



Securing the Jewish future in Ukraine

In past months, eastern Ukraine has been gripped in a violent conflict between separatist forces and the Ukrainian government. According to the United Nations, as of the end of October 2014 more than 4,000 people have been killed in eastern Ukraine, more than 9,000 wounded, and more than 930,000 displaced. The fighting has had a deep impact on all Ukrainians, including the 211,000 Ukrainian Jews eligible for *Aliyah* (immigration to Israel).

Throughout the conflict, throughout Ukraine, The Jewish Agency has been there to evacuate refugees, facilitate Aliyah, provide aid to those staying behind, and continue our educational programs that not only provide Jewish inspiration to Ukraine today, but also secure its Jewish future.

In Ukraine, as around the world, we have been there in times of emergency because we have always been there – and we always will be.



Aliyah Growth Continues

Aliyah from Ukraine constitutes nearly half of all Aliyah from the FSU this year. A total of 4,465 *olim* (immigrants to Israel) arrived in Israel in January-October of 2014, an increase of 178% over the same period last year. By the end of the year, **more than 5,900 people** had made Aliyah from Ukraine. We facilitated the Aliyah for every one of these olim, often under extremely complicated circumstances:

Jewish Agency Office	Jan-Oct 2013	Jan-Oct 2014	Dynamics
Odessa	176	611	+247%
Kharkov	261	1,330	+410%
Among them from:			
Donetsk	64	716	+1,019%
Luhansk	17	362	+2,029%
Mariupol	27	81	+200%
Dnepropetrovsk	183	625	+242%
Kyiv	331	606	+83%
Simferopol (Crimea)	61	165	+170%



(The information in the table above is based on The Jewish Agency's direct flights, and does not include olim who came to Israel as tourists and changed their status after they were already in Israel.)

In 2014, more than 17,500 Ukrainians contacted The Jewish Agency about making Aliyah, more than double the 2012 number; 21,000 people attended Aliyah events; 1,600 took Hebrew courses provided by The Jewish Agency; and Ukrainian registration in the Na'ale and Selah programs for young immigrants to Israel increased 35%.

For the many refugees who make Aliyah, The Jewish Agency has set up a residential center in Dnepropetrovsk, providing temporary accommodations and Hebrew *ulpan* (intensive language courses). In 2014, around 400 people lived in our refugee center.

The Jewish Agency also created, in the spring of 2014, a 24-hour help hotline for Ukraine, whose staff has worked around the clock to reach out to those eligible for Aliyah, find out what they need, and provide support and information. As of the end of the December 2014, the hotline continued to receive phone calls.

Jewish Agency Programs in Ukraine: An Overview of Our Continued Work

Heftizbah: More than 4,150 Jewish children started the new school year at 18 Heftizbah Jewish Day Schools in Ukraine. One school in Donetsk continues to operate, though most of the faculty and students have fled; 20 children remain, with a struggling staff.

Hebrew Ulpan: Fall of 2014 had 45 Hebrew Ulpan classes throughout Ukraine, with over 530 students. Classes in Kharkov and Dnepropetrovsk include refugees from Donetsk, Luhansk, and other towns of eastern Ukraine.

Sunday Schools: 11 Sunday schools are currently operating in Ukraine with over 230 pupils.

Summer and Winter Camps provided uplifting Jewish experiences to more than 2,100 Ukrainian children, with an emphasis on children who needed respite from violence and anxiety: 1,500 attended camps in Ukraine itself; 600 were relocated to Belarus or the Baltic States; and 50 were brought to Israel.

Day Camps in the FSU, in pilot phase in 2014, provide supplemental Jewish education during short school vacations. So far, more than 200 children have benefited in Kyiv, Vinnitsa, Cherkasy, and Kharkov.

Youth Activities are a year-round extension of camp, and operate in larger cities to promote Jewish traditions and culture, connection with the Jewish people, and connection with the State of Israel. They include - depending on the city - studio art programs with Jewish themes, bar/bat mitzvah preparation, local history, Shabbat programming, and other informal education activities.

FSU Educational Leadership Institute (ELI) is the required one-year training course for those wishing to become counselors at Jewish Agency camps. 160 young Ukrainian counselors staffed the camps in Ukraine in 2014.

Emergency Assistance Fund: In the years 2013 and 2014, Jewish Agency allocations for security measures at Jewish institutions in Ukraine totaled nearly \$460,000.

Taglit-Birthright: around 310 Ukrainian participants went on the iconic, free 10-day Israel trip in 2014.

Masa Israel Journey: In the 2013-14 program year, 538 motivated young-adult Jews from Ukraine were in Israel on Masa.

Grassroots Development and Students Initiatives is a source of professional support for a wide range of local projects of, for, and by students in the FSU. In 2013-14, we supported young Ukrainian Jews with their grassroots, community-building initiatives; resulting grassroots programs in Ukraine attracted 1,060 young Jews.

Tailored Community Programming covers an extremely wide variety of programs that are particular to specific towns and regions in Ukraine.



In Donetsk, Igor was an engineer, and Oksana was a stay-at-home mom. They enjoyed Jewish family life: Igor went to synagogue regularly, and the entire family studied Hebrew with Jewish Agency Hebrew teacher Alexander Ivashchenko. With the war, both students and teacher faced a new reality: they have all evacuated their homes in Donetsk. The Terniks continued studying Hebrew with Alexander, but now in The Jewish Agency's refugee center for future olim in Dnepropetrovsk.

Today, the Terniks are settled into Kibbutz Tel Katzir through The Agency's "First Home in the Homeland" absorption program. "We are so grateful for the shelter, help, and care that we received at the refugee center," they said. "It was a real temporary shelter on our way to Israel."

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