



Save the Children.

Journeys
with US



UKRAINE

September 2025

Photo: Olga Borodina



Photo: Sacha Myers

UKRAINE

LAND, PEOPLE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Ukraine, the second-largest country in Europe, lies at the heart of the continent's east, bordered by Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. Its diverse landscape stretches from fertile plains and agricultural heartlands to the Carpathian Mountains in the west. Overall climate varies from temperate in the north to subtropical in the south, with cold winters and warm summers influencing daily life and seasonal traditions.

Ukraine is a land that has long been a crossroads of civilizations. From ancient tribes like the Scythians and Sarmatians to the rise of Kyivan Rus in the 9th century – a powerful medieval state that laid the foundation for Ukrainian identity – Ukraine's history is rich and complex. Over centuries, Ukraine experienced periods of foreign rule and shifting borders, shaped by various empires and political powers that influenced its cultural and national development. The 20th century brought immense suffering, including the Holodomor famine and devastation during World War II. Ukraine finally gained independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Despite these hardships, the Ukrainian people have preserved a vibrant culture rooted in folk traditions, Orthodox Christianity and a strong sense of national pride. Family is central to Ukrainian life, with generations often living close together and sharing customs passed down through centuries. Hospitality is a cherished value – guests are welcomed with warmth and generous meals, often featuring homemade dishes like borscht and varenyky. Ukrainians take pride in their language, folklore and celebrations such as Ivana Kupala and Malanka, which reflect a deep connection to history and nature. Whether in vibrant cities or remote villages, a strong sense of community and mutual support is deeply felt. Even in times of crisis, neighbors help one another, and families find ways to preserve traditions, joy and hope. This enduring spirit makes Ukrainians not only survivors of adversity but stewards of a culture that continues to inspire the world.



UKRAINE TODAY

A NATION UNDER SIEGE

On February 24, 2022, full-scale war began in Ukraine and changed the lives of 7.5 million children forever. Children have had their childhoods ripped away as they've been forced from their homes and schools, lost loved ones and friends and lived in fear as air raid alerts, drones and explosions consume the world around them. From children living on the frontline of the war to those who've been displaced from their homes, the scale of loss is catastrophic – one of the largest humanitarian emergencies in Europe since World War II. By 2025, the war has displaced over 6.9 million people globally, with 3.7 million internally displaced within Ukraine.

Three years into the conflict, the situation still remains dire. Daily life is marked by fear and uncertainty, as missile strikes and drone attacks continue to target civilian infrastructure. Homes, schools and hospitals have been destroyed, leaving families without shelter, education or medical care. Children are among the most vulnerable – 21% of those under 5 lack access to early education and 1.5 million are at risk of post-traumatic stress. Despite these challenges, Ukrainian families continue to persevere, holding onto hope and community as they navigate daily life in a war-torn nation.

UKRAINE FACTS:

GOVERNMENT:

President, Semi-presidential republic

CAPITAL:

Kyiv

POPULATION:

Est. 39 million

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE:

Ukrainian

MONEY:

Hryvnia

AREA:

603,550 square miles
(1,563,187 square kilometers)

MAJOR MOUNTAIN RANGES:

Carpathian, Crimean

MAJOR RIVERS:

Dnipro, Dniester

NATIONAL FLOWER:

Sunflower

MAIN EXPORT

Known as the “breadbasket of Europe,” Ukraine is the largest grain exporter in the world and largest producer of sunflower seeds and oil.



JOURNEYS WITH US LEAD

IEVGEN RENOV

Education Coordinator,
Emergency Response

Ukraine

Ievgen Renov is among the staff members working in Ukraine’s frontline city of Kharkiv. Born in Kharkiv in 1991 – the year of Ukraine’s independence – he holds degrees in Law from Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University and in Journalism from V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. Ievgen also earned a PhD in Constitutional Law and went on to work as a university lecturer and researcher. When the full-scale war began, he evacuated to the western region of Khmelnytskyi but returned to his hometown in June 2023 to join Save the Children.

In his current role, Ievgen focuses on improving access to education in frontline regions of Kharkiv and Sumy. His work involves supporting schools and kindergartens, establishing and equipping shelters, developing digital learning spaces and providing a range of other educational support to children and educators affected by the war.

SAVE THE CHILDREN

SUPPORTED OVER 4 MILLION PEOPLE – INCLUDING ALMOST 1.5 MILLION CHILDREN.

Inside Ukraine, Save the Children is supporting children through a wide range of interventions. These include cash transfers to help families afford food, shelter and basic needs; distribution of hygiene kits and clean water; and rehabilitation of damaged schools and hospitals. 62 child friendly spaces and 83 digital learning centers have been established, ensuring children have safe environments to learn, play and receive psychosocial support.



CHILD PROTECTION

Our child protection programs help children stay safe and supported through individual case management, child-friendly spaces and community-based services. With local partners, we strengthen child protection systems and train frontline workers.



MENTAL HEALTH

Ukrainian children have endured immense trauma – bombardments, displacement and loss of loved ones. Many have spent hours sheltering in basements, which has deeply affected their mental health. Save the Children responded by creating child friendly spaces and offering art, play and psychosocial support to over 267,000 children, helping them process trauma and regain a sense of normalcy. We strengthen mental health and psychosocial support by training teachers and social workers in key skills like psychological first aid and social and emotional learning. Through culturally adapted programs and strong local partnerships, we help children build resilience and access the support they need to heal and thrive.



EDUCATION AND ADAPTATION

With over 3,800 education facilities damaged or destroyed, thousands of children now study online or in improvised settings like vacant subway stations. Save the Children has supported over 322,000 children with digital learning centers, catch-up classes and school supplies. We help children continue learning despite the conflict by repairing schools and shelters, distributing learning kits and laptops and creating digital learning centers. Our Safe Schools initiative promotes child-led safety planning, ensuring education remains accessible for all children.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

We restore water systems damaged by airstrikes and help families access clean water and hygiene essentials. We support water storage in bunkers and transit centers, build sanitation facilities and promote safe hygiene practices, while training local partners to expand and sustain these efforts.



FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

Our livelihoods programs help families recover from displacement by providing food, agricultural inputs and cash-for-livelihoods support. We also assist family farms and small businesses with tools, training and grants, while offering vocational training and job placement for at-risk youth – helping restore stability and long-term resilience.



CASH ASSISTANCE

We help meet families' urgent needs through cash assistance, including support for protection, utilities and recovery after airstrikes. Our teams reach conflict-affected areas to register families quickly – especially those under evacuation orders or near the frontline – reducing negative coping strategies and helping children stay safe.



WINTERIZATION

In Ukraine, our teams help families stay safe and warm by repairing damaged homes, supporting collective sites and distributing winter essentials like blankets, heaters and fuel. As attacks on energy infrastructure continue and temperatures drop, we're also winterizing schools and community centers, while offering cash assistance so families can meet their most urgent needs with dignity.

CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND

Today, there are more children in need of humanitarian assistance than at any other time since World War II. Save the Children has been supporting the unique needs of children caught in armed conflicts and disasters for over 100 years.

As disasters became more frequent and severe, Save the Children recognized the need for a more agile response vehicle for children in crisis situations. In response, we created the Children's Emergency Fund so we can act faster and bring humanitarian assistance to children during global crises.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

TAKE ACTION

Support our work in Ukraine

[DONATE FOR UKRAINE](#)

Support our Children's
Emergency Fund
(humanitarian global efforts)

[DONATE](#)

SUMMARY

Save the Children's work goes beyond emergency relief – it's about restoring hope. By helping children reconnect with education, process trauma and rebuild their lives, we're laying the foundation for a brighter future, even amid conflict.

Despite the ongoing war, Ukrainian families continue to navigate daily life under fear, uncertain of their safety or future. Yet amid these hardships, the resilience of the Ukrainian people shines through. Parents strive to maintain routines, protect their children and preserve a sense of normalcy. Their courage and determination reflect a deep commitment to family and community, even in the face of relentless adversity.

REFERENCES:

**FACTS AND FIGURES
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Ukraine Education Cluster Strategy 2025 – ReliefWeb

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Ukraine: Humanitarian Situation Snapshot (March – May 2025)

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