

**\*\*\*MEDIA RELEASE\*\*\***

## **Australian Ambassador for Ukraine visits Caritas Australia's partner, CRS Moldova**

1 December 2022

Ambassador Bruce Edwards, the Australia Ambassador for Ukraine, recently visited Caritas Australia's partner in Moldova, CRS Moldova, to meet the local families that have welcomed Ukrainian refugees.

Since February this year, over 7 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes, in the largest European migration in decades. The small country of Moldova is one of the poorest in Europe, yet it is now home to over 90,000 Ukrainian refugees. Caritas Australia has been working with our partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Moldova to support Moldovan families to take in Ukrainian refugees.

Ambassador Edwards met with CRS Moldova staff to learn about the program, and also visited the homes of several Moldovans who had welcomed Ukrainians into their homes.

"It is awe inspiring how Moldovans have opened their homes. For such a small country to exhibit such generosity is an inspiration to all of Europe," said Ambassador Edwards.

The CRS Moldova Safe and Dignified Accommodation program helps families fleeing the conflict in Ukraine to find long-term and safe accommodation in Moldova. The program also provides financial support for host families who are housing Ukrainian refugees in their homes.

The program has reached 1,600 Moldovan households who have been supported with incentives for hosting refugees and as a result of the program over 10,000 Ukrainian refugees are now living in safe, dignified transitional accommodation.

"The vast majority of the refugee families from Ukraine are actually staying with host communities," said CRS Head of Programs, Federico Rota.

"It is not just about housing and feeding all these people, but also about how we can prevent already vulnerable people from being exploited or even trafficked. The Safe and Dignified Accommodation program offers a unique way to help prevent these issues. It takes advantage of existing accommodation options that are normally inaccessible to refugees without local contacts or language."

"They are also providing food, hygiene items, items for schooling, and several other expenses, such as paying for transportation for some families to move further into Europe. So, this cash support really looks at providing an assistance that is tailored, but also can be adapted."

Support people facing disaster. Visit Caritas Australia's Ukraine Emergency Appeal: <https://www.caritas.org.au/ukraine/>

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