Social Housing for IDPs in Ukraine

Submitted By: Charity Organization HOUSING FOR IDP



Organization Profile

Organization Name: Charity Organisation HOUSING FOR IDP & Stryzhavka municipality

Organization Type: Foundation and philanthropy

Website: https://housing-idp.in.ua/

Practice Details

Country(ies): Ukraine

City(ies): Stryzhavka, Vinitsa region

Start Year: 2024 **Ongoing:** Yes **End Year:** N/A

Main Adequate Housing Components:

Affordability

Accessibility

Location

Housing Thematic Areas:

Housing Affordability & Financing

Social Housing

Housing in Crisis & Displacement Contexts

Relevant SDGs:

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

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Problem & Context

The housing crisis in Ukraine caused by the war has reached enormous proportions, with more than a million internally displaced persons (IDPs) having neither their own homes (which have been destroyed) nor the means to rent (due to high prices). In Ukraine, the problem of evacuating residents from cities and towns near the line of military operations remains acute, but there is a catastrophic shortage of temporary accommodation. The Housing for IDPs Foundation team has focused its efforts on working with local municipalities to renovate abandoned buildings into apartment buildings. When we started implementing our first project in the Irpin community in 2023, we were the first to implement such a project, from concept development to resident settlement. Both we and the community created a roadmap for the implementation of social housing projects.

Solution Developed

Reconstruction not only allows the project to be completed in a shorter time frame (unlike new construction), but also has a positive impact on the community, triggers a series of other changes in the surrounding area, and creates social housing that is used for free rent (IDP families only pay for utilities). In addition to housing itself, we also help communities build capacity to manage their housing stock and strengthen their knowledge in the process of jointly implementing such projects. In both the Irpin and Stryzhavka communities, our joint projects have become pilot projects, and communities can scale up this experience.

Implementation

All projects begin with a detailed analysis (some projects, unfortunately, are rejected after such analysis due to their impracticality) and calculations, attracting external financing (donor), signing agreements with local authorities, where they assume the costs and efforts of connecting external engineering networks and working with IDPs.

The implementation of the project from start to commissioning can take a little over a year, with the construction work itself taking 9 to 12 months. The apartments are handed over to the community fully renovated and furnished, ready for occupancy. In addition to involving international partners in project financing, all work is carried out with the involvement of Ukrainian, often local, workers. Building materials are exclusively of national production.

Enablers & Obstacles

Based on our experience of implementing two social housing projects in collaboration with local communities, we can say that their implementation was carried out with the full involvement of local authorities and their direct participation in all processes. Many legal and organisational issues were resolved through close cooperation between the foundation and the municipality.

Since there were no ready-made solutions and we had to work within the legal framework of Ukraine, we often found solutions that were used for the first time.

Among the main challenges, we can also mention the weak capacity of communities and the lack of professional specialists in the areas of reconstruction, construction, and social housing fund management. Therefore, the willingness of communities to change and learn, to adopt experience, is key to the successful implementation of such projects.

Results & Impact

We have already implemented two projects (for 33 families, 100 residents) to renovate abandoned buildings into social housing projects. We are not creating dormitories, but apartment buildings with areas for future residents to socialise.

All projects are inclusive, taking into account the needs of people with special needs and families with children. The projects also include the development of the surrounding area, which has a positive impact on neighboring buildings and residents. It is worth noting that the choice of reconstruction is determined not only by economic but also by environmental considerations.

Replication & Scale Up

We plan to implement similar projects to renovate abandoned buildings into social housing in other communities in Ukraine where there is a particularly high concentration of IDPs. The main factor for such scaling should be the availability of suitable buildings and the willingness of communities to actively participate.

We have already begun searching for buildings in more than 20 hromadas (municipalities) that meet the fund's requirements for implementation.

Policy Uptake

This housing practice has informed or been partially integrated into policy discussions, strategies, or pilot-level policy instruments.

We used public-private partnership approaches and basic approaches to social housing development, while relevant draft laws and changes in public policy were being prepared and discussed in the country. Together with local communities, we formed municipal enterprises that will continue to manage social housing projects.

We transferred our findings to Caritas Ukraine for the implementation of their first pilot project.

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Lessons & Takeaways

In future projects, we would like to interact more with the end beneficiaries, i.e., IDPs and other categories of the population who are eligible for social housing. Such interaction would allow us to improve housing solutions, take into account the specific needs of future residents, and provide them with better living conditions in the long term.