

Reportback from Recent Work in Ukraine

On their mutual aid supply runs to the war-torn Ukrainian territories

Solidarity Collectives

2023

Our Trip to Lyman Was an Entire Operation Which Became Possible Thanks to Many People Who Worked on It Together

The city had been under Russian occupation for 4 months and was seriously damaged as a result of fighting. Almost 90% of the buildings have been damaged or destroyed by shelling. But people continue to live in the city. Many of them stay in basements under charred high-rises where their apartments used to be not so long ago.

Every day, volunteers from Kramatorsk bring meals to Lyman and give them out at 3 different locations. One of these food distribution locations was where the Solidarity Collectives organized humanitarian aid distribution. The main things we brought to Lyman were warm clothes: winter jackets and coats, sweaters, hats, thermal underwear, winter shoes, etc. Because most people are only wearing whatever they managed to move to bomb shelters. We also handed out dozens of blankets, pillows, and bed linens. We obtained all this thanks to our comrades from Germany who brought tonnes of items to Lviv. FemSolution activists, who organized aid collection in Kyiv, also helped.

In addition, power supply was restored in the city after de-occupation, so another request is now electric heaters and electric stoves. Before this, people had to heat the shelters with firewood (and the majority still do).

Other than that, people received power banks, flash lights, batteries, cell phones. And we gave 2 powerful heaters and a generator to the local volunteers for their needs.

We want to say a special thank you to Ukraine Solidarity Bus, FemSolution, , , mostundtrestler, Oskar-Romero-Haus, Lützerath, FemSound and UA for hosting us so nicely in Kramatorsk.

But each of these trips tells us just one thing: this is just a miniscule part of what is actually needed. There are still thousands of impoverished people in the city who still don't have the most basic necessities. So we're already preparing for the next trip, and we will appreciate it if you support it.

Solidarity Collectives Returned from Our Second Humanitarian Mission to Lyman

The city of Lyman (Donetsk region) was severely damaged by shelling and the 6-month-long Russian occupation. After it was liberated by the Ukrainian army in October 2022, we started providing aid to its residents, about 13,000 people who survived not only months of intense shelling that virtually destroyed the city, but also a winter without gas and central heating.

Just like the last time, we were guided by people's direct requests: the locals themselves wrote or dictated their needs to us over the phone. As a result, we have distributed dozens of electric heaters and electric stoves, power banks, telephones, small kitchen and medical equipment, hundreds of kilograms of clothes, shoes, kitchenware, medicine, pet food and hygiene products.

All of this would not have been possible without your help: your donations to our humanitarian needs, the items you sent or brought to our collection points, as well as without our friends who agreed to turn their offices and venues into our collection points.

We would like to thank Ukraine Solidarity Bus for the electrical equipment provided; Comité Ukraine – Suisse for the quality shoes and clothes, and EcoPlatform for sorting and shipping them to Lyman; Step UP Animal Rehabilitation Center for providing food for animals; FemSolution feminist organization for 100 hygiene kits, and comrades from and Mates Cafe for their help in collecting the items.

And, of course, to Ksenia Kozeniuk and Olexii Prytugin for the beautiful photos.

Thank you to everyone who proves that solidarity is power in action!

The Humanitarian Team of the Solidarity Collectives Has Just Returned from Kherson Region

The humanitarian team of the Solidarity Collectives has just returned from Kherson Region and is preparing a report for you now. But another one of our trips has not been covered yet. In February, together with our Catalanian comrade from Lluita Internacionalista (UIT-CI), we visited Dobropillia (Donetsk Region) and Zaporizhia.

Dobropillia is a mining monotown. Here we met with the miners' union and the Donbas branch of the Labor Initiatives, our old partners. From the first days, their office has operated a humanitarian center where both Dobropillia residents and IDPs can receive aid. We brought them a lot of warm clothes (with which our German comrades and Yulia Novobranets helped us), and the Labor Initiatives distributed it among the residents of the neighborhood. And we bought 85 food packages for the families of the military who have been killed in action.

We also bought 79 food packages for the members of the Independent Union of Railway Workers in Zaporizhia. Unfortunately, their income has shrunk considerably since the beginning of the invasion, so even food is significant support for them.

"I used to earn 1,000 euros. Now I get 300," says Serhiy, a locomotive driver and head of the Union. Her wife, who is responsible for oil supply for trains, makes even less. She received her advance right in the middle of our conversation: it was 40 euros.

This was our third humanitarian trip to working class areas which was made possible thanks to UIT-CI, which we are incredibly grateful for. You can find a detailed account of this trip and an interview with union workers recorded during it at this link: uit-ci.org/index.php/2023/03/20/ukraine-from-within-3.

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