her family – who has since added one more grandson – brings Maria happiness. Expressing gratitude for the assistance, Maria says, "I simply cannot wait to be able to hang curtains for my new windows!"



Maria Ivanovna in front of her new windows

Photo: Caritas Ukraine

Acknowledgements

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