Unrelenting reality of war in Ukraine

Ukraine continues to face the unrelenting reality of war with a devastatingly cold winter approaching. Millions of people are displaced, fleeing violence inside the country or taking refuge in neighboring countries. People with disabilities and aging individuals face more challenges in escaping the attacks than others.

Nadezhda, 66, was diagnosed with diabetes 22 years ago. She has survived two strokes, two heart attacks and cervical cancer—and uses a cane to get around. She lost her husband and son to cancer.

"The shelling and stress from the war has further deteriorated my condition," explains Nadezhda. "I tried to tough it out—at my age, I just want to be home—but the constant explosions forced me to leave.

She was referred to a center for displaced people, where she first met Humanity & Inclusion’s rehabilitation team.

"Before I met Humanity & Inclusion, I only wanted to walk again," Nadezhda adds. "Now, I believe that I can even run! I have had wonderful progress." Humanity & Inclusion offers an array of rehabilitation services in Ukraine, for those with pre-existing conditions or ones that resulted from bombing. Gaëlle Smith, an emergency rehabilitation specialist, supports local hospitals treating blast-injured, poly-trauma patients during the early stages of their recovery. Rehabilitation from day one is vital but is dependent on readily available resources.

"The weapons being used do not discriminate and are far more advanced, mutilating and destructive than anything I’ve ever witnessed," Smith explains. "Ukrainian medical professionals are doing an incredible job, but the heart-breaking reality is that civilians need more care than they can provide. More people will continue to be injured daily, not only until the war ends, but until each item of explosive ordnance has been safely disposed of."

‘APOCALYPTIC’: ONE-THIRD OF PAKISTAN UNDERWATER

Heavy monsoon rains starting in June resulted in the worst flooding Pakistan has experienced in more than a decade, leaving one-third of the country underwater.

The waters damaged upwards of 1.3 million homes, injured at least 12,900 people and claimed the lives of more than 1,700 people. Experts estimate it will take months for the waters to recede. Meanwhile, 6.4 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

"It’s a bit apocalyptic," says Caroline Duconseille, Humanity & Inclusion’s country manager for Pakistan. "You see houses that have completely collapsed from the passage of water. Bridges are destroyed. On the side of the roads, people have built temporary shelters and are sleeping in tents—without any shelter. They are sitting on the banks of the rivers. Not to mention the trauma that this represents for these people."

Working in Pakistan since the early 1980s and with experience responding to the 2010 floods there, Humanity & Inclusion launched an immediate emergency response. In the initial phase of intervention, more than 2,000 individuals were assessed in an effort to prioritize people with the greatest needs.

With donor support, Humanity & Inclusion’s response is ongoing and long-term.

Even before the floods, the population was facing increased food insecurity. The climate disaster has only exacerbated the crisis. According to the UN, approximately 73% of affected households have insufficient access to food, more than 2 million acres of agricultural land were damaged and more than 1.2 million livestock were lost.

Teams began by distributing food, cookware, blankets, soap and emergency supplies to 1,500 families in the affected regions of Nowshera and Charsadda.

Psychological experts are working with people displaced from their homes to assess mental health needs.

Parveen, whose family received a kit of non-food items, says that the support from Humanity & Inclusion "will help us in resettling and restarting our life."
Q&A: Confronting global food insecurity

Madeline Sahagun, Global Food Security Specialist, is based at Humanity & Inclusion’s U.S. office in Maryland. She shares how the organization is confronting the global food crisis, including reflections from her recent visit to Ukraine.

Q: What does the day-to-day look like for someone facing food insecurity?
A: It depends on the context, but households are forced to resort to coping mechanisms. It can be a matter of survival. People go through desperate measures to feed their families. For example, to have food on the table, people sell their tools and other work equipment, negatively impacting their work, and ultimately, their access to food. Some households reduce the amount of food they consume to one meal a day, which directly impacts their nutritional and caloric needs. Some households are forced to have everyone in the family work, including children—so they can’t go to school and their risk of exploitation is increased.

Q: What is the importance of an inclusivity lens when confronting global food crises?
A: Evidence shows that people with disabilities and those with limited access to sufficient and quality food for growth and development, and are more at risk of undernutrition or malnutrition. Disabilities can pose limitations in accessing food: mobility limitations, cognitive limitations, work limitations. 36% of households that are food insecure include at least one person with a disability.

Q: How is HI addressing food insecurity in the Horn of Africa?
A: The Horn of Africa has been experiencing years of drought so there is no rain to support crops and thousands of livestock have died. A holistic approach to addressing food insecurity is the best practice. That entails responding to people’s immediate needs, whether with cash or food, but also looking to longer-term solutions that address the root causes of food insecurity.

Q: You recently spent some time in Ukraine. What stood out to you?
A: What struck me the most is the strength of the people and their sense of nationalism and community. Communities are welcoming internally displaced people into their cities, towns and villages and establishing centers where local community members are providing food, water and shelter.

Q: What role does cash assistance play in response to the war in Ukraine?
A: There is a big push from the humanitarian community to distribute multi-purpose cash assistance for food and other basic household needs like hygiene items, medication and shelter. The distribution of cash provides people with a sense of choice and dignity. Cash assistance can stimulate the local economy and can be done on a larger scale as opposed to rations that have complicated supply chain and logistical considerations.

The amount of cash provided is determined by what is needed to cover a household’s monthly expenses. Individuals in Ukraine receive around $60 a month, and Humanity & Inclusion eds a top-up for other specific needs that is distributed through an online banking system.

Co-located with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (OCHA) and the World Food Programme (WFP), Humanity & Inclusion’s teams are providing multi-purpose cash assistance to those in need. We provide households with cash to purchase the food and goods they need to survive. We have reached over 200,000 people with cash assistance since the beginning of the crisis, with an average of $60 per month.

Jeff Mead
U.S. Executive Director
Twitter: @Jeff_HIUS

Note from the Executive Director

As always, we expect a new international agreement limiting the use of explosives weapons in populated areas (EWPAP). This significant accomplishment seemed unequitable when work first started three years ago. Even six months ago, it was still in doubt. Yet, on Nov. 18 in Dublin, the Irish Government will announce the “Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.” All signatory parties now have an opportunity to demonstrate that the agreement is worth fighting for. It will also strengthen the global advocacy movement to end the use of EWPAPs, which has been led by HI and its partners for decades. The declaration will play an important role in the upcoming negotiations for the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Thank you for supporting inclusive aid, rehabilitation care, disaster response and mine action in more than 85 countries since 1982.

1982
Operated by the injured experienced by victims of antipersonnel landmines at the border of Cambodia and Thailand, Humanity & Inclusion (then Operation Handicap International) sets up workshops to produce braces and artificial limbs from local materials.

1992
In Cambodia, HI pilots its first humanitarian mine clearance operation.

2006
The International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is adopted, with support from HI.

2010
In the wake of the deadly Haiti earthquake, HI responds on an unprecedented scale.

2013
Typhoon Haiyan strikes the Philippines. HI offers emergency aid and implements risk reduction programs for future disasters.

2015
HI provides emergency aid following a devastating earthquake in Nepal.

2019
In Chad, HI launches the first-ever test of drones to assist with mine clearance.

2022
HI teams deliver emergency aid in the wake of two major disasters: armed conflict in Ukraine and catastrophic flooding in Pakistan.

Thank you for making our work possible!

COLOMBIA
In July, Humanity & Inclusion declared the Inza municipality free of landmines. Over two years, deminers surveyed and cleared more than 215,000 acres of land that has been released back to its 27,000 residents. For the first time in a decade, Justino (left) can safely operate his coffee farm.

NYC MARATHON
Lauren Obliv (Boston), Nick Cooper (San Francisco) and Tony Searng (Morrisonville, NY) raced the New York City Marathon on Nov. 6 as ambassadors of Humanity & Inclusion. Together, the trio raised $12,000 to support inclusion. Thank you, Lauren, Nick and Tony!

COVID-19
Humanity & Inclusion is thrilled to announce a new funding partnership with the Center for Disaster Philanthropy to support communities around the world, especially those most impacted by COVID-19. And for those who would like to help, we have set up a special COVID-19 fund.

I was 5 years old, living under Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. Antipersonnel landmines were all over. We were not informed about the risk they posed. I went to fetch water and that’s when it happened. I stepped on a mine. I tried to get up three times before understanding that my right leg was torn off at the calf. Soldiers brought me to a makeshift dispensary. The anesthetic I was given was a stick to bite on when the pain became too much. I was transferred to a refugee camp. I had to undergo 17 operations, but my leg was gangrenous and I fell into a coma for a month.

Not long afterward, I met the founding members of Humanity & Inclusion. They were a small group of young people, full of dreams, animated by a desire to help people like me who had been stripped of everything. With great humanity and respect, they put me back on my feet.

My first prosthetic was simple, made of recycled materials like wood, car tires, and resin, but I had to work hard to learn to use it. I had to hard work to learn to use it. It’s hard to believe that was 40 years ago. Today, I live life like everyone else. I am a nurse and work with young people with disabilities. I am a mother of a beautiful girl. I am so grateful to those who helped me all these years ago. They gave me back my smile and dignity, which everyone should have!
Hope Services is Silicon Valley’s leading provider of services to people with developmental disabilities and mental health needs. The non-profit serves approximately 3,500 people and their families in six California counties, providing a wide spectrum of programs ranging from community enrichment to individual interventions, from babies to aging adults.

The organization also operates three HopeTHRIFT secondhand stores. Sales of clothing and household goods help raise funds and provide employment for people with developmental disabilities.

To expand their philanthropy, the Hope Services community came together to stand in solidarity with civilians afflicted by the war in Ukraine. From April 13 to July 1, HopeTHRIFT pledged 25 percent of all Wednesday and Thursday sales to support relief efforts in Ukraine. In the three months, the stores welcomed more than 600 new customers and the result of their charitable shopping campaign was an astonishing $156,000.

To maximize their already incredible impact, Hope Services chose to channel these funds into international humanitarian organizations that deliver direct and essential aid in Ukraine. They graciously selected two recipients: Save the Children and Humanity & Inclusion.

"When it came time to select recipients for this donation it was a task we did not take lightly," explains Charles “Chip” Huggins, President & CEO of Hope Services. "There are so many wonderful organizations doing relief work in Ukraine but our decision to select Humanity & Inclusion was a natural and promising one." Cathy Bouchard, Hope Services’ Specialty Director, first looked to Charity Navigator to research and assess potential organizations. Finding that Humanity & Inclusion ranks in the top nine organizations doing work in the medical service field; has a comprehensive network of specialists that work directly on-site; is a leader in inclusive policy that other humanitarian organizations look to; and that 86 percent of monetary assets go directly to comprehensive programs and services—Bouchard made a "prudent" decision. These factors were in addition to the vital and clear intersection between Hope Services’ and Humanity & Inclusion’s missions: providing support to people with disabilities.

Hope Services’ generous donation of $28,205 will do just that. Donor support allows Humanity & Inclusion to continue delivering specialized rehabilitative services, psychosocial support, mobility devices, cash and other emergency relief to those with the greatest needs in Ukraine.

More than a year after U.S. troops withdrew from Afghanistan and the Taliban seized control, Humanity & Inclusion’s teams continue to work with civilians injured in conflict. These photos from Herat show three children who are thriving with rehabilitation care and psychosocial support—thanks to generous donors like you!

After being struck by a bullet, Sosan lost the use of one of her legs. She’s received a walker and participates in physical therapy and counseling sessions. If she doesn’t become an English teacher, Sosan sees herself as a professional artist.

Asef lost his right leg in a landmine explosion. With his artificial limb, he walks to the mosque each day for religious classes with other boys in his neighborhood. He dreams of becoming a doctor.

Yasamin was injured by shelling as her family attempted to flee their village. Strengthening her muscles with physical therapy and using a leg brace, she’s able to walk again and has returned to school.

Are you or someone you know 70.5 or older? You might be eligible to dedicate a portion of your IRA to make a difference with Humanity & Inclusion. IRA gifts make an immediate impact in the communities we serve. And, they often come with tax benefits—including helping you meet a Required Minimum Distribution for 2022. Consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution today!