

WORKING WITH REFUGEES IN SOUTH ROMANIA

When we began receiving money for Ukrainian refugees in March I recognised that our existing partners were not going to be of sufficient scale to use all your donations. So we partnered with “Together for Mission” in southern Romania. Most of their updates are only available within closed groups, but the following link is in the public domain: <https://www.facebook.com/togetherinmission/>

The work is headed up by Pastor Raul Costea and his wife Ana, in Craiova. The humanitarian aid is channelled through an Association registered in Dragonești-Olt (see map on page 5). They have transported approximately 600 refugees from the border to destinations in Europe by car and minibus. They are renting six houses as a transit centre, where 50 refugees spend a week to calm down and confirm their future plans before moving on.

The refugees are a very transitory population. Many will only stay in Romania for 5-10 days. Working with them is very demanding, and uses different skills to other projects. They arrive highly stressed with mental trauma. They don't know if they will ever see again their loved ones left behind in Ukraine. Many have already lost their houses and livelihood in Ukraine. Many have been travelling for days without food or sleep. They don't know if the people receiving them will abuse, rob or rape them.



The function of a week in the transit house is to allow them to eat, sleep, and come to terms with their situation supported by Christian love and care. They have access to donated clothes, hygiene products and toys for the children. They may need access to a phone to contact relatives and update them. The aid workers need to buy all the food, entertain the children for the day, and provide laundry facilities for clothes. Conversations are carried out in broken-English or using a mobile phone app to translate between Ukrainian and Romanian.

As Ana Costea says *“I was exhausted from a long day preparing food and entertaining them, and I was looking forward to a quiet couple of hours at home before bed, when I was presented with a large bag of laundry to take home with me”*. There is no day-off from this work, it is pretty relentless.



Thanks to the efforts of the volunteers the refugees benefit mentally, physically and spiritually from the Christian compassion and love. Weekly food deliveries are also being made to Ukraine [right]. A significant amount of their help comes from USA.

Reach 2 Romania has sent 2000 euros to “Together for Mission” - 500 euros each month for March, April, May and June. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. **Ed.**

