



ADRA UKRAINE



2025 / APRIL



"Working in the humanitarian sphere is exactly what we should do today"

To shoot humanitarian stories is not only about reportage, but also about empathy, courage, endurance. Dmytro Bilyi, cameraman and photographer of the charitable organization ADRA Ukraine, talks about his professional vocation, creativity under fire, filming evacuations and the lives of people in the combat zone. And also - about why work in the humanitarian sphere gives meaning and keeps in Ukraine.

— Dmytro, tell us a little about yourself. How did you enter the profession and find yourself in the ADRA Ukraine team?

— I graduated from the Kiev National I. K. Karpenko-Karyi University of theatre, cinema and television - I studied at the film and television operator, photographer. For 17 years I have been working in a specialty. I live in the city of Bucha in Kyiv region. It was there that I met the full-scale war - the first week my family and I spent under fire, and then evacuated to Zakarpattia region to friends.

There I began to volunteer - together with other displaced persons, we received food products from ADRA Ukraine and delivered them to nearby villages. At some point I started filming - how we distribute assistance, how people live. It was such reporting content - both photos and videos. Subsequently, the PR department of the organization began to attract me, they asked me to do some more shooting. On some of the shots taken then, there is my wife and daughter - her photo is published in the reporting magazine "Protecting the heart of the nation in the war period."

When we returned to Kyiv (it was the end of 2022), I learned about the vacancy of a photographer and videographer in ADRA Ukraine. I passed the interview - and from March 2023 I was officially in the team. For me, this is not just a job - I really found a meaning in this area that responds to my inner convictions.



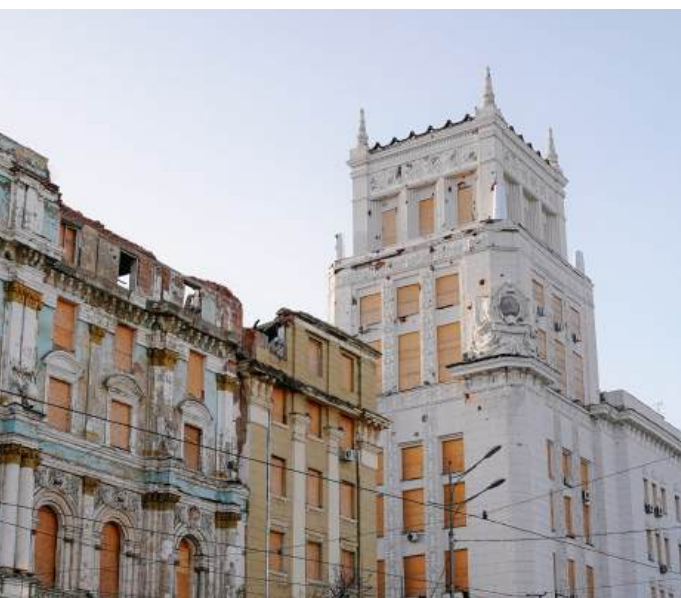


● Dmytro's daughter and wife, 2022

— You said that you found meaning in this work. What do you think is the mission of the photographer in a humanitarian context?

— Before the war, I worked as a photo reporter in the news. And I always thought that military photographers had the most extreme and interesting kind of shooting. It looked difficult, but at the same time romantic - as if you can show yourself, earn more, show professional qualities. But when the war came to my house, such a vision collapsed. My family and I were locked down in Bucha. My daughter was only two years old. We lived in the basement for a week, trying to find a safe escape route. And only on March 4 managed to leave. I then saw the true face of the war and became convinced that there was nothing romantic about it. After that, I never looked at the war as something "interesting to shoot." War is about pain, fear and loss...

And when I began to cooperate with ADRA Ukraine, I saw how humanitarian aid really changes people's lives. And I realized: I can be useful. I have had periods in my life when I was either engaged in documentary, or news, or even filmed a wedding. But now, during the war, the humanitarian sphere - I think this is exactly what to do. My camera is a tool to bring people's stories to the world. And it became a real mission: to help through my profession. That's what keeps me here in Ukraine. I don't want to go - I want to be part of a common cause that brings the victory closer.



● Kharkiv city after shelling

— What exactly do you shoot in your daily work?

— 90% is reporting. I take photos, videos, make short stories. The first is reporting to donors. This is a mandatory part. But at the same time, it is a way to show the world that humanitarian aid is really reaching the people who need it. That this support is still very much needed.

It is important for me not only to record the event, but to convey the history of a person. If this is, let's say, the issuance of food kits - then I try to show who these people are, how they live, what conditions they have. I often interview them to gather information for future projects. In the frame - not just a portrait, but the circumstances of life, background, details that tell more than words.

Especially I remember the filming of evacuations - when we took people out of the city of Ukrainka (Kyiv region) and the towns near Kurakhovo and Selidovo (Donetsk region). They were sick and disabled people. They were sometimes on wheelchairs, sometimes they were carried out of houses in arms of volunteers, with things, with pets - cats, dogs. We helped them go to safer regions. Now these cities, from where we took people out, are either already occupied, or the enemy has come very close.

I also remember many shootings in the Donetsk region, in cities such as Liman, Slavyansk, Kramatorsk, where social transport transported people from remote villages to cities where infrastructure operated. These are mostly elderly people who have not left the home. Our drivers work there, and they take risks every day, but they make their lives a little easier. To shoot such stories is not about spectacular shots, but about human dignity, which you want to preserve.



● Dmytro and Pylyp Shubert, the ADRA Ukraine Security Officer

— **It's a very stressful job. A lot of road, yes?**

— Sure. Only in trains for 2024 did I spend 20 days - this is excluding car trips. Sometimes I drive myself, sometimes with someone from the team, it happens - I use BlaBlaCar. But most of all is the railway. Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian railroad system) is now at its best - both comfort and schedule. I wonder how well its infrastructure works in such conditions.

— **How do you stand it? Are there times when it's too heavy?**

— Often. For example, when we were in Zaporizhzhia, guided aerial bombs fell near us. We were just filming the issuance of building materials, and nearby the evacuation of the wounded and dead began. Such situations leave a mark. After some filming - we can't eat anything, can't drink, and are silent for hours.

And it happens differently - when you go to an interview, and you choose people with the most painful stories. In a day I can talk to ten, and almost everyone - with tears. We pass it all through ourself, and in the evening we just want to talk only to a psychologist. Such emotional stress is part of this work.

— **How do you recover?**

— Nature. Daughter. Family. The best rest for me is somewhere in nature. The Zakarpattia mountains then, in 2022, gave me the feeling that I was still alive. And still, when I want to recover, I go to the forest, just walk, listen to silence.



— Tell us a little bit about the technical side. What technique do you work with and what is important for you in shooting?

— When I joined the ADRA Ukraine team and realized what my task would be, I asked what I needed for quality work. The PR department took this seriously. Everything needed to work in the field was purchased. Now I have high-quality, professional equipment - exactly the one that can withstand rain, dust, blows - everything you encounter in locations. For reportage photos and videos, the technique is critical. This is not a studio, here you do not have the right to many takes. Everything should be mobile, fast and reliable. And, of course, this technique is not cheap. But this is a tool through which you can do your job qualitatively.



● Kharkiv city after shelling

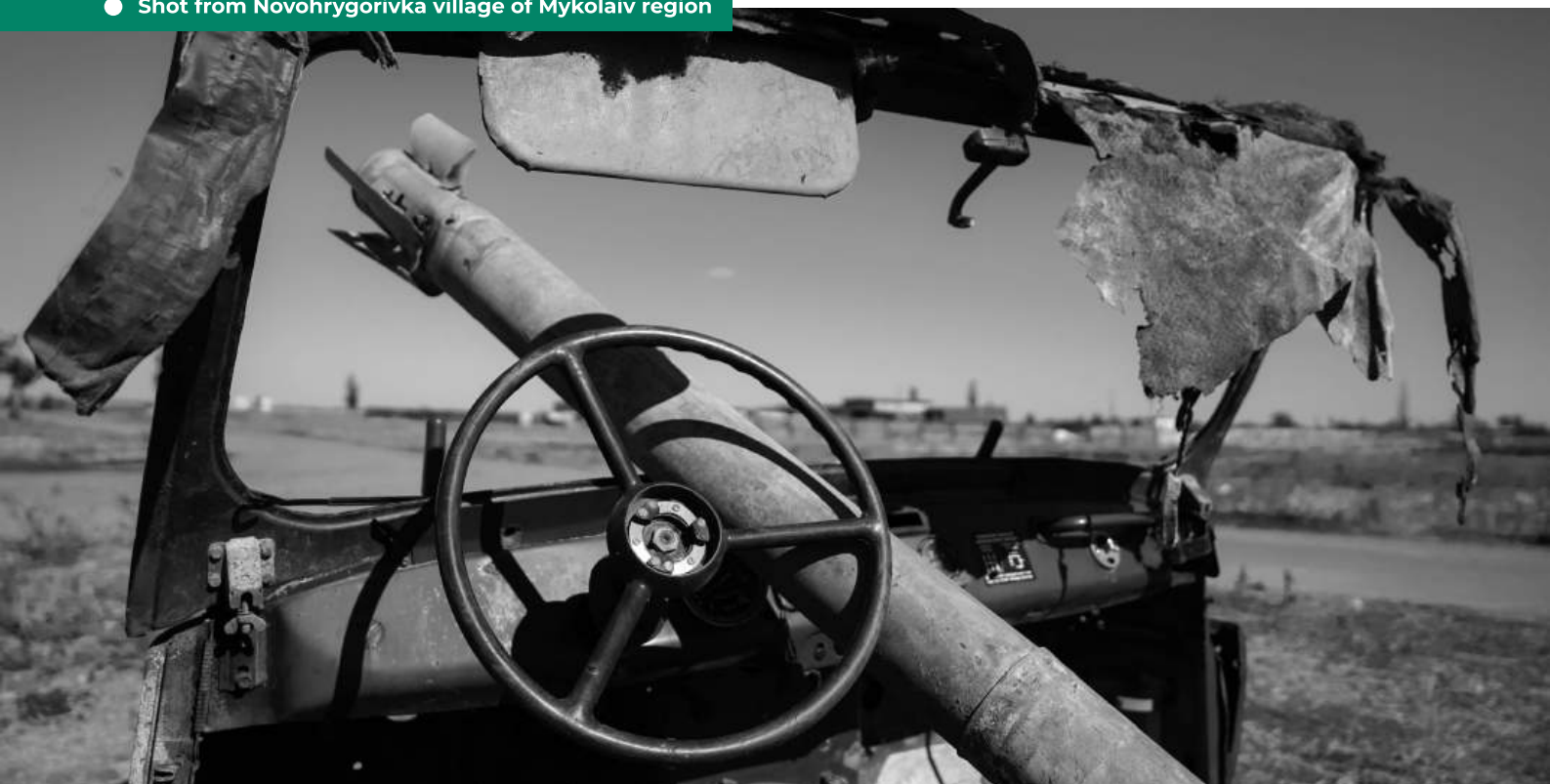
— What about creativity? Do you have space for it, or does everything dictate the situation?

— For me it is very important. I am generally a creative person. I love art, I am inspired by painting, cinema, the works of great directors. And I try to use their techniques in my work. I constantly try to bring something of my own to each shooting - from composition to lighting. That is, I try to make the percentage of the creative component greater than the percentage of the technical-routine one. Sometimes there are locations where, it seems, you will not remove anything interesting. But even then I try to find an angle, detail, face, which will make the frame expressive. When possible, I make a series of frames, stories. To have not just a photo from the "transfer of assistance," but a certain visual narrative. It is important for me to convey the essence. Therefore, I often say: photography should have its own direction. This is about how to fix an emotion, a meaning, a moment that will say more than words.

— Are there any shots you are particularly proud of?

— There are series to which I return from time to time. For example, a shooting in the village of Novohryhorivka in the Mykolaiv region. There were almost no whole houses left - everything was completely destroyed. And there were a lot of artifacts of war - fragments of missiles, shells... We filmed grandmothers who were preparing for winter, and had nothing to cover the roof. I was there three times - and each time the shots came out strong, real.

● Shot from Novohryhorivka village of Mykolaiv region





Another memorable moment is the city of Kupyansk in Kharkov region. Very close to the front, a lot of destruction, tension in the air - but also a lot of humanity and strength. There were also powerful photos.

Also is the story of a boy somewhere near the city of Izyum: he sits in a car among boxes of humanitarian aid, and his eyes are extremely expressive.

I remember the day when I arrived at the Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv. I was just nearby - with a camera. I knew that ADRA Ukraine went there with the first aid team. I arrived at the place immediately after the strike. There were many people - both children and adults, doctors, volunteers who dismantled the rubble. This shooting was very emotional - just in the first minutes after the tragedy. We then shot a short video. In the frame there were both wounded and, unfortunately, dead. Not all photos we published - some are too heavy. But several posts from this series are on Instagram. This is one of those shootings that are not forgotten - it is about the true cost of war.

Another memorable series is the shooting in the city Kharkiv, when there was a threat of occupation of the city. That was last spring (2024). I was sent there to show how the city lives in these anxious days. The one Kharkiv man took me to different locations, we recorded a lot - both anxiety and resilience. People then were very worried that the city could be captured at any moment. This series is also important for me. We often return to it when we need shots about Kharkiv. It's very eloquent.

— **What about the ethical side of filming? For example, I heard the story of one famous photograph: the photographer Kevin Carter in Africa in the 90s filmed hunger in South Sudan, and filmed a child who fell from hunger, and how a vulture was waiting for her death. The picture helped in raising funds for African children, but also caused discussions whether shooting in such a situation is ethical. And do you have moments when you hesitate - to shoot correctly or not?**

— There are. And they're not easy. One man told me that at the beginning of the war he received a humanitarian aid - and he was very ashamed when he was removed with a box in his hands. And although I try to shoot carefully, with respect, such stories are thought-provoking. Of course, we do not have such extreme shootings, where it is necessary to save someone instead of shooting. But there are emotionally difficult shooting. I used to work as a news operator on news channels, it is customary to shoot some stories at any cost. Reporters, correspondents have a certain professional deformation in this regard. We have not. I always try to balance, not to get into the face, not to shoot where a person is uncomfortable, but rather to "catch" the moment from the outside. But difficult situations, where there is a fine line, still happen.

— You mentioned that your shots are sometimes taken by international partners. Does it really work?

— Yes. Although it is not always immediately noticeable. This is the teamwork of our PR department. We constantly publish reports, photos, stories - and ADRA offices in other countries see it. International organizations, such as the UN World Food Programme, often take our shooting. Our photos live their lives - somewhere in reports, somewhere in publications. And they really affect. Because if something happened, and this was not filmed or told - sometimes it seems like it did not happen. In the age of visual information, a camera is a tool no less important than logistics.

— And finally: what would you advise those who want to work in this area?

— First of all - to understand why you do it. Motivation must be honest, otherwise you will not stay long. Then - do not be afraid. Undergo safety and first aid trainings. And - always have a camera at hand. Shoot, notice, capture moments of life. That's really important.



Novohrygorivka village (Mykolaiv region)



Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital after shelling in 2024, Kyiv



Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital after shelling in 2024, Kyiv



Kharkiv city after shelling



Photo by Dmytro Bilyi



[YOU CAN LOOK AT THE SHARED PHOTOS BY THIS LINK](#)

Statistics of assistance provided for April 2025

Assistance component	Number of beneficiaries	Amount of assistance	Region of assistance	Donor Name
Food Security	163 076 beneficiaries	56 214 food kits; 1 206 canned food boxes; 434 510 loaves of bread; food products for 2 shelters	All of Ukraine	The UN World Food Programme & ADRA Switzerland; Max Brose Hilfe, ADRA Germany, ADRA Czech Republic, Aktion Deutschland Hilft; ADRA Korea
Legal Assistance	211 beneficiaries	-	Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Vinnytsia, Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi, Odesa, Ternopil, Sumy, Zaporizhzhia, Zhytomyr, Poltava, Kherson, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Volyn, Zakarpattia, Kirovohrad, Chernihiv regions.	Max Brose Hilfe, ADRA Germany, ADRA Czech Republic, Aktion Deutschland Hilft;
MHPSS	3 095 beneficiaries	1 781 individual sessions 489 group sessions 825 trainings	All of Ukraine	Radiohjälpen & ADRA Sweden; Max Brose Hilfe e.V., ADRA Germany, ADRA Czech Republic, Aktion Deutschland Hilft; (GAC) IHA Canada & ADRA Canada
Protection Centers	1 486 beneficiaries	11 protection centers	Zhytomyr, Poltava, Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, Khmelnytskyi, Chernihiv, Sumy, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv regions	Radiohjälpen & ADRA Sweden; (GAC) IHA Canada & ADRA Canada
Humanitarian Transportation	2 851 beneficiaries	137 social trips	Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson regions	Max Brose Hilfe, ADRA Germany, ADRA Czech Republic, Aktion Deutschland Hilft;
Education	137 beneficiaries	Co-financing of education for 14 students; Career guidance radio laboratory program for 14 students; 4 educational losses catch-up centers (59 sessions for 109 students)	Lviv region	«Schulzentrum Marienhöhe» the German School & ADRA Germany
Education: MHPSS	679 beneficiaries	173 individual sessions 265 group sessions 140 psychotherapy sessions	Lviv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, Khmelnytskyi, Poltava, Chernivtsi, Cherkasy, Vinnytsia regions	ADRA Australia
Water, sanitation and hygiene	-	1 «BioSeptik» system 1 water tower	Dnipropetrovsk region	Max Brose Hilfe, ADRA Germany, ADRA Czech Republic, Aktion Deutschland Hilft;
CASH	215 households (442 beneficiaries)	\$ 115 328,75 (4 773 600 UAH)	Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Poltava, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Odesa, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, Kyiv, Sumy, Chernihiv, Cherkasy regions	ADRA Japan & Japan Platform
Generators	-	23 pcs.	Kharkiv region	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ukraine
Non-food assistance	72 households (146 beneficiaries)	Cash for solid fuel \$ 42 063,55 (1 728 000 UAH) (24 000 UAH per household)	Chernihiv region	(GAC) IHA Canada & ADRA Canada



HIGHLIGHT

Spring therapy with creativity: gingerbread painting for children took place in Khmelnytsky

On April 13, a meeting for children filled with spring mood and creative inspiration was held at the ADRA Ukraine Protection and Support Center in Khmelnytsky. The event dedicated to gingerbread painting was not only entertaining, but also therapeutic in nature – as a form of psycho-emotional unloading through art. The initiative is supported by the Swedish charitable organization [Radiohjälpen](#) and [ADRA Sweden](#).

The master class was held by the facilitator of the Center – Yulia Bufechchikova. Children happily plunged into the process of creating their own sweet masterpieces: gingerbread in the form of bunnies, ducks, hearts and flowers came to life under bright colors. The spring theme inspired – each product became a real embodiment of children's imagination, joy and warmth. The child experimented with colors and patterns, drawing each line with glaze.

The event became an island of peace and positive emotions. Through creativity, children were able to express themselves, reduce tension and simply enjoy the moment. Throughout the meeting there was an atmosphere of support, trust and sincere children's laughter.

Published on: 15 / 04 / 2025

The publication on the website:

<https://www.adra.ua/en/spring-therapy-with-creativity-gingerbread-painting-for-children-took-place-in-khmelnytsky/>





HIGHLIGHT

ADRA Ukraine and the National Institute of Cardiovascular Surgery will cooperate to support patients

On March 27, in the city of Kyiv, a working meeting of representatives of ADRA Ukraine with the leadership of the N. Amosov National Institute of Cardiovascular Surgery of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine was held. The parties signed a Memorandum of partnership and cooperation, the purpose of which is to provide specialized medical care to war veterans with cardiovascular diseases. In particular, ADRA Ukraine plans to join the assistance to support the institute with medical consumables in accordance with the vital needs and capabilities of the organization.

Published on: 18 / 04 / 2025

The publication on the website:

<https://www.adra.ua/en/adra-ukraine-and-the-national-institute-of-cardiovascular-surgery-will-cooperate-to-support-patients/>





HIGHLIGHT

The UN System Coordinator in Ukraine visited ADRA Ukraine distribution points

On April 16, the UN Coordinator in Ukraine Matthias Schmale, together with representatives of the Odesa office of the UN World Food Programme (WFP), visited the distribution points of his partner, the charitable organization ADRA Ukraine.

The visit took place in the village of Posad-Pokrovsky, that located in Kherson region, where on that day ADRA Ukraine employees distributed food kits and loaves of bread provided by the UN WFP. Matthias Schmale personally got acquainted with the process of distribution of assistance, discussed with the team of the Odesa office of the WFP the peculiarities of distribution organization and logistical challenges.

During the visit, the coordinator also talked with ADRA Ukraine representatives about the current security situation in the region and the difficulties faced by employees during work.

Matthias Schmale expressed his sincere gratitude to the entire ADRA Ukraine team for their dedicated work in difficult conditions and effective work on the places of needs. In gratitude, he was presented with the magazine "Protecting the Heart of the Nation in the War Period," during which the guests were briefly told about the organization's activities and implemented projects in Ukraine.

Published on: 30 / 04 / 2025

The publication on the website:

<https://www.adra.ua/en/the-un-system-coordinator-in-ukraine-visited-adra-ukraine-distribution-points/>





STORY

Olexander from Zolochiv village of Kharkov region

Olexander is a lonely man who is already retired. Unfortunately, due to hostilities, his house was completely destroyed. In an instant, he was left without everything he had created for years. He had to move to completely unfamiliar people, who, fortunately, turned out to be sincere and friendly - they sheltered him and gave him the opportunity to live in their house.

Olexander is now in a very difficult situation: not enough money even for the most necessary.

"I am 70 years old. I receive only a pension and humanitarian aid," the man says.

His monthly pension is very small, and therefore the assistance from the UN World Food Programme and ADRA Ukraine (which is provided with the support of ADRA Switzerland) was a real salvation. Thanks to this support, he is able to cook soups, cereals, and even bakes something tasty from flour, with which his neighbors help him.

"I have to save a lot," Olexander shares.

Despite the difficulties, he does not lose faith. He hopes that the hard times will soon be a thing of the past. In the meantime, the situation remains unstable, the man gratefully speaks about the support from ADRA and partners and dreams that this support will continue to save the lives of thousands of Ukrainians who suffered from the war.

April 2025





Lyudmila with her husband

STORY

Lyudmila from the city of Mykolaiv

"I was in the city, and somewhere around four in the morning the explosions began. And it became scary. What will happen next? "- the woman recalls the terrible events of February 24, 2022. This is how Lyudmila's morning began. She could not imagine that her quiet life would change so suddenly, and she would be in danger.

When the explosions first started, no one knew how to react. Will it be long or just for one day? Go to another city or stay at home? These questions haunted Lyudmila, but she could not dare - until something forced her to act faster.

"Near the house of our relatives, a shell destroyed the car, destroyed the apartment. Everything burned down," the woman recalls.

This happened about a week after the start of the full-scale invasion in Ukraine. After such a tragedy that affected native people, Lyudmila and her husband decided to leave for a safer place. They had a granddaughter and cats with them, and they gave the parrots to a neighbor so that they would not be left alone. The family took care of everyone so that no one died.

At first they did not know where to go, but then they learned about the shelter from ADRA Ukraine in the city of Lviv. It was there that the family was able to stay in safety and silence.

"There we were fed, food was brought, it was possible to take a shower, there were new mattresses," says Lyudmila.

Of course, for some, these are trifles, but for people who left their homes and found themselves with nothing, even a warm shower and hot food were of great importance.



Lyudmila is very grateful for taking care of them. ADRA Ukraine psychologist regularly came to the shelter, who communicated with the internally displaced persons and helped them to restore their mental health. Also freely available were tea, coffee, various snacks and sweets. If someone needed clothes or personal care products, they were also provided. It would seem that life was getting better, but the longing for home and peaceful time was always in the heart. Therefore, after some time, the family decided to try to return to where they were born and lived before the full-scale invasion. The situation in the city has somewhat stabilized: shelling, although ongoing, but not so frequent. These terrible events strongly affected the health of the family.



"The nervous system has suffered so much. It's especially hard at night - now we constantly have to drink valerian," the woman admits. Therefore, sometimes they go to the city of Lviv for examination to a doctor and can stay in a shelter from ADRA Ukraine. This is very convenient, because hotels are expensive, and they can not afford it.

Of course, the family still has certain needs, for example, power banks, to charge their handphones and always be in touch with relatives. But they are already happy for the support they received. The woman is infinitely grateful to everyone who is involved in this help and at least slightly facilitated the life of her family in this difficult time.





STORY

Lyubov Mikhailovna from Borova village of Kharkiv region

Lyubov is a pensioner, and lives with her husband. Their children are adults and live in another country. Housing is damaged as a result of constant shelling, and in order to at least partially restore it, it takes a lot of money.

"The roof is damaged, the windows are broken, the barn is destroyed," the woman says.

Of course, the family does not have enough money, and there is almost no assistance in the village. Wages and pensions are small, so people just survive.

Fortunately, the charitable organization ADRA Ukraine, together with the UN World Food Programme, with the support of ADRA Switzerland, regularly deliver packages with food to the village. These boxes contain necessary food products, so people can prepare a variety of nutritious dishes. Such assistance is very important for the residents of the village, because it allows them to save a little of their money, and most importantly - not to stay hungry.

"We use everything that is in those kits," the woman says.

She is very grateful for this support!

April 2025





MORE NEWS

The Mykolaiv Regional Oncology Center received an ambulance from ADRA Ukraine
04 / 04 / 2025

The Swiss Mine Action Fund (FSD) conducted training for employees of ADRA Ukraine
04 / 04 / 2025

Settlements in Kharkiv region received generators with the support of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
08 / 04 / 2025

Students of the Lviv Lyceum "Zhyve Slovo" visited the Western Media Center of the TV channel "Nadiya"
11 / 04 / 2025

In Chernihiv, teachers mastered the skills of providing psychological first aid
11 / 04 / 2025

ADRA Ukraine supports Pavlograd City Hospital
15 / 04 / 2025

ADRA Ukraine signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with a medical institute in Dnipro
15 / 04 / 2025

In Kryvyi Rih, the psychologist talked with young people about apathy and stress resistance
16 / 04 / 2025

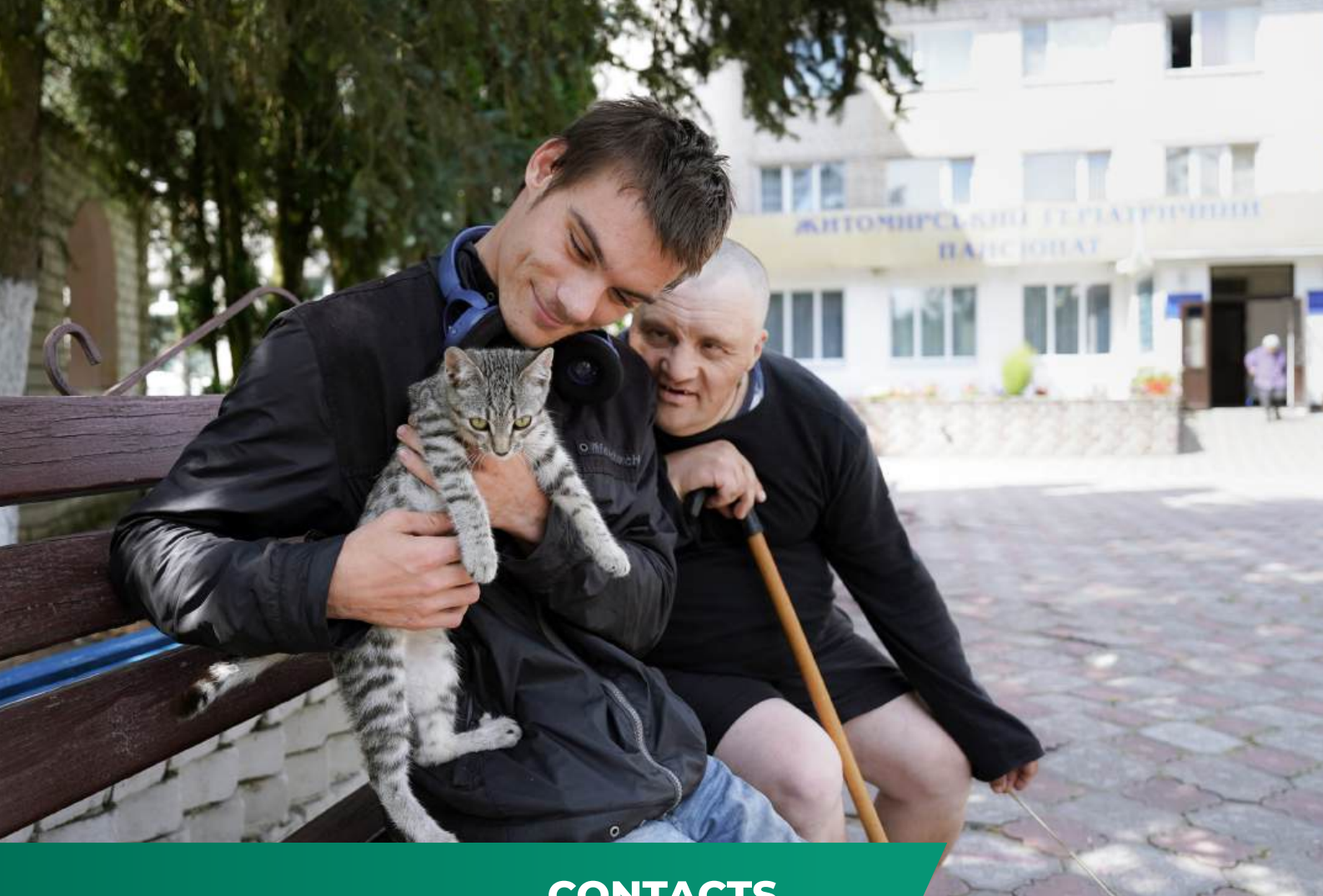
Cooperation with the city authorities of Kupyansk secured an official document
17 / 04 / 2025

ADRA Ukraine supports schoolchildren in choosing a profession
25 / 04 / 2025

Discussed countering violence and burnout: ADRA Ukraine meeting with IRC employees
28 / 04 / 2025

Children of Kurylivka community received Easter gifts from ADRA Ukraine
29 / 04 / 2025





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