

# ODU Activity Report 2022

Update 16-05-2023

## Board structure

At the end of 2022, the Board consisted of the following people:

- Robert Serry (Chair of the Board)
- Nico de Borst (Treasurer)
- Anna Botsvine (Secretary)
- Beja Kluiters (Head Humanitarian Table)
- Hans Wesseling (Head Reconstruction and Economic Table)
- Diederik Kramers (Head Knowledge, Culture and Civil Society Table)
- Max Igelnyk (Board member)

At the end of 2022, the Advisory Board consisted of the following people:

- Joris Voorhoeve (Chair of the Advisory Board)
- Kees Klompenhouwer (Advisory Board member)
- Dirck Smits van Oyen (Advisory Board member)

## Activity report 2022

2022 has been a turbulent year for foundation OpenDoorUkraine.NL (ODU). The unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022 presented an enormous challenge to European values based on democracy and human rights and international principles of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states, including the prohibition of the conquest of territory by force, as enshrined in the UN Charter. In an international climate that had changed so completely and suddenly, ODU's plans had to change accordingly. ODU provided humanitarian aid from the very beginning of the war, mainly by evacuating desperate refugees from Ukraine to settle in the Netherlands and Germany. This was done in collaboration with foundation Hart voor Kinderen, which funded the majority of these activities.

Thus, many Ukrainian citizens were picked up by minivan or truck drivers at the Polish-Ukrainian border and moved to safe territory. ODU also helped the refugees find lodging. Refugees included (orphaned) children and disabled people. These activities propelled ODU to the forefront in the media. Prominent members of the board helped promote ODU's public profile by speaking at fundraisers and on national television or radio. This also contributed to the public awareness of the situation in Ukraine with the general public. The Humanitarian table was meeting frequently and helped to coordinate the efforts of its members, including by organizing regular transports of various urgent humanitarian needs (for example, food, medicines, generators) to Ukraine.

Gradually, the organization's focus shifted from providing immediate relief and evacuating refugees to aiding early reconstruction and recovery. As already many other organizations were providing aid and relief, the board considered it would be better for ODU to focus on this type of activity. In collaboration with the Ukrainian Embassy in the Netherlands, ODU organized an early reconstruction conference in Rotterdam on June 17th. Prominent officials attended, such as the former mayor of Rotterdam, Ivo Opstelten, Ukraine's First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Yuliya Sviridenko, and the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Assistance, Liesje Schreinemacher. The conference garnered a lot of interest from

Dutch business and NGOs and the venue was fully booked.

In June, after a visit to Ukraine of the Chairman of ODU, an initial trial early recovery project was selected in Irpin. The goal was to reconstruct the war damaged roof of a five-story apartment building in collaboration with the local homeowner's association (OSBB). The main objective was to enable some 200 residents, among them refugees and IDPs, to return to their flats. Other objectives were to avoid capital destruction and to stimulate the local economy. Encouraged by the success of the first project (the roof was completed within two months), ODU decided to seek additional funding beyond the successful initial crowdfunding campaign in order to expand its activities in Irpin and, if possible, also to other war affected areas in Ukraine where the security situation had become relatively stable.

In October, ODU took part in a conference on reconstruction in Ukraine organized in The Hague by the Dutch ministry of Foreign Trade and Development. There, the Ukrainian ambassador to the Netherlands, Maksym Kononenko, mentioned ODU's activities specifically as a successful example of early reconstruction. Thereafter, ODU engaged with several other organizations to upscale its activities. Thanks to donations received by Foundation Vastenactie and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a second and third roof-project were initiated during the last months of 2023 in Irpin. By the end of the year, ODU was also holding consultations with Oxfam Novib (hereafter Oxfam) and Stichting Vluchteling (hereafter SV) to expand its activities in 2023. At the end of the year an amount of roughly Euro 250.000 had been collected through ODU crowdfunding activities and donations from other organizations; in the last days of December 2022, SV made an advance payment of EURO 100.000 to enable ODU to quickly respond to urgent humanitarian needs during the winter period, aggravated by Russia's attacks on Ukraine's energy and other civilian infrastructure, causing prolonged electricity outages throughout the country.

In addition, the humanitarian table continued its activities, including new crowdfunding activities with the aim of helping Ukrainians survive the winter. The priority was to respond to the electricity outages by buying and transporting generators to Ukraine. Thus, as autumn progressed, ODU became increasingly focused on the so-called "winterization" of Ukraine. ODU also donated to other organizations, such as Zeelandia which had established a bakery in Ukraine and provided free food to the neediest, many of which were internally displaced Ukrainians. Another example is a project that aimed to provide trauma care and relief for victims requiring a prosthetic.

ODU's third table was renamed to the Knowledge, Culture and Civil Society table to suit the much increased needs for awareness and knowledge about Ukraine in war. In cooperation with the Netherlands Institute for international relations Clingendael, a knowledge conference was planned and initially scheduled to be held in December but postponed to January 2023. This conference focused on the knowledge field in the Netherlands and the Flemish part of Belgium concerning Ukraine. Academics, representatives from think tanks and other NGOs, and others took part in the discussions. The conference was funded and attended by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the need for follow-up activity in 2023 was generally recognized.

Due to this increase of activities, ODU had to grow as an organization both in scale and in professionalism. Particularly in the second half of the year, organizational capacity was expanded to include a paid executive secretary. It was also decided to set up a local representative office in Kyiv in order to manage a growing number of projects and activities in Ukraine.

The ODU Board wishes to express its heartfelt gratitude to all those persons who have so generously responded to our crowdfunding activities, as well as to our institutional donors, which have enabled us to assist in the international efforts addressing the humanitarian and early recovery needs of the

Ukrainian people who have been affected by Russian aggression. ODU is determined to continue and expand its activities during 2023 in Ukraine as long as this will be necessary.