

OCTOBER 17, 2022

CARE Ukraine Crisis Update

Songs from home: unique instrument instills hope



Looking like a cross between harp and guitar, the bandura is an instrument steeped in Ukrainian history and culture. For Diana Polichuk, a Ukrainian refugee living near Warsaw, playing bandura has become a way to process her feelings about leaving Ukraine, while giving others a poignant reminder of home.

“A lot of people died in the front line, as well as my mother’s friend,” says Diana, 22. “When he was brought home dead, my mom was very upset about it. We started to worry, and she decided to move to Poland.”

Because the instrument is such a symbol of the country’s proud culture – its history dates back to 591 – conquering powers persecuted Ukrainian musicians. “In the 1930s all the bandura musicians were collected to a musical festival; they were all invited,” Diana says. “The idea was to collect them all in one place and execute. They were killed on the way to the festival.”

Stressful work, stress-busting outlet

When not playing, Diana works for a company that helps Ukrainian refugees find work in Poland, providing assistance with visas, work permits, and much more –

along with language lessons. This work complements what CARE is doing: providing jobs, accommodations, and mental health services, as well as financial assistance to Ukrainians who have been forced to leave.

“You need to have strong nerves to solve the conflicts that appear,” Diana says. “To overcome my stress, I play bandura – this is a way to express my emotions.”

Because it has survived for centuries, bandura music lifts spirits for more than just musicians like Diana. “The music I am playing, the songs I am singing, give hope to people,” she says. “They remember that they are Ukrainians, they remember what is Ukrainian song that inspires them.”

“I can’t believe this is happening in the modern world now. It is real grief. I worry especially for my friends, it’s difficult. And I worry for my relatives as well. I want everyone to be healthy and live a normal life.”



How to Stay Human in the War

After war erupted in Ukraine, Tetyana and her 12-year-old daughter slept underground for 70 days, hoping they would not be forced to leave their home. On May 8, they finally fled on what they said was the last bus out of the Luhansk area, in eastern Ukraine.

“When there was only one shop left, we knew it was time to leave,” she says.

They arrived in Rivne, a city in western Ukraine. “The first time there were air sirens in Rivne it was like something turned inside of me.”

“I came to Rivne totally broken”

Tamara, a psychologist working with a local organization supported by CARE, has been helping Tetyana talk through her experiences.

“I had some practical exercises to control my negative thoughts, to stop and to turn it to the positive,” Tetyana says. “Now I can deal with it better. I can talk about it. The sirens do not scare me as much.”

War’s invisible wounds

Living in a war zone is difficult physically and practically, but it is also difficult emotionally and psychologically. Tamara works with internally displaced people who have fled from areas with active fighting and who are now trying to start a normal life.

“Most of my patients either live in the past or in the future,” says Tamara, “but I help them to find their now

and live in the present. I talk to families that arrived at the train station in Lviv when the missiles hit.

Tamara thinks this psychological crisis will only get worse as the war goes on. But not everyone wants to talk to psychologists. “There is still some stigma against it,” she says. “Some of the people believe they can deal with it by themselves.”

“I talk to children that sing loudly when the air sirens go off, to not hear them.”

Another path forward

Olena, 33, a psychiatrist in Lutsk, has worked to provide a different path forward for the people who are reluctant to seek help through in-person services.

Olena’s book, *How to Stay Human During the War*, answers questions about how to communicate with relatives who have fled from fighting, how to decrease stress in children, how to treat sleeping problems, and how to overcome guilt.

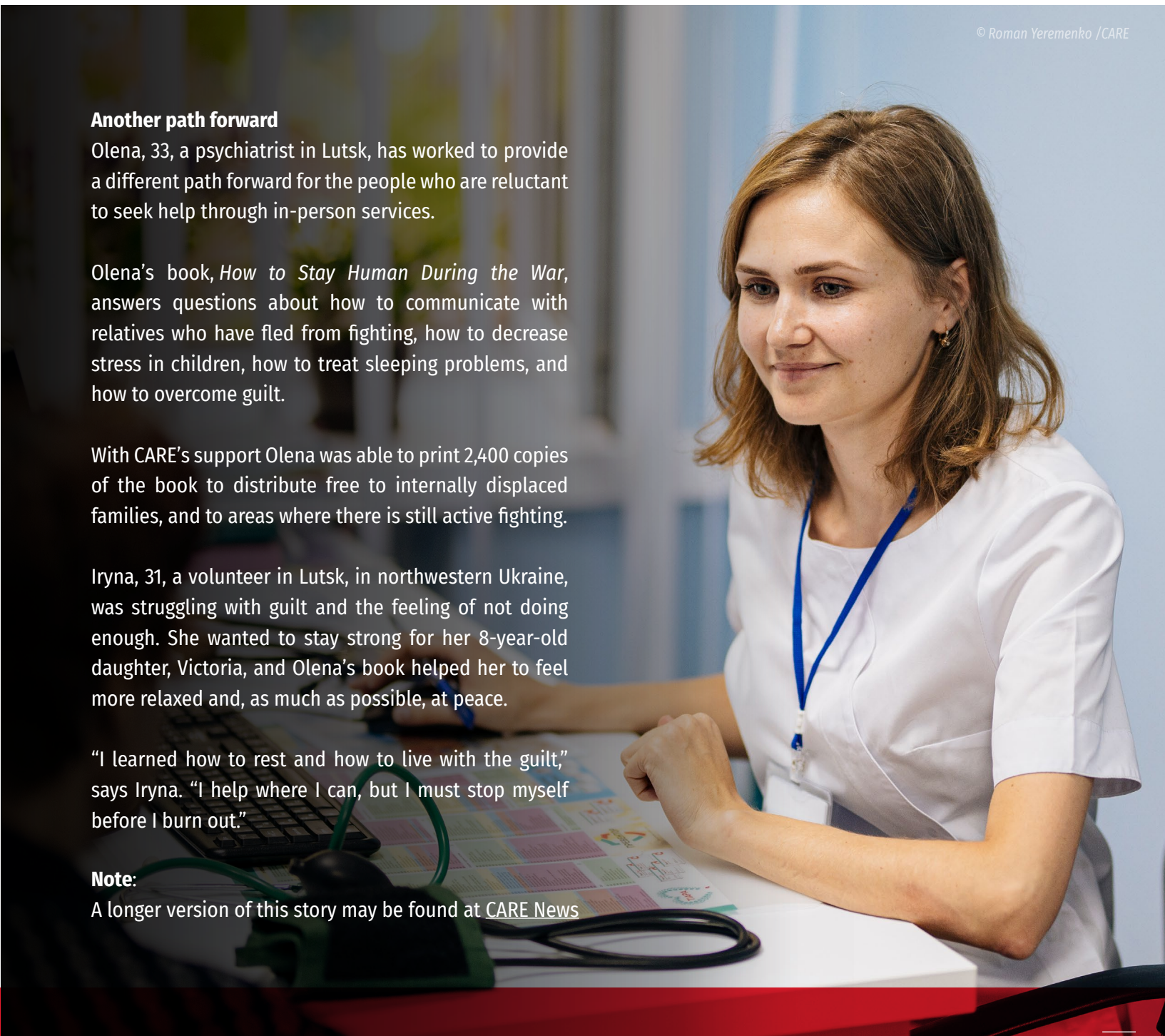
With CARE’s support Olena was able to print 2,400 copies of the book to distribute free to internally displaced families, and to areas where there is still active fighting.

Iryna, 31, a volunteer in Lutsk, in northwestern Ukraine, was struggling with guilt and the feeling of not doing enough. She wanted to stay strong for her 8-year-old daughter, Victoria, and Olena’s book helped her to feel more relaxed and, as much as possible, at peace.

“I learned how to rest and how to live with the guilt,” says Iryna. “I help where I can, but I must stop myself before I burn out.”

Note:

A longer version of this story may be found at [CARE News](#)



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Back to school means back to work for Ukrainian refugee teachers

With autumn in full swing, thousands of Ukrainian kids are back to school in Poland as CARE's Cash for Work program resumes for a second academic year, along with partner PCPM.

This program employs Ukrainian refugee teachers, providing critical work for them, while supporting Ukrainian children and the overwhelmed school system. It not only helps integrate Ukrainian kids into Polish society but also provides childcare for Ukrainian families who have found employment in Poland. CARE also supports after-school programming for refugee students and other upcoming education initiatives.

The support is important, but for the students, it no substitute for an end to the conflict that uprooted them. "I like Poland – good people, good weather," says Lada, a high-school student from Kiev.

"I really want to go home, because I miss it"

BY THE NUMBERS

14,031,127

refugees fleeing Ukraine since Feb. 24¹
(Up 10.83% from Sept. 13 update)

6.2 million

internally displaced²
(Down 11.43% from Aug. 23 update)

Neighboring countries receiving refugee influx:

1. **Poland:** 6.78M¹
2. **Russian Federation:** 2.85M³
3. **Hungary:** 1.55M¹
4. **Romania:** 1.32K⁴
5. **Slovakia:** 852K¹
6. **Moldova:** 654K¹
7. **Belarus:** 17K¹

9,371

civilians injured⁵
(Up 11.28% from Sept. 14 update)

607

healthcare facilities damaged
or destroyed⁶ (Up 14.31% from Sept. 9 update)

2,528

education facilities damaged
or destroyed⁷ (Up 2.72% from Sept. 12 update)

SOURCES

1. UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Oct. 11, 2022;
2. International Organization for Migration (IOM), Sept. 26;
3. UNHCR, Oct. 3;
4. UNHCR, Oct. 9;
5. UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), Oct. 13;
6. World Health Organization (WHO), Oct. 10;
7. Multiple Sources, Sept. 21

