OPERATION REPORT

UKRAINE

2022

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FOREWORD FROM OUR
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Adam Marlatt
Operations Director at Help.NGO

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in a major escalation of what has been an ongoing conflict since 2014. The invasion caused Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II, with over 10 million Ukrainians fleeing the country and a third of the population displaced. It also fueled significant political and economic insecurity around the world due to Ukraine's important role as a commodity exporter.

Meanwhile, in early February just prior to the invasion Help.NGO's Disaster Immediate Response Team (DIRT) was deployed to Brazil in Rio de Janeiro state after receiving a formal request from local authorities. With invaluable financial, technical as well as personnel support provided by the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Disaster Response Team, Help.NGO responded to a natural disaster in Petrópolis, which was hit by devastating landslides following unprecedented rainfall.

Over four days, Help.NGO Subject Matter Experts flew drones (Unmanned Aerial Systems – UAS) over the affected areas. The data gathered was then shared with authorities, allowing responders to identify the most affected areas, determine the extent of the severity of the disaster, and better coordinate their plan of action.

With the Brazil response underway, upon news of the invasion, we quickly had to adapt. Staff based in Gdansk, Poland immediately became involved in the evacuation of families from areas affected by hostilities, assisting refugees with settling in Poland or other European Union countries. Around 20 people from regions across Ukraine were evacuated during those early days of the conflict.

Hundreds of humanitarian organizations from all over the world, including UN agencies, began providing aid to the victims of the conflict, yet the UN did not have a pre-existing presence in Western Poland. As a UN Standby Partner and the sole partner based in a country bordering Ukraine, Help.NGO logisticians and administrative staff set up a hub for NGOs, UN Agencies, and the private sector to collaborate, coordinate, and deploy assistance.

This hub, as well as other office hubs in Ukraine, came to play a key role for the World Food Programme (WFP) and Logistics Cluster as they rapidly scaled up their intervention.

The team also assisted UN agencies and other non-governmental organizations wherever the need arose: organizing helicopter transports, negotiating hundreds of border crossings, inventorying equipment, arranging storage spaces, facilitating transport, providing secure connectivity, performing assessments, procuring trucks, as well as storing and distributing fuel.

The team's operational background, flexibility, as well as linguistic and regional expertise turned out to be invaluable assets. As did our existing partnerships with organizations like AWS, which allowed our team to leverage cutting edge technological solutions and deploy them where we are needed most - whether secure connectivity for diplomats on-the-move or increased cloud computing power.

Our work in Ukraine continues. In this report, covering the period from February 24 to October 31, 2022, we will look at the different areas of Help.NGO operations in Ukraine.

Adam Marlatt

Irpin, May 2022
The city was shelled by Russian artillery during the Kyiv offensive in the early stages of the war.

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNICAL SUPPORT

OVERVIEW

As a result of natural disasters, poverty, or armed conflicts, entire communities face a lack of access to telecommunications infrastructure. They are unable to call for help and have no way of finding out what is happening around them and to their loved ones. The same applies to first responders, medical services, NGOs, and volunteers who provide humanitarian assistance. Without access to a cellular network or internet, they are unable to communicate with each other or provide the right kind of help where it is most needed. Connectivity and communications capacity are therefore crucial for both responders and beneficiaries alike.

For over a decade, Help.NGO has focused on restoring and providing connectivity, leveraging innovative technical solutions to improve response capacity across the entire disaster response life cycle – from response and recovery to preparedness and risk mitigation.

During the war in Ukraine, there was a high demand for stable and secure internet connection. With help from Starlink and Klas, we provided connectivity both to devastated regions that were cut off from the world as well as for humanitarian and diplomatic personnel on the move, enabling both victims of the conflict and humanitarian organizations to connect to the internet or contact others.

In partnership with AWS, Help.NGO deployed cutting-edge solutions used by humanitarian actors across Poland, Moldova, and Ukraine. With assistance from Wickr, Help.NGO leveraged end-to-end encryption and secure messaging capability hosted in the AWS cloud and federated across edge devices to keep humanitarians connected. Coupled with connectivity on the move, these solutions enabled staff from UN agencies like WFP and UNDSS to be in constant contact with each other during humanitarian convoys and official visits to Ukraine by UN representatives. In no-fail missions this is critical, because a loss of comms means that all humanitarian logistics movements stop. To date, Help.NGO supported by AWS has deployed connectivity to over 300 humanitarians representing more than 50 local and international organizations. This includes providing connectivity to Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) working to provide lifesaving assistance to field hospitals in Ukraine, as well as directly providing connectivity to refugees fleeing across border locations staying at designated transit locations within the country.

Help.NGO continues to expand this coverage across humanitarian hubs located in central and eastern Ukraine. Even in this unprecedented situation, the secure communications and situational awareness tools, powered by cloud computing and specifically designed and tested with these scenarios in mind, are holding up in the field when we need it most. It also shows the importance of being proactive in designing unique solutions for humanitarian actors. These tools are conducive to our deployment teams having maximum impact on the ground; they enable us to help more beneficiaries and relief agencies.

It would not have been possible to immediately deploy personnel and these technical solutions with this speed working alone. Help.NGO has been fortunate to engage in a series of preparedness initiatives with the AWS Global Social Impact team, rapidly iterating proofs of concept and pressure testing them in field locations to ensure mission-readiness.

CONNECTIVITY FOR UN CONVOYS

By prioritizing security and mobility, Help.NGO ensures a high quality and stable connection for humanitarian personnel in Ukraine.

In cooperation with private sector partner Klas, Help.NGO procured secure routers designed for high-speed connectivity on-the-move using both satellite and cellular types of connection.

The devices were used in humanitarian hubs and also provided a secure connection for the United Nations convoys while on Ukrainian grounds.

All traffic was tunneled via VPN back to secure areas to avoid the cyber-attack threat. The routers provided failover capacity over four levels for greater reliability in unpredictable conditions. These routers provided satellite internet connectivity for high-level humanitarian convoys.

This includes two visits by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, several field visits by the UN Under-Secretary-General, as well as the visit by an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection team to the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in September.

MULTI-PURPOSE CONNECTIVITY

Help.NGO procured 25 Starlink terminals to ensure high bandwidth connectivity in humanitarian hubs in Odesa, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Vinnytsia, Kyiv, Rzeszow, and Krakow. The terminals continue to provide high-speed and reliable connectivity to UN personnel deployed on a permanent or temporary basis to the humanitarian mission to Ukraine.

KHARKIV, JULY 2022.
HELP.NGO OPERATIONS TEAM PROVIDED STARLINK TERMINALS TO ENABLE UN AGENCIES OPERATING IN EASTERN UKRAINE

To ensure a high degree of security and safety during deep field operations, Help.NGO has used Satellite Push-To-Talk devices alongside VHF, Cellular, and Satellite-based communication for even greater security, awareness, and the ability to keep up with dynamic personnel movement.

Additionally, to ensure a secure flow of confidential information regarding VIP personnel and convoy movements, Help.NGO has been using encrypted mobile devices which have also been provided to key strategic decision-makers within our partnership network.

KYIV, JULY 2022.
HELP.NGO IT SPECIALISTS PROVIDED CONNECTIVITY TO UN OFFICIAL CONVOYS DURING THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S VISIT IN UKRAINE.

Rzeszow, Poland
Help.NGO installed a high throughput Low Earth Orbit (LEO) internet terminal on the roof of the Global Logistics Cluster warehouse.
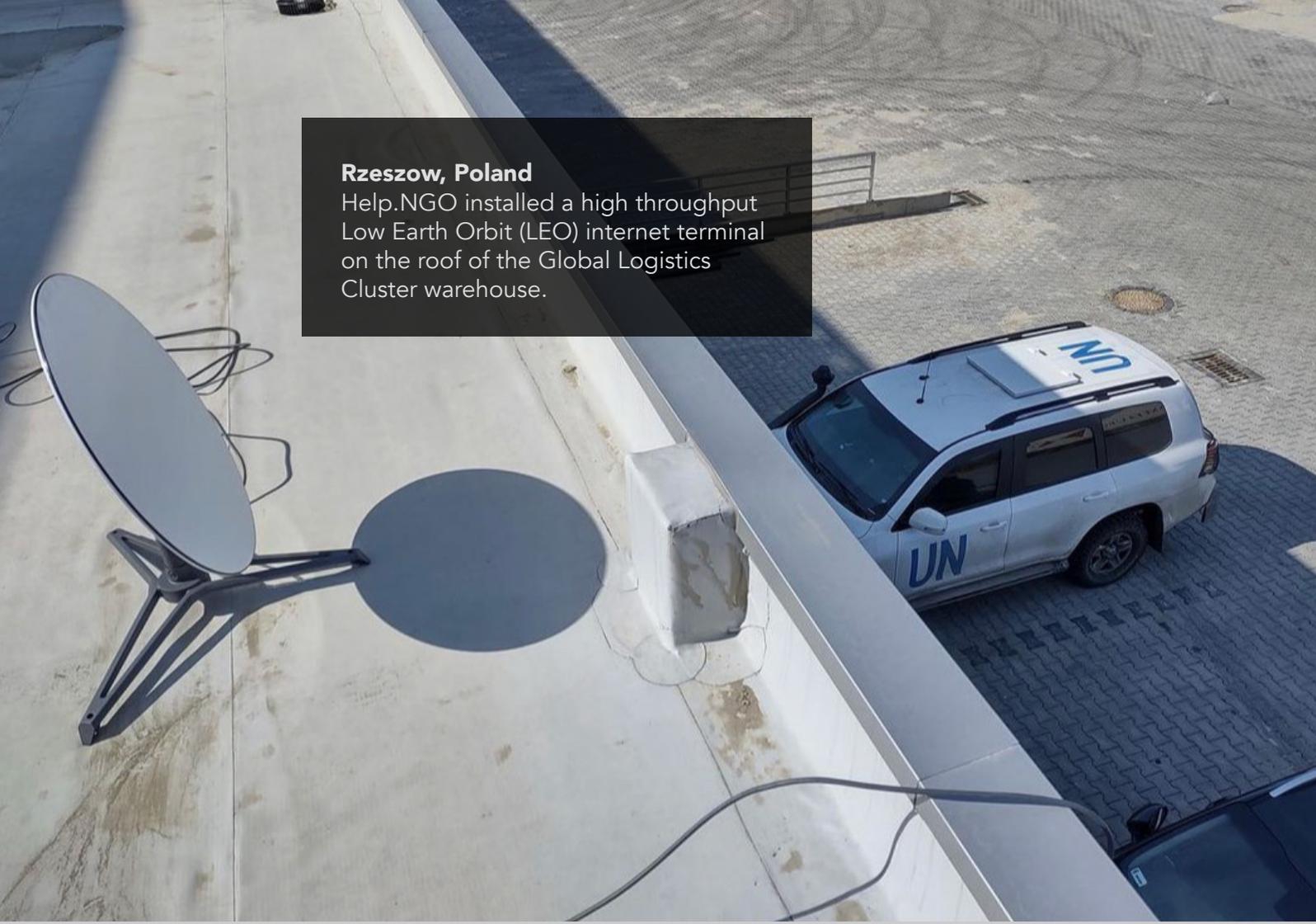
Help.NGOs logistics team facilitated the UN Under-Secretary-General and World Food Programme Executive Director David Beasley's movement into Ukraine at the beginning of the conflict to meet with key officials and start delivering lifesaving assistance.

AWS CLOUD BROKER

Introduced during the Ukraine response, the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud Broker service expands access to cloud-based solutions to local responders and partners, with Help.NGO acting as an intermediary. Applications include TAK – a situational awareness tool; Wickr – encrypted chat; and customized AWS workloads available to the broader humanitarian community.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Team Awareness Kit (TAK) is an edge-capable smartphone geospatial infrastructure and situational awareness application. In emergency situations, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Help. NGO have been using it to provide situational awareness and personnel tracking for safety.

An overlay manager allows Help.NGO SMEs to tag and map critical sites like hospitals, police stations, or warehouses, securely sharing their location to the broader humanitarian community. During operations in Ukraine, this solution was deployed using cloud computing and provided to partners to increase security during field missions, tracking safe movement and providing situational awareness.

WICKR

Wickr is a secure collaboration platform equipped with full end-to-end encryption. So far, it has been used by multiple government agencies due to its advanced and reliable safety features, validated with a FIPS 140-2 certificate. The app includes features such as text messaging, collaboration rooms, audio and video calling, file sharing, and storage.

Across the response in Ukraine, Help.NGO used Wickr internally and managed the onboarding of multiple partners into the chat environment to ensure uncompromised security. This was essential when handling information concerning logistical movement of VIP personnel and humanitarian staff in high-risk areas.

Bucha, May 2022
Mass grave site in Bucha near
he Church of Andrew the Apostle.

LOGISTICS & ADMINISTRATION

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OVERVIEW

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The first 30 days of any intervention are critical. They ensure that an operation is able to scale both as quickly as possible and in the best direction to efficiently support affected communities. By intervening early and targeting assistance where it is needed most by identifying trends and anticipating needs, the humanitarian community can ensure that as large-scale operations ramp up, they are doing so in a data-driven way where operations match evolving demands.

On February 24th, seeing that there was a critical need on the ground, Help.NGO and partners like Amazon Web Services (AWS) immediately got to work activating a standby roster of available personnel, prepositioning Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) at humanitarian logistics hubs, and deploying service packages of equipment to ensure operations could start immediately. Within 24 hours, the combined Help.NGO-Amazon team laid out a plan and positioned personnel on the ground to support it.

As the only United Nations Standby Partner based on a bordering country with Ukraine, Help.NGO immediately activated in support of the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the Global Logistics Cluster (GLC).

The Cluster is the coordination mechanism for over 1,000 global partners moving critical assistance into disaster zones by establishing a supply chain, and common services, and identifying needs on the ground. As the UN did not have a presence where the humanitarians were staging in Poland, Help.NGO deployed a team of logisticians and administrative support personnel to set up a hub for NGOs, UN Agencies, and the private sector to collaborate, coordinate, and deploy assistance.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Help.NGO filled multiple administrative support roles as the humanitarian community scaled up to respond to the invasion of Ukraine.

Help.NGO leveraged Polish and Ukrainian staff to provide key information management roles in support of UN and Logistics Cluster operations.

At the formal request of the Logistics Cluster and WFP, Help.NGO handled the procurement of supplies to help set up office space for UN agencies. This included filling the office spaces with necessary IT and office equipment, furniture, and office supplies. Help.NGO has been involved in office space procurement for the UN and the Logistics Cluster in each of the major strategic hubs of the response.

From the very beginning of the mission, and at the request of the WFP and Logistic Cluster, the Help.NGO team was involved in commissioning maps of the territory of Ukraine.

The Help.NGO team also helped oversee and manage WFP and Logistic Cluster staff accommodations and conference space arrangement. This allowed subsequent staff to have the resources they needed in order to work. The team also rented cars and parking spaces and equipped the WFP warehouse in Rzeszow.

DISASTER RESPONSE BY AMAZON (DRBA) COLLABORATION

Alongside the Disaster Response by Amazon team (DRBA), Help.NGO provided critical items and services that enabled arriving humanitarians to focus on the situation within Ukraine and subsequent refugee outflow. This included securing rental vehicles for staff movement, setting up offices immediately across three cities, deploying helicopters for moving personnel and supporting medical evacuation, and ensuring duty of care to humanitarians on the ground.

These efforts sped up the initial phase of the response by nearly two weeks, thus avoiding many of the usual challenges associated with international donated staff mobilizing to new areas, such as procurement, resource availability, and human resources required to put all of these pieces together. The cluster was therefore better able to rapidly scale from a two-person assessment team to one with over 50 personnel and partners on the ground providing assistance.

AMAZON WEB SERVICES (AWS) VOLUNTEERS DEPLOYED WITH HELP.NGO TEAM IN POLAND SORTED THROUGH AND DISTRIBUTED ITEMS DONATED THROUGH THE DISASTER RESPONSE BY AMAZON PROGRAMME.

LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT

Since the beginning of the conflict, Help.NGO has negotiated over 100 border crossings between Poland and Ukraine.

This included managing helicopter movement from Krakow to forward locations in Western Poland, enabling quick and immediate movement to the Ukrainian border.

On a smaller scale, Help.NGO team arranged free taxi rides using the Free Now application to ensure Help.NGO staff as well as WFP and Logistics Cluster personnel had the freedom of movement to perform their activities efficiently.

Help.NGO procured trucking resources for the first USAID humanitarian transport into Ukraine. After assisting USAID with truck procurement, a truck containing 24 pallets of MREs (Meals Ready-to-Eat) and bottled water traveled from Rzeszow to the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) inside Western Ukraine, who then distributed supplies to those in need.
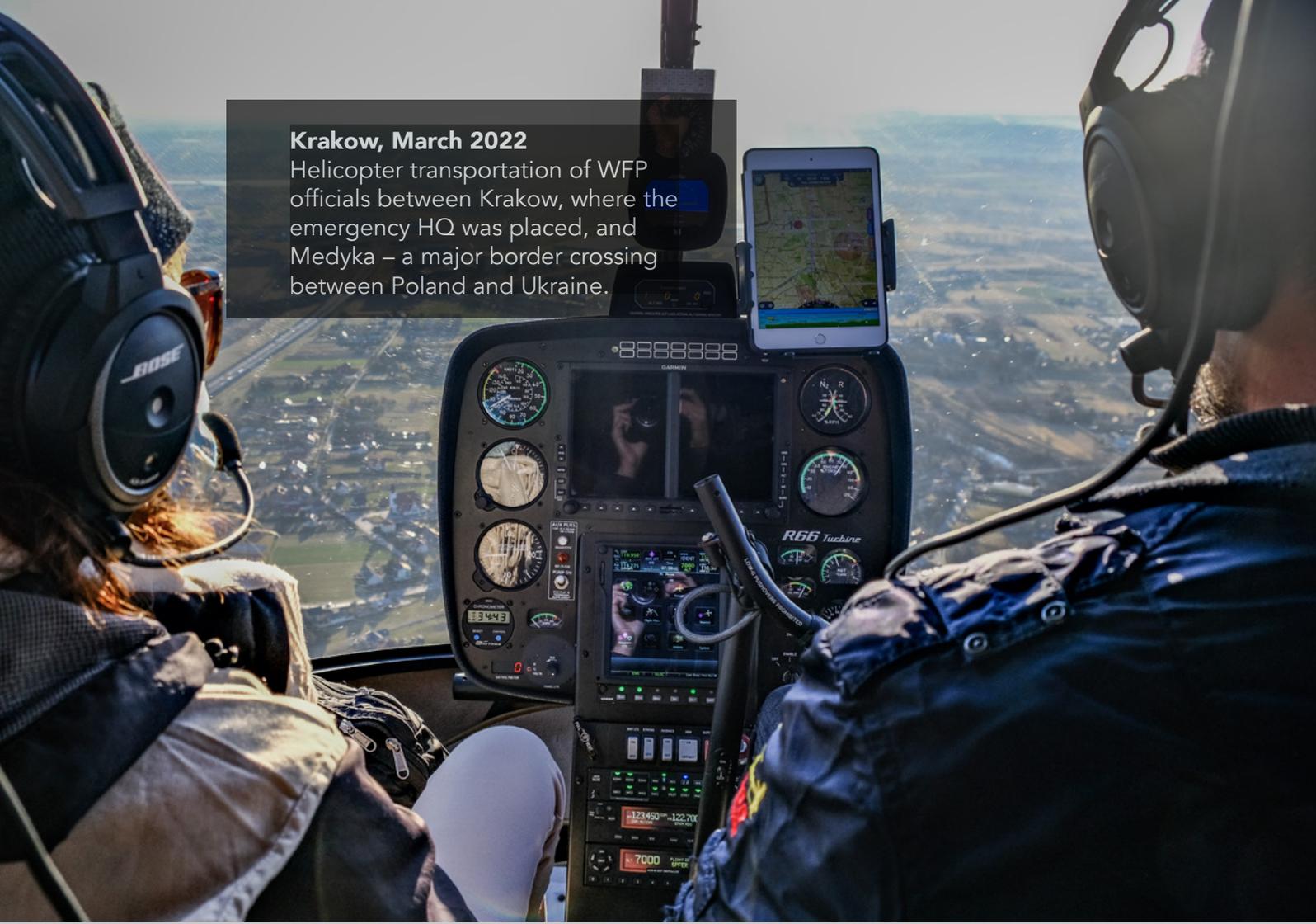
Krakow, March 2022
Helicopter transportation of WFP officials between Krakow, where the emergency HQ was placed, and Medyka – a major border crossing between Poland and Ukraine.

Kyiv May 2022.
Help.NGO cars parked in Kyiv after the team safely drove the WFP delegation to a hotel in the city center.

FUEL PROCUREMENT & DISTRIBUTION

OVERVIEW

Before the war began, 80% of the country's fuel was imported from Belarus or arrived via Black Sea ports closed by a Russian naval blockade. After a series of rocket attacks, the only significant local producer was taken offline in April. Russian rockets had also destroyed a dozen fuel-storage facilities and damaged railways, sometimes restricting what could be transported.

Meanwhile, military and emergency vehicles' fuel needs have been ratcheting demand. With fuel stations closed across the country, Ukraine found itself in the midst of a serious fuel shortage. In May, the 550 km long road from Lviv to Kyiv had just two working petrol stations, each with a queue tailing back several hundred meters. Russian strikes had damaged critical infrastructure, disrupting the majority of supply chains.

Due to the ongoing fuel crisis in Ukraine, Help.NGO joined forces with longtime partner Fuel Relief Fund (FRF) to provide free fuel to local and international humanitarian aid organizations. Help.NGO and FRF personnel managed to procure, transport, and deliver diesel and petrol, thus enabling truckloads of humanitarian aid to be delivered to vulnerable areas across the country. Partnering with a Ukrainian oil and gas company, the team secured over 17,000 liters of gasoline and over 27,000 liters of diesel fuel. This enabled the distribution of small on-demand quantities to assist in emergency situations as well as larger-scale deliveries to particularly affected regions.

Thanks to the fuel we provided, aid organizations such as World Food Programme, Médecins Sans Frontières, International Medical Corps, Ukrainian Red Cross, Caritas, and other organizations could travel deep into the country, including to places otherwise cut off from supplies. Many humanitarian workers and volunteers were therefore able to provide necessary assistance to some of the most vulnerable locations in Eastern Ukraine.

Part of the fuel procurement strategy involved procuring the quantity of diesel necessary to facilitate United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) visits to Kyiv and Dnipro in the wake of the initial Russian attacks, as well as the procurement and storage of 30,000 liters of fuel for the UN World Food Programme (WFP). We also provided emergency fuel capacity in support of United Nations convoys, including the IAEA inspection in Zaporizhzhia and the UN Secretary's General's visit to Odesa.

Kyiv Oblast, May 2022.
Gas stations and key infrastructure have been a main target for Russian forces.

FUEL DISTRIBUTION

MAIN LOCATIONS OF FUEL DISTRIBUTION

Volyn
Rivne
Chernihiv
Sumy
Zhytomyr
Lviv
Kiev
Khmelnytskyi
Ternopil
Poltava
Kharkiv
Luhansk
Ivano-Frankivsk
Vinnytsia
Cherkasy
Zakarpattia
Kirovohrad
Dnipropetrovsk
Donetsk
Mykotaiv
Zaporizhia
Odessa
Kherson
Crimea

EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT WE HAVE PROVIDED FUEL FOR IN COOPERATION WITH FUEL RELIEF FUND.

OTHER AD HOC ACTIVITIES

Over the course of Help.NGOs operation in Ukraine, Help.NGO has received ad hoc requests from humanitarian agencies in a variety of forms. In particular, at the beginning of the war, when the activities of various organizations were not yet fully structured and the UN personnel was just organizing themselves and adjusting to the Polish and Ukrainian context, linguistic fluency and area expertise turned out to be a great asset. Knowledge of the language, legal regulations, terms of rental, purchase, shipments, obtaining permits and documents, or organizing various projects and tasks in support of a variety of UN and humanitarian actors became routine.

LOGISTIC SUPPORT

At the formal request of WFP Help.NGO sourced 550,000 cardboard boxes to repack food items in Kyiv, Kropyvnytskyi, and Dnipro - central distribution sites for UN food distribution in Ukraine.

PPE PROCUREMENT

Help.NGO supplied Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), such as helmets and tactical vests, to WFP personnel to ensure personnel safety in higher-risk environments.

Kyiv Oblast, May 2022.
Shopping center bombed
during the Kyiv offensive.

ABOUT US

Help.NGO is an International Non-Governmental Organization specializing in emergency response, preparedness, risk mitigation and prevention. Wtih bases of operation in the EU and USA and operations across the globe, Help.NGO leverages cutting-edge technological solutions and expertise to improve national and international disaster response mechanisms prior, during, and after emergencies.

Help.NGO focuses on increasing the capacity of national and international institutions through the provision of strategic guidance, technical expertise, and training. Drawing on a range of Subject Matter Experts, we help to enable local actors to respond efficiently and effectively across the entire humanitarian-development nexus – not only in the wake of an emergency but prior to and throughout the disaster life cycle.

Through the co-development of solutions with private and public sector leaders, we aim to optimize the use of time, resources, and funding in all aspects of our humanitarian and development operations. By providing experts-on-mission, deploying predefined service packages, delivering capacity-building assistance, and supporting sustainability, Help.NGO has spent over a decade working to reduce the effects of natural disasters, man-made conflicts, economic disparity, climate change, epidemics, and other public health emergencies through enduring humanitarian and development assistance.

> IN 2019, HELP.NGO BECAME ONE OF 55 ACTIVE STANDBY PARTNERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS. AS A MEMBER OF THE GLOBAL STANDBY PARTNER STEERING COMMITTEE, HELP.NGO HELPS SHAPE PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT POLICY ACROSS UN AGENCIES.
>
> **UN STANDBY PARTNER**

- **CONNECTIVITY**
- **LOGISTICS**
- **FLIGHT OPERATIONS & UAS**
- **RESCUE DISCIPLINES**
- **ICS COORDINATION**
- **STRATEGIC CONSULTATION**
- **MEDICAL SUPPLY**
- **COMMUNICATIONS**

OUR
TEAM

Help.NGO was founded in 2010 by first responders in the wake of the 2010 Port-Au-Prince Earthquake as Global DIRT (Disaster Immediate Response Team). These founders realized that rapidly evolving technological solutions were capable of improving the capacity of international institutions responding to disasters and complex emergencies.

Our commitment to both innovation and the democratization of access to technology stretches back to our founding in 2010. 7 years later, in August 2017, Help.NGO was born with a view towards widening our scope.

In 2020, the organization expanded its already global presence by opening a EU-based headquarters in Gdansk, Poland.

Today, Help.NGO combines administrative, technical, and project management with field and operational expertise.

Our mission is to respond across the entire disaster response lifecycle: from response to recovery; from mitigation to preparedness. Help.NGO Subject Matter Experts represent a wide array of professional and personal backgrounds (civilian and ex-military; domestic and international; technical and administrative; academic and professional).

All of our Subject Matter Experts share a commitment to both helping those most in need and working to improve the international community's ability to prepare and respond to the expanding set of emergencies and crises facing the globe.

HELP
NGO

USA | Poland | Philippines