

Dorset Welcome Fund
Impact report for Round 3 (grants made January 2023)

Summary of funded projects and impact on beneficiaries

Grant recipient	Project	Amount Awarded	Allocations	Number of beneficiaries	Number of volunteers involved	Outcomes
BCP Hosts and Guests Community	Face to face support for Ukrainian refugees and host families at support sessions & events, plus guides/resources to address key issues	£1756	£1756 BCP Council	150	30	Improved connections between refugees, improved awareness of support available, support for wellbeing
Bridport Community Shed	A Bench for All, From All - weekend workshops with refugees and people from multicultural backgrounds, to create a community bench	£3090	£3090 Dorset Council	6	2	Improved connections between refugees, support for wellbeing
Citizens Advice BCP	Mobile Refugee Advice Project to support Ukrainian refugees in BCP	£4000	£4000 BCP Council	64	5	Increased access to specialist advice on immigration and other issues impacting refugees
Community Alliances Limited	2 events for Ukrainian refugees, organised with Dorset Ukrainian Community CIC	£5000	£2500 BCP Council £2500 Dorset Council	300	30	Improved connections between refugees, improved awareness of support available, support for wellbeing
DEED (Development Education in Dorset)	A Place called Hope: welcoming refugees to Dorset through a community play with refugee performers, in partnership with Vita Nova	£7980	£4877 Dorset Council £3192 DCF Fundholder	14	25	Improved connections between refugees, improved confidence, mental health and wellbeing, increased awareness of refugees in the community

Guggleton Farm Arts CIC	Blended English language and art & craft skills sessions for Ukrainian Refugees, and a Film Club	£3895	£1170 Dorset Council £2725 GCLS via DCF	93	12	Improved connections between refugees, improved English language skills
Purbeck Connect Ukraine	Cultural sessions to teach Ukrainian language and culture to refugee children, and sharing cultural art/music with the wider community	£3475	£1816.92 Dorset Council £1658.08 GCLS via DCF	45	20	Improved connections between refugees, improved English language skills (for adults) and connection to Ukrainian culture and language (for children)
Safe and Sound Dorset	Support group for Ukrainian refugees in partnership with International Care Network	£5772	£5772 BCP Council	40	2	Improved confidence, mental health and wellbeing
The KORU Project	Creative and outdoor/sports therapeutic sessions for young people from refugee families of all nationalities	£3960	£3960 DCF Fundholders	25	10	Improved connections between refugees, support for wellbeing
TLW Dance Foundation	Financial support for refugees to attend dance classes at TWL Dance	£826	£826 Dorset Council	12	0	Supporting wellbeing of refugee children and connections to other children
Treads	Partnership with Friendly Food Club, using cooking sessions to improve community cohesion between young people and Ukrainian refugee peers	£7996	£7996 Dorset Council	73	5	Supporting wellbeing of refugee children and connections to other children
St Aldhelm's & St Ann's, Radipole Parish	Stand with Ukraine – a development of activities and practical help for the local Ukrainian community, led by a Ukrainian steering group	£2000	£2000 Dorset Council	140	12	Improved connections between refugees, improved confidence. Practical support to address housing, English language skills, routes into employment,
Rainbow Makers CIC	Together Day for Ukrainian Guests and their Hosts, organised in partnership with Dorset Ukrainian Community (facebook group)	£3000	£3000 Dorset Council	180	48	Improved connections between refugees, improved awareness of support available, support for wellbeing
Community Alliances	Supporting the Ukrainian community to organise an event on Ukrainian Independence Day	£2500	£2500 BCP Council	300	20	?

Shaftesbury Refugee Group	Programme of events for local Ukrainian children and their families, with Kiev City Ballet, August 2023	£5000	£3000 Dorset Council £2000 DCF Fundholder	230	45	Community cohesion and visibility of Ukrainian refugees, support for wellbeing
TOTAL		£60,250		1672 beneficiaries	266 volunteers	

Reports and case studies submitted by the groups

1) BCP Hosts & Guests Community

Funded activities

- We funded a trip (minibus and sandwiches) for 7 Ukrainian families to join the National Trust's Nature Discovery Day at Studland Bay for November Halloween celebrations.
- We hosted a large Christmas party for over 150 BCP hosts and guests on 7 January. Volunteers from the Church of Latter Day Saints supported us with the preparation of food.
- We supported Ukraine Relief marking the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine 25 February, providing volunteer support and food at their event at Castlepoint Shopping Centre.

We really wanted to best use the funds, so we sent out a survey to the hosts and guests after the large Christmas event 7 January to better understand what they wanted. The results were that both hosts and guests preferred smaller gatherings with specialist help and advice at the event. As a result we worked with It's All About Culture (IAAC) in Boscombe because it was central and because it could cater for drop-in type events. This worked well because we were offered a reduced rate and IAAC also got positive exposure from the events too, even receiving donations for their cause from new donors during the events.

- We hosted a Hub for Help for around 50 BCP hosts and guests on Saturday 18 March at IAAC Multicultural Hub in Boscombe. The event was supported by BCP Council, ICN and Dorset MIND experts volunteering their advice and expertise on housing, employment, ESOL, wellbeing and general support. The event was also a Ukraine food day and BCP residents got to taste Ukrainian food and talk to the guests.
- We hosted an Easter Hub for Help at the IAAC Multi-cultural Hub again 1 April, which was attended by nearly 70 people. Support was provided by the BCP resettlement, employment and housing teams, ICN Ukrainian supporters and Dorset MIND.
- Committee members attended the Employment and Housing webinars hosted by Dorset Council in April and May 2023, making sure that questions asked by the Ukrainians on Facebook were put forward to the Councils, and then the webinars and answers were published in our Employment guides.
- Committee members attend monthly Community Health Ambassadors meetings, disseminating presentations of interest to the BCP hosts and guests through the Facebook Guide sections.
- We accompanied several Ukrainians to Job Fairs at the AFC Bournemouth stadium and the Bournemouth Pavilion in May and June 2023, making introductions and supporting with translation.

Impact

This grant has allowed the BCP hosts and guests to come together regularly, share information, socialise, get advice and support from various organisations and enjoy being together. Some Ukrainian guests have received advice that has helped them move forward with their lives, seek employment, training and new housing. Other hosts and guests have been able to impart their knowledge to those earlier on in the journey, creating friendships that will last into the future.



Project Development

The BCP Hosts and Guests Community has been fortunate to receive funding from a local church to fund another Christmas party 23 December 2023 at Citygate and we will continue to keep the guides on our Facebook page up-to-date.

Case study

'Andrew' came to the 18 March Hub for Help desperate for advice. His wife and child were in Scotland but he had managed to get a permanent job down in the BCP area. He wanted to understand how he could bring his family down to Dorset and what housing support he could get. He had found a property but needed to know whether there was any support available for a rental deposit, as the landlord wanted 3 months worth. He was able to speak directly to the BCP resettlement team and the BCP employment team, who advised on his next steps. Soon after the Council housing team were able to make an agreement with the landlord to guarantee Andrew's deposit. By the end of summer Andrew was able to bring his wife and child down to join him in his flat in Bournemouth, which made him very happy.

2) Bridport Community Shed

Funded activities

We delivered three 2 day workshops, introducing woodworking and lathe turning to 14 adults and young people from the Bridport area. Each participant learned to use the lathe to turn a piece inspired by a personal journey, drawn as a line between two points and made as a template. Each piece will go into the back rest of a public bench, to be sited at the Chapel in the Garden. This allowed participants to collaborate in the making of a visible representation of the community.

During these workshops we also offered a making tutorial for a carrier stool to teach participants basic woodworking; sawing, marking out, and joining; all the while emphasizing the diversity of the natural woods we worked with to bring participants closer to a connection with nature and its materials. The timber that we sourced for the workshop came from a local woodland, which we intend to host the bench-opening celebration in to further manifest the connection and sense of belonging. We organised childcare to allow more families to take part, including single mothers.

Impact

The offer brought many people together who hadn't known each other before; refugees and culturally diverse community members met other similarly positioned folks in their community. They bonded in solidarity over shared similar experiences; not being from Dorset, being brown or black, being a refugee, being a minority and more. This served to offer community cohesion and sense of belonging, and will do so even more when the bench is made as a public manifestation of the community. Each participant made their own carrier stool to take home, which held that memory and boosted confidence in skills/abilities, and boosted their confidence and wellbeing. The experience recognised their differences and reflected that minorities were welcomed in Bridport's community.

We also worked with Jurassic Multicultural Group, a community support and meet up group for individuals and families who are culturally diverse or minoritised. Many participants were made aware of this community support group through our workshops and are now members who regularly attend meet ups.

Project Development

Unable to continue without funding.

Case Study

A daughter of one of the participants, 14 years old from Sudan, nervously learned to use the lathe machine. Her mother was turning away on the other lathe a few meters away. Seeing her mum confidently using the lathe, she began turning and after about 5 minutes was completely in the zone. She spent hours turning her piece on the lathe and said she liked it so much, she thought she might be a woodworker one day and that she wanted to enroll in her school's woodshop classes.

3) Citizens Advice BCP

Funded activities

Our initial plan for this work, was to implement targeted advice provision for Ukrainian refugees through the use of our Community Advice Vehicle in targeted locations. After meeting with Ukraine Resettlement Officers at BCP council, and the lead at Dorset Ukrainian Community, we discovered that the need was for advice on more targeted subjects, where clients could visit our advisers for a group session with their community members. Therefore, we decided to work with DUC to provide 4 workshops over the year period covering topics which were of particular concern to local Ukrainian community members. Our Community Advice Vehicle continued however to undertake regular community outreach sessions for refugees of any nationality (including Ukrainian).

The first workshop session took place at Boscombe Engagement Hub and covered the topic of discrimination and bullying. An interpreter was engaged to translate this and all subsequent sessions. Two advisers gave a presentation on what is considered bullying and discrimination in the UK, and how to deal with situations arising if a person suffers from one of these issues. The community were particularly concerned around bullying of children, and discrimination at work. The second, third and fourth sessions all took place at Parkstone United Reformed church so that participants could take part in their community hot lunch

after the session; we were also able to use a large room with more privacy and space for people to participate. The second session covered driving and vehicles in the UK; topical to Ukrainian people due to restrictions on their ability to drive in the UK or to register their Ukrainian vehicles here. We researched the topic and answered questions, particular to individual situations, and were able to work through problematic scenarios alongside the community. The third session covered both housing and education, with an hour dedicated to each topic. At this session, we brought in two guest specialists from BCP council; one member of the resettlement team and a representative from the education department. The final session was on the topic of Immigration. We brought in a specialist external adviser for this session, where the community was very passionate about the issues facing them with the uncertainty around their 3 year long visas.

Impact

“It means a lot to be heard, and to be helped to live our lives here in your country”.

Working with the community to build their knowledge, resilience and to help with problems they have been facing has been a great honour. We have seen first hand that the Ukrainian refugees we have worked with want to be equipped to provide a good life for themselves and their families in the UK. We provided an environment where they could feel safe to tell us the full scope of the problems facing them so that we could help them find a way forward, with resulting good quality advice from the right providers. This resulted in better outcomes for clients, and a clear understanding of the next steps. They understand where to go for further assistance within the local community. Our own knowledge and presence within the refugee community has grown. We have worked closely with local charity ICN and local support groups to ensure that the community know how to approach us for further help, and to ensure that people are not isolated.

Project Development

Moving to the workshop sessions was the right choice as it enabled the community to come together as a whole and gave them a chance to support one another and learn from each other, as well as from us. It also enabled us to demonstrate that we were clearly listening to what the community needed and what worked for them. The workshop arrangement enabled us to get to know the community better, which meant that people got to know us and felt comfortable with us over time, which enabled them to open up and participate more fully in the sessions.

Case Study

Lena, a 34 year old mother of 2 young children, attended our workshop on Immigration for Ukrainian Refugees. She had previously attended 2 of our other workshops, and over time got to know us. Lena helped others to voice their issues or concerns and became a voice for the community during our workshops. She was able to vocalise the frustration she felt towards the UK and Ukrainian government regarding her 3 year long visa under Homes for Ukraine. She was really worried about what would happen to her and her children after the end of the visa; her children were young and were learning English. She felt that by the end of their 3 year period, the UK would be the only home they would remember and they may suffer trauma if they were made to return to Ukraine. Equally, she passionately loves her home land and wants to return when it is safe to do so.

Lena, and others within her community, wanted to know what her options would be to stay in the UK beyond the 3 years, should they wish to do so. We discussed other immigration routes which people could switch in to. Frustratingly for Lena, we realised that none of these other routes met her needs and it would be best for her to stay on her current visa. Although this was not ideal, the full exploration we demonstrated, walking Lena and the community through the other options available, meant that they felt assured that their current visa was the best one to meet their needs at this time. Lena told us after the session that having the chance to vocalise her worries and talk to experts about this topic has enabled her to let go of the concern that she could be doing the wrong thing for her children. She mentioned that understanding all options meant that she felt that she could make an informed choice.

4) Community Alliances Ltd

Funded activities

We provided 2 events celebrating St Nicholas day the weekend before Christmas; a traditional Ukrainian holiday celebration not celebrated in the UK. We originally planned for 100 people but had to change the venue due to the high demand. We managed to secure an additional £1023 in funding on top of the £5000 grant which helped with this.

We also provided access to a number of advisors and community groups providing support to Ukrainians including Skills and Learning, Purbeck Connect Ukraine, Secondary Schools Careers Advisor, BCP Communities Team, Wardrobe Foundation. The events had music and dancing by Ukrainians and also a Christmas gift celebration for children. Mental Health workshops were led by a Ukrainian Physiologist.

Impact

The principle beneficiaries were Ukrainian Refugees with secondary beneficiaries being host families attending. The feedback from Refugees was highly positive in terms of sense of wellbeing and emotions at a time of great distress. A woman with 3 children (1, 4 and 7 years old) came at the end in tears for the presents and children received 3 presents each (9 presents in total). She could not believe it!

"Joyful faces of children and their emotions"

"The value was that I seemed to be in Ukraine. And it's priceless"

"A sea of positive emotions. Meeting with friends, which took me to her native Ukraine"

Publicity of the project via social media has led to a 30% increase in members of our group on Facebook.

Project Development

We have secured a range of funding off the back of this grant including £5000 to deliver an Easter Event with support workshops, in partnership with Parkstone United Reformed Church/Poole Community Exchange. £600 to support a Celebration of the Kings Coronation with Ukrainians. Funding for our website and videos.



5) DEED (Development Education in Dorset)

Funded activities

Vita Nova's Celeste performing art group, consisting of refugees and asylum seekers from around the world (including Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iran, Sierra Leone, Eritrea, Belarus) toured 'Hopeful' and 'Refugee Nativity' At Rosebury Park Baptist Church, Bournemouth 16/12/22, Vita Nova, Bournemouth 07/05/23, Sandy Hill Arts Centre, Corfe 08/07/23, Bridport Town Hall 29/07/23, Museum of East Dorset 30/07/23.

In each location, members of the local community were brought together to watch the play and participate in after show discussions with the cast who shared where they had come from and how important it was for them to tell their story and find their voice. Audiences of between 60-80 attended each performance and were enthralled by what they saw and what they heard, which was very different from what they saw on the news. The heartfelt, poignant performance helped strengthen their empathy towards refugees.

DEED supported each event by managing bookings and refreshments for each venue and generally making sure the cast was well looked after, which they appreciated as they were all volunteers. We also brought a display of refugee stories to each performance to raise further awareness of refugee issues.

Impact

The cast of at least 20 was welcomed wherever they went and it had a hugely positive impact on their self esteem and confidence knowing that there were people who supported refugees locally. They particularly enjoyed visiting different parts of Dorset and were given some free time in each place so they could explore the town. Many had not been to these places before and loved this social aspect, where they were able to spend time with each other and practice their English.

The project has hugely increased the refugees cultural capacity and engagement; making connections with the cultural sector in BCP and Dorset, engaging in diverse cultural activities such as World of Love festival and Increase the Peace festival, enjoying visiting local community theatres, museums and arts centers. This has helped increase their sense of belonging to their local community. It has helped improve their English language skills by performing in English and using this common shared language as their social language. It has also helped build social & professional networks. They have been introduced to DEED, Bournemouth & Poole College, ICN and others working with refugees such as the local Amnesty International group.

Finally, the project has given them a voice in a very public conversation about refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants that is often toxic, negative and one-sided, removing the personal factor. By creating such an impactful performance they have created their own narrative and helped bring empathy back to the issue. They taught the audience that all the simple things matter to them just as much as it does to us; having a home, feeling safe, being with family and that had a hugely positive impact on each audience.



Project Development

The number of refugees, 14, was less than we had originally expected as we thought the cast would keep changing as people came and went, but most of the cast stayed as part of the production each time. Although we had less refugees involved, the connections between them were stronger. We had many more in the audience than we expected with each performance sold out to the capacity of each venue. We have built a community through this project of people and organisations that want to continue to work together to tell the authentic stories of refugees, and Vita Nova and DEED will continue to seek funding to do so.

Case Study

Khabib, who played one of the main characters, was transformed during the play. He is a refugee from Afghanistan and had previously worked with Vita Nova on their 'Refugee Nativity' play performed around Christmas time. When Sharon first met him he was very shy and did not talk about his identity as a refugee or his experiences in Afghanistan. He was one of the cast that at the first performance did not want to tell the audience where he had come from. But by the final performance his social and communication skills and confidence had grown incredibly. He became one of the leaders of the group, he acted as a translator for others. He proudly told the audience that he came from Afghanistan and gave an impassioned speech about being a refugee and what needs to happen in the world. He is now enrolled at Bournemouth & Poole College and wants to become a doctor. We are so incredibly proud of him.

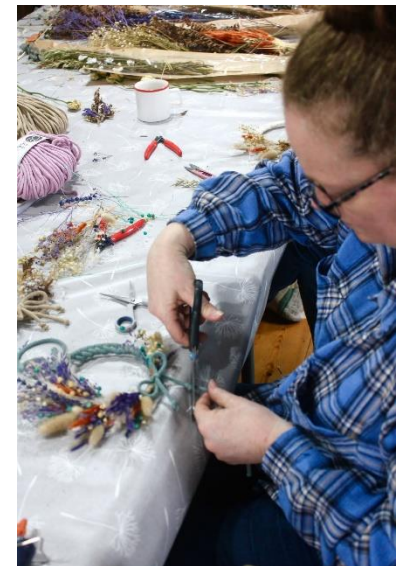
6) Guggleton Farm Arts CIC

Funded activities

English and Arts and Crafts lesson for Ukranian guests with an ESOL trained tutor and our creative team, alongside a film club to bring the community together, and using the English language over shared experiences and tasks. Travel was an issue and so car sharing was implemented. There is a lack of availability of Ukranian language films in this country. Our research sent us to a Ukrainian Director, who let us know that the most popular genre in film for the population was very akin to slapstick comedy. For this reason we chose instead to show English comic films with Ukranian subtitles. Mr Bean was particularly popular.

Impact

The classes were often taken up by more than one member of the same family unit. They reported that, until their lessons, they had had limited opportunity to meet with other UK guests residents.



Project Development

The families have continued to keep in touch and a new community of guests has emerged. We will be pursuing further funding to hire films and publicise them as a community Cinema showing international films. We have been delighted to have the grant and to be able to make such real difference to the lives of so many of our Ukrainian guests. We are only sad that there is no funding, as yet, in place for us to be able to carry them on as many of the students have been in touch as recently as last week to ask when and if they might resume.

Case Study

Oksana, a Ukrainian guest in her 70s, had never left Kiyv or spoken any other language than her own. She attended the English/craft lessons with her daughter and at first was very quiet. After a few lessons she opened up and began to speak English. At her last lesson Oksana, unprompted, told the group in English that she was looking forward to decorating her window sill (a custom from her home city). At the same last lesson Oksana was tearful and very keen for the lessons to resume as soon as possible.

7) Purbeck Connect Ukraine

Funded activities

With this funding we established the Purbeck Ukrainian Learning Hub. Regular sessions have been held at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Swanage, providing English language lessons for adult refugees (three to five hours a week) and Ukrainian classes for the children (two hours a week). The English lessons are taught by a qualified ESOL teacher, and cover levels of English from basic to advanced. The learners attend in small groups according to their level. The Ukrainian children's lessons are given by two Ukrainian teachers (themselves refugees) who have undergone Safeguarding training. They are held on Saturday mornings and the lessons cover Ukrainian language, reading and writing in the Cyrillic script, Ukrainian history and cultural practices, and craft activities.

In addition to the classrooms for adults and children, we also have a lounge at our disposal, where we serve tea, coffee and snacks. This provides an excellent opportunity for the Ukrainians to get to know one another and also to meet our volunteers. If required, our volunteers also provide transport for the Ukrainians to the lessons. During the course of the year, five outings were organised for the Ukrainian children and adults - four to places of interest in Purbeck, and one to Bournemouth to attend an event organised by the Dorset Ukrainian Community. Two Ukrainian meals - a dinner and a lunch - were organised and served by our Purbeck Ukrainians. To this, we invited their hosts, our volunteers and other members of the community. Performances of Ukrainian music were given. In this way, the Ukrainians were able to share something of their culture and cuisine, and to build a firmer bond with the local community.

Impact

The Purbeck Ukrainian Learning Hub has enabled adult Ukrainians to learn and improve their English, and Ukrainian children to maintain and improve their Ukrainian language skills. The English of the adults has improved to various degrees, with some of the learners making extraordinary progress, while others still struggled with learning a foreign language. The children have appreciated being able to interact with their peers in their own language. At their English schools, they are often able to follow what the teachers say to them, as they make an effort to speak slowly and clearly and to ensure understanding, but the children sometimes find interacting with their peers challenging and casual conversation among the other children difficult to follow. The parents are keen for their children to keep up their Ukrainian to help them in their lives after they return to Ukraine. Apart from the educational benefits, the weekly Saturday morning sessions of the Learning Hub have provided Ukrainian refugees (both learners and parents/grandparents accompanying the children) with the opportunity to meet and chat with one another and with our volunteers. This has meant that they have been able to provide friendship and support to one another.

The Learning Hub outings have given the refugees the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful natural environment of Purbeck, to discover new places, to learn about the nature, geology and history of the area, and so to strengthen their bond with their new surroundings. The existence of the Learning Hub has drawn the presence of the Ukrainians in a positive way to the attention of the wider community.



Project Development

Purbeck Connect Ukraine wishes to continue the general support work for Ukrainians, and also the activities of the Purbeck Ukrainian Learning Hub. Emmanuel Baptist Church, Swanage, where the Learning Hub lessons are held, generously declined the budgeted contribution we offered them towards the costs of heating and lighting. This meant that, together with other donations, we were able to continue lessons for longer than anticipated on the basis of the grant. The Church intends to extend their generous provision of accommodation into the future.

Funding needs to be secured for all the future work of Purbeck Connect Ukraine. Swanage Action for Refugees (our parent organisation) receives a number of regular donations but these are not enough to support our all activities. We have submitted a grant application to the UK government, together with the Dorset Ukrainian Community in Bournemouth/Poole, for funding teaching and social activities for children and young people. We received a donation of £1000 from Swanage Rotary Club. A fundraising concert is being held by a local choir in in January 2024. We are looking out for more grant opportunities.



Case Study

During the summer, in a short space of time one of our Ukrainian teachers developed serious mental health problems. Because of the bond that we had built up through our activities in the Learning Hub, she had the confidence to reach out to our volunteers during this time of crisis. For about ten days, three of us were providing almost constant care for her, while trying to access medical assistance. After repeated contacts with the NHS, we finally managed to get her admitted to hospital, where she stayed for over four weeks. Following proper medical treatment, she was well enough to be discharged from hospital, and she is progressing well in her recovery. Although this was a tragic instance, we are glad that we were able to assist her on the road to recovery. Without the support network established through the Learning Hub, the outcome may have been very different.

8) Safe and Sound Dorset

Funded activities

Women from Ukraine met with our support workers every fortnight for 2 hours, and a support person from Ukraine, who has been here since the war broke out. (ICN supplied several support workers over the year.) The group is held in a private room at The Well and staff provided cream teas, sandwiches, cakes, crisps, fruit and salads. Total attendance has been 40 women over the year, with each session having between 8-14 women who come regularly. At half terms and over the holidays, there have been up to 18 people (women and children) who attended and we needed to use 2 rooms. One support worker wrote:

“There were about 15 Ukrainian women present, expertly facilitated by Natalia of Safe and Sound Dorset. The event had a mixture of creative activities (painting, we recall) skill building (role play on phoning the GP) story sharing, and enjoying hospitality including Ukrainian specialties.”

Impact

The environment created allowed opportunities to: re-tell stories of escape, share tears and memories, compare notes on British culture, navigate affordability of life in the UK. Overall, building integration of the potentially isolated and disoriented. The support workers in the Ukraine Welcome group have run some wonderful projects, including creating beautiful jewelry with flowers encased in resin. Flowers have a lot of meaning in Ukrainian culture so this is very meaningful. Most weeks they have someone who plays guitar so they can sing, which is beautiful to listen to as their songs have haunting tones. The women say that they look forward to every meeting and that here they have become happier and feel more settled. They have said thank you many times for giving them the opportunity to meet like this and become an important part of The Well and the activities we host.

One woman who attended this group regularly, asked to become a volunteer at the Safe and Sound Dorset afternoon session once a week so that she could become more integrated and improve her English. We so appreciate her. She is always cheerful and well integrated into our lovely team. The leader of the group who became known to us through English classes, has now got a full time job in Lush and continues to run the group by taking the afternoon off every other Wednesday to run the group

Project Development

Very few of us know much about Ukrainian culture so it was helpful when ICN did training with us. We learned some invaluable things e.g. the significance of flowers in Ukrainian culture. We were also made aware not to invite our Ukrainian friends to the air show or summer fireworks as this could traumatise them after some of the experiences they encountered leaving their country. We hope to keep this group running if we can get some more funding for it. ICN and Safe and Sound Dorset feel that it is very important to help integration and social cohesion by facilitating groups such as this.

9) The KORU Project

Project activities

We supported 25 asylum seeker separated minors accessing support through International Care Network (ICN), offering: Creative arts workshops, Football training and matches, Group trips out to the local community. Koru practitioners have commented that the collaboration between the staff at the ICN and Koru was excellent, we have developed warm, positive relationships. This collaboration is based on complementary expertise and qualities: ICN bringing familiarity with the young people and their particular circumstances, which is complemented by the therapeutic approach and skills of the Koru practitioners.

Impact

Football: Between 10-14 young men attended football every week. The atmosphere of this group has been fun, relaxed and with a level of excitement. I observed a sense of community and friendship between the young people who laughed, encouraged, and joked with each other and with the KORU practitioners. It was also nice to see them make connections with the wider community - they arranged to continue playing football with members of the public in the court opposite. I have observed friendships being made and strengthening. Young people have used the sessions to speak about their week – enabling further support to be offered if needed/wanted. The football group offers a safe, peaceful space for young people to come to engage with an activity they enjoy with their friends. Thus, reducing isolation but without the pressure or expectation to speak about their collective and individual life experiences.

Art: The group has tended to have between 1 – 4 YP present (male and female). Young people have engaged with and immersed themselves in the art process often feeling very proud of their end result. They have linked their art to their homes and culture often making comments about the scenery of home or through metaphor (balloons floating in homeland - then painted in block red). KORU deliberately do not ask young people to share or reflect on their work, but it is evident from what they create that the workshops are enabling reflection on their own journeys. For some it is the first creative workshop they have engaged in and their first time experimenting with and exploring different arts and crafts. This can provide a healthy hobby/ interest/ coping mechanism for the individual.

The Studland trip: This was a much loved trip; spoken about and referred to by several of the youngsters when we were working with them over the next year. Along with other sessions it helped to bond youngsters who didn't know each other in community and shared experience before they began college together in the September. It gave time for these youngsters to play, relax and be teenage boys when so much of their lives and time are full of concerns, worries, uncertainties and stress. The way that Koru had organised specific food that was familiar to these youngsters around a table in community was very special.

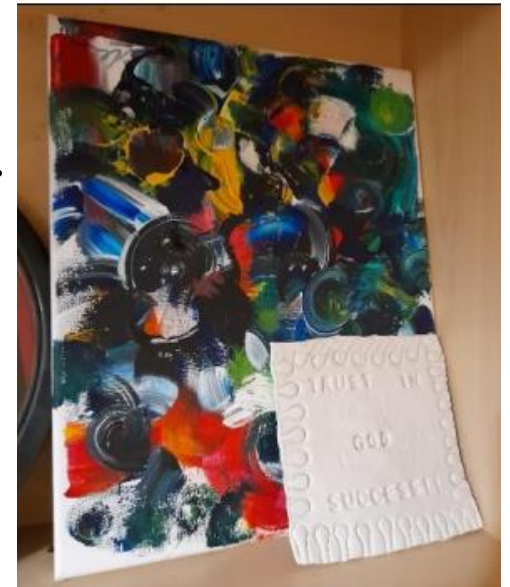
The Brownsea Island trip: This was attended by a mix of youngsters who knew each other already; some who knew Koru and ICN staff and some newly arrived to the area who didn't. Creating a place and sense of safety, warmth, kindness enables healing of body and mind to begin to take place supporting mental health and wellbeing. Walking and swimming in an area of natural beauty where they wouldn't have had access to otherwise was very special.

“Whilst waiting with the young people for their taxi to take them home one came up to me wanting to show me an image on his phone - a photograph of the very first meal we shared together at Studland more than a year previously. He pointed to me in the image and said ‘that’s you, remember?’ He had such a big smile on his face. It was a lovely moment of connecting linking back to the very first day of the partnership. I felt very moved.”

Case Study

From ICN:

“I helped a young person to move back into his accommodation after needing to move out temporarily to allow for renovations to be done. He has 2 pieces of artwork displayed in his room from 2 previous Koru art sessions: an acrylic painting and a clay tile. I find this especially poignant as working with the youngsters that we do I have consistently found that they do not hold on to anything that they create or want to take things home with them. I have concluded, after 4 years in this role, that this is because of not only the transitory nature of their past and present life still living in a state of flux and uncertainty with regards to status and housing, but also because they have lost so much that it might be hard to keep hold of anything of any value to them. There will have been so many points in their life and journey so far where everything would have been taken off them.”



10) TLW Dance Foundation

Funded activities

The main need for funding was to provide dance classes for the Ukrainian refugees and items of uniform/specialist dance shoes. The money we received was spent in meeting these needs. In addition TLW Dance Foundation were able to provide the dance studio and fund two workshops by Kyiv Ballet for students in North Dorset. One of the workshops was solely for displaced Ukrainian children - this gave 12 young Ukrainian dancers the opportunity to work with the professionals. The other workshop gave 30 students from North Dorset the same opportunity.

Impact

The Ukrainian students showed great enjoyment of their classes and participated enthusiastically. The North Dorset children welcomed them into the school and during the classes new friendships were made. Having the Ukrainian students within the dance school increased the understanding of the Dorset students of the Ukrainian/Russian conflict and its impact on families. Empathy was built. Conversations between the parents of the Ukrainian students and local Dorset dance parents, provided benefits to the wider community and was an important part of the welcome that Dorset provided. An unexpected benefit was the opportunity for the mothers of students to meet at the dance studio while their children were dancing. This created an informal network which involved both the Ukrainian mums and established Dorset dance mums.

Project Development

All the students have now returned to Ukraine or moved to other parts of the UK.

Case Study

Anastasia was in training with a ballet school in Kyiv when the Russian Army invaded Ukraine. Her family fled to North Dorset. TLW provided classes and a space to practice so that Anastasia was able to maintain her fitness and skills. Anastasia was successful in auditioning for the English National Ballet where she now dances. This was featured in the Sunday Times on May 8th 2022

11) Treads

Funded activities

We offered a variety of activities to Ukrainian and other local families, including preparing, cooking, and sharing food, engaging in arts and crafts, planting seeds for fruits and vegetables, and playing indoor and outdoor games. Additionally, we provided one-on-one support when needed. English language skills were integrated into all these activities. The number of people attending the sessions each week varied with an average of 25. Initially, many adults attended with their children, but over time, more children and young people attended than adults. The youth began introducing their friends to the sessions, and some Ukrainian children even invited other refugees, such as Syrians, to join.



Overcoming language barriers was a challenge, especially for those with limited English proficiency. To address this, we implemented diverse communication methods, including visual aids, gestures, simplified language in instructions, and utilized translation tools like Google Translate. Additionally, we encouraged language exchange activities to facilitate mutual learning among participants.

Participants demonstrated interest and knowledge in diverse culinary traditions during the cooking and food-sharing activities. In arts and crafts, they shared their cultural projects with each other, showcasing a wide range of artistic expressions from various backgrounds. Local children were interested in learning Ukrainian words for popular items.

Impact

Through activities that promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding, refugees have felt more welcomed and included in their new environment. The project has facilitated the formation of friendships and support networks, enhancing refugees' sense of belonging and wellbeing. It provided essential support in their integration process, access to language learning and practical skills.

Other children and young people learned to appreciate diversity through activities promoting cultural exchange. Participation in group activities encouraged teamwork, cooperation, and empathy, which helped with the formation of friendships with Ukrainian young people, with some reporting that they saw these friends outside of program venues.

For the wider community, the grant has fostered greater cultural awareness. By coming together in shared activities, it has broken down stereotypes and promoted understanding of different cultures.

Project Development

No further funding for this project.

Case Study

A 14-year-old Ukrainian youth was facing difficulties in making friends, displayed reluctance to engage in activities or participate in group discussions, exhibiting suspicion and mistrust. Despite possessing proficient English skills, she opted not to communicate with local peers in English. Her attendance was irregular, so we encouraged her mother and host to motivate her to attend sessions consistently. Gradually, she began forming friendships with a few fellow Ukrainian children, and our team facilitated interactions with local children by assigning her small collaborative tasks. We assigned a local young person to be her mentor and accompany her during each session, providing her with individualised support. This approach boosted her confidence, leading her to gradually make friends. With attendance improving, she started conversing in English with local children, further enhancing her social integration and sense of belonging within the community.



12) Church of England St Aldhelm's & St Ann's, Radipole Parish

Funded activities

Our Ukrainian Refugee 'Support Hub' operated across Spring, Summer and Autumn 2023, helping refugees with a range of support including housing, employment, benefits, language, administration etc, all supported by Citizens Advice, Dorset Council, and Help & Kindness and volunteers. 30 Ukrainian Refugees were directly supported, and the impact was felt by others such as family members and friends. The grant was also used to pay for a coach to attend Ukrainian Independence Day celebrations in Bournemouth attended by 5 Ukrainians, and a fun day out at Cumulus Outdoors Adventure Centre Swanage attended by 60 Ukrainians

Impact

The Support Hub has helped Ukrainian Refugees find and move into independent accommodation, supported practical activities such as learning the English language, finding meaningful employment to match skills, help with access to funds/loans to facilitate entry to employment and other practical needs, help with filling in forms, making calls, arranging and attending appointments; and much more. The trips and days out have helped enormously bringing the Ukrainian community closer together, building confidence and empowerment, and wider appreciation of UK culture. One mother stated:

"Another wonderful day at Cumulus Outdoors helping my children step away from the pain of what is happening in Ukraine"

Although a majority of the Ukrainians desperately want to go home, they realise this is not going to happen soon. They have now, generally, settled very well into our South Dorset life and society, not least due to the great work of Help & Kindness and, to a lesser extent, Radipole Churches - and the wonderful funding by Dorset Community Foundation. They are almost all in employment (not claiming benefits), though so often their work roles in no way match the skills they have to offer. Teachers, dentists, medical professionals, company managers, etc, are found cleaning houses or working behind pub bars or shop counters.

Project Development

As most of the Ukrainians are in employment and cannot attend a day time Support Hub; neither can the supporting professionals attend evenings or weekends. Therefore, we have discontinued the Support Hub and have focused on signposting Ukrainians to the necessary support agencies. We have used the funding to develop further community cohesion by enabling social and cultural activities and interaction. We have also been asked to explore founding a 'school'/classes on a Saturday to help the Ukrainian children retain their own language and culture for when they return to their homeland. Although most Ukrainian children are doing well in the UK Education system, there is a need for support for a small number who have not accessed the English language, and who schools are unable to afford to adequately support. Beyond this, there is the possibility of broadening into sporting and art/music activity and more.

We have raised over £2000 with sponsored bike rides, staging a viewing of the Eurovision Song Contest at Weymouth Pavilion, and more; but have now spent this also on Ukrainian support needs. It would be astounding if Dorset Community Foundation were open to application for further funding to enable the above!

Case Study

A Ukrainian teenage boy was deeply traumatised when I first met him due to what he had observed before leaving Ukraine, by having to leave his home and, more recently, by the death of his father in combat. This boy is now studying successfully at a local sixth form, having achieved well at GCSE. He has established good friendships with both Ukrainians and local UK youngsters. Some of this is due to the opportunities this grant has enabled.

“What can I say. The Dorset Community Fund (and Dorset Welcome Fund) are amazing. Thank you so much for all you have enabled us to move forward. Special thanks to (Grants Manager) for her sterling support throughout. I do hope that Dorset Council continue to fund you. Your work is crucial, not just to vulnerable groups like the Ukrainian Refugees but also to our local community and the many who would love more opportunity to volunteer.”



13) Rainbow Makers CIC

Funded activities

Nearly 250 people attended the Together Day; a celebration of togetherness of the British and Ukrainian communities, which World of Love Festival prepared in collaboration with Dorset Ukrainian Community. It was nearly a year since the conflict in Ukraine started and the event provided an opportunity to reflect on the past, connect with those who have been through the same experiences, and talk about a better future. At the event, we shared food from both countries, and we shared music and other entertainment from both countries to make it a diverse and inclusive experience. Inviting Dr Nwokolo, a Psychiatrist of Nigerian descent, was an opportunity for the Ukrainian people to learn more about the importance of self-care and mental health & wellbeing. The programme included:

- Activities for children in Ukrainian & English
- Live music and Entertainment
- Q&A session: Advice for hosts and guests post 6 months
- Mental Health and Wellbeing of Children and Adults seminar & Q&A session

Impact

The aim of the Together Day was to celebrate togetherness of the Ukrainian people, their Dorset Hosts, and everyone else impacted by the war in Ukraine. People in the United Kingdom have shown a tremendous support of those who have been impacted by the war and our intention was to make people from these two cultures feel even more connected. It a great opportunity to chat about cultural differences and similarities. Our event also helped the Ukrainian refugees meet new people from the Ukrainian community. For children, it was an opportunity to meet their peers who speak the same language and have been through similar experiences. Thanks to our partners: Dorset Police, Freo Wellbeing, Dorset Polish Centre, Bilingual Services, and ICN, the event helped the

refugees take the lead in addressing their needs, and allowed them to access services that normally are more difficult to access. By inviting interpreters to help people communicate we made them feel more connected and less isolated in the community.

Together Day was described by the attendees as 'a happy day'. The Ukrainian people who were affected by the war had a chance to feel welcome and aware that they are not alone. Our advisors have guided them and helped find solutions to their everyday challenges related to living in a foreign country. The talk about trauma, how to deal with it and at the same time, how to better understand people who have been through it, has helped both the Ukrainian refugees and their sponsors understand one another and the situation they are in.

Project Development

On the 19th August at Kings Park we will be running our next event, World of Love Festival, which is a Diverse Arts and Cultures event and an umbrella event for diverse communities. One of the communities who will be running their own event with our logistical help and support is a Ukrainian event organised by Dorset Ukrainian Community. Thanks to our collaboration, the majority of volunteers at World of Love Festival will be from the Ukrainian community.

Case Study

At the event, one of the visitors was a Ukrainian lady who suffered from depression and mental health problems. She was impressed with Dr Nwokolo's session about mental health and wellbeing but her English skills were not good enough to speak to her and explain her problems in a detailed way. We offered her an interpreter, thanks to which she was able to speak to the doctor. After the event the Ukrainian lady arranged a private session with our translator and Dr Nwokolo. She was very happy that she came to the Together Day and she was able to receive the help she needed.

14) Community Alliances

Funded activities

Our event, delivered in partnership with Dorset Ukrainian Community, celebrated Ukrainian Independence Day on the 26th of August 2023. The event was held outside at Redhill Park and a tree was planted to commemorate the event. There were various stalls and wellbeing activities and it was attended by Citizens Advice, BCP Council representatives, Police and MP's. The event was a success despite poor weather, benefitting the Ukrainian Community and also some host families. The event was featured on Local BBC - South Today and so many local people got to hear about the issues facing Ukrainians. Images and pictures of the event can be viewed on facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/uacommunitydorset/permalink/971108910845581>

Impact

Events bringing together the Ukrainian Community are of huge importance for this community of people in the BCP Area. They bring a sense of pride to a group that is impacted greatly from displacement. A verbal survey was carried out with 20 attendees – all reported an uplift to personal wellbeing and resilience, and an increased sense of belonging in their community. The memorial tree activity of planting a tree and placing ribbons on the tree accompanied by a wish, prayer or quiet reflection for individuals and the sense of acknowledgement was mentioned by a number of individuals who felt the benefit from that activity, which improved their wellbeing. Host families and they said the event helped them appreciate Ukrainian Culture.

Project Development

Dorset Ukrainian Community is continuing to organise events and support for this community of people.

15) Shaftesbury Refugee Group

Funded activities

It was our aim during the week to give all the children in local Ukrainian families a chance to see and meet this internationally renowned company of dancers and identify with them. There were 5 workshops in 5 schools where Ukrainian and other children from 8 schools met the dance company, learned something of their lives and experience, and had a chance to dance with them. We provided young local dancers with an inspiring opportunity to be coached by the company. We also arranged a class for Ukrainian children and 4 coaching classes by the Directors and members of the Ballet Company for novice and senior dancers with our partner, TLW Dance.



We wanted the week to build community and to be a reason for Ukrainian people to meet with each other, speak Russian or Ukrainian, share meals based on Ukrainian cuisine, and celebrate their resilience. We gave Ukrainian guests a chance to invite the community and especially their hosts to their events, to give thanks and celebrate the kindness and security that has been given. There was a 'Bread and Salt' welcome drinks reception at Compton MCrae in early October, and two evening discussion events in Shaftesbury and Gillingham. There was a film and talk at Shaftesbury Arts Centre and the Mayor of Shaftesbury held a thank you reception in her Parlor and Town Hall Chamber. Through this series of events the ballet company visit gave a strong signal to Ukrainian guests that the community of North Dorset has high regard for people from Ukraine who have been displaced. The highlight of the week was a rich performance of Ukrainian culture including Kyiv City Ballet, in Sturminster Newton on Sunday 8th October

We were conscious that the dancers live a life as displaced people as challenging as the guests in our area. We therefore provided some moments of respite for the Company and celebrated with them the beautiful landscapes of Dorset and South Wiltshire on the journeys we took. We ensured there were two recreation days for the Company where they were able to visit local landmarks, undertake favorite pastimes and receive therapies.



Impact

We used the visit of Kyiv City Ballet to draw attention to the positive influence of refugees on our community. How their endeavor, cultural transfer and economic contribution makes for a richer local life.

"I really liked the idea of taking a dance class with a friend. This adds communication for the child and between the parents. Thanks for a great week!"

"It was great and important for us as a lot of Ukrainians feel divided from their culture"

"First of all, thank you for organizing this event! This is extremely hard work that was done brilliantly! ...Thank you for your support of Ukraine!"

"It was really lovely to attend the Bread And Salt event and meet more Ukrainians. I can see how this event really helped the refugees with their identity as a nation and that they can be known for much more than just the war."

"I received a lot of positive emotions and am grateful for the opportunity to bring something really pleasant to the soul into my everyday life, which gave me the strength to move on!"



Project Development

We will continue to support cultural activities based on the rich heritage of Ukrainian guests and other displaced people.



Case Study

We met M with her host B at Bread and Salt. B took a Trustee to one side and shared that they were worried that M and her daughter had few contacts with the community of Ukrainians. We took her telephone number and contacts and then saw M at 4 events. She shared some of her thoughts with her community via our Ukrainian WhatsApp group during the week so we could see her story unfold. After the final performance she wrote:

"It was amazing, I have no words to describe all the emotions I got from this amazing concert! Thank you very very very much! Everyone was just incredibly cool!!! The heart trembled, the soul sang, the legs danced."

M wanted to be added to our group and mailing list. Since then she has accessed a grant for a half term children's activity and received a gift from a donor of a beautiful quilt. She has found the community she needed.