

Sustainability of Interfamily Clinic (SIC Project)

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1. Executive summary

This Project is created by Pavlo Kolesnyk, Director of International Family Medicine Clinic for Refugees – Interfamily, Associate Professor, PhD, Head of the Department of Family Medicine and Outpatient Care, Medical faculty №2, Director of the Educational and Training Center for Family Medicine, Uzhhorod National University (Ukraine). The author is also a National Council member of EURACT (European Academy of Teachers in General Practice/Family Medicine), EGPRN(Association of Researchers in the Family Medicine Field) and of EUPROPREV(Prevention Association under the umbrella of WONCA Europe, and a former President of Association of Corvallis (Oregon, US) – Uzhhorod Sister Cities (CUSCA).

The goal of the Project is to help Interfamily Clinic to survive during the coming 12 months of the war providing free medical service to internally displaced people (IDP) and giving training to medical residents and students, until the Interfamily Clinic receives national medical insurance.

Interfamily Clinic can function only as NGO, so the Eastern European Mission CF was chosen as an umbrella for it. As the goals of the Eastern European Mission CF among other things include helping victims of disasters, armed conflicts and accidents, as well as refugees and people who are in difficult conditions, it was quite natural to develop a medical branch of the Mission responsible for providing medical assistance to the Internally displaced people during Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

2. Background

Ukraine is at war. Apart from offensives, counter-offensives, victims of shelling and bombing, of not less important during this war remains the problem of refugees and migration of internally displaced citizens from Southern and Eastern regions of Ukraine. According to analytics, the world undergoes the biggest refugee and migration crisis of the XXI century. 1951 Refugee Convention defines *“refugees” as people who are outside the country of which they are citizens , while.” Internally displaced people (IDP)“ are those who fled their homes but did not cross the international borders.*

The UN confirms that since the beginning of the war more than **14 million** people have left Ukraine and 3.7 million have returned. Now there are more than 11.million Ukrainian refugees in Europe. That is ¼ of the Ukrainian population.

But there are many people who left their homes inside Ukraine who are defined as ***internally displaced people (IDP)***. According to the International Organization for Migration, they amount **8 million**. They are the target of our interest. The number of internally displaced people in Western Ukraine has decreased by 1.3 million since the peak figures of spring, though after recent massive Russia's attacks in October 2022 this figure may rise again.

IDP include: minor children, single parents, elderly without family support, single or unaccompanied women, pregnant or lactating women, female-headed households (widows or orphans), disabled and traumatized individuals and members of ethnic/religious minorities. In every second of internally displaced family there are elderly people, 46% of such families have children, there are people with disabilities in every fourth family, there are pregnant women almost in every tenth family, and every third family takes care of the chronically ill people. To add to this that the majority of internally displaced population has, as a rule, the lowest income, one may have all the reasons to consider internally displaced people the most **vulnerable layer** of Ukrainian society now. Many of those people have neither homes to return to, nor jobs to live from. The upward mortality that was observed among Ukrainian children before the war has significantly increased during the war. A natural decline in the Ukrainian male population as a result of the war will definitely cause demographic changes and by this will accordingly reduce reproductive potential.

Precisely this category of people and just with such problems fled into Uzhhorod, a small town in Western Ukraine, at the beginning of Russia's aggression. The goal of the family doctors was to help the refugees survive and keep the country's most vulnerable population healthy enough to lift Ukraine out of ruins one day.

3. Concept note overview

Due to the influx of more than 60 000 internally displaced people from Eastern and Southern Ukraine the population of Uzhhorod has increased up to 160 000 or even more. Uzhhorod is one of the safest cities in Ukraine, as it is the western-most city, and sits on the border of a NATO nation, Slovakia. Due to this fact, it became a refuge for the IDP, many of whom did not want and, in fact, could not afford leaving the country.

Dr. Paul Kolesnyk, an Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at Uzhhorod National University, is the Head of Outpatient Care Department, where student doctors receive clinical training. Seeing the chaos and lack of medical care for the incoming IDP, he and his wife Dr. Natalie Kolesnyk, felt they needed to help organize temporary medical care for the displaced citizens. They were joined by medical students, residents, other physicians and refugee doctors in this work. It was the initiative of his volunteer family doctors team to organize day and night medical service 24/7 on the border checkpoints, railway stations and shelters for refugees and IDPs in Uzhhorod and Chop. Soon there were organized several locations of the Volunteer Medical Centre. As neither of the numerous Uzhhorod clinics was ready to provide free medical services to this category of the population, mostly elderly people, women and children, soon came the realization that the latter would need an actual clinic where patients could receive free comprehensive evaluation and treatment. The situation aggravated even more when hundreds of medical institutions were purposely destroyed by the Russian invaders that caused a devastating effect on the Ukrainian health care system.

The national resources of Ukraine have been directed to the military, and for this reason, funds were and are delayed for medical services. There are currently up to 60 000 IDP in the Uzhhorod region who are registered in distant clinics that often no longer exist due to missile strikes.

The idea of building a new clinic for internally displaced people during the war, the clinic to provide free medical service seemed to be crazy and ambitious for everyone except Dr Kolesnyk. Having some former experience in fund raising and with no help from the local government he contacted his friends and colleagues all over the world, through EURACT, WONCA, and CUSCA. The result exceeded any expectations: an amazing network of international donors and helpers has been established all over the world. People from different countries and their friends started bringing the so needed medications to Uzhhorod in their own cars and vans. As there were some problems with the direct bank transfer to Ukraine during the war, Dr Kolesnyk and the Head of the Eastern European Mission CF Peter Gabor had established the bank donation center in Hungary. With assistance from fellow colleagues throughout the USA and Europe, Dr. Kolesnyk arranged to purchase space in a building and establish the International Family Medicine Clinic of Uzhhorod. In normal life it might take years to accumulate financing, to carry out construction work, to install modern medical equipment and to organize a team of soul mates. But due to the war and thanks to the financial aid from dozens of international donors from all over the world who responded to Ukrainian cry for help, it took only three months to complete this ambitious task! On 23 September 2022 the dearest offspring of Dr Kolesnyk and his team: **International Family Medicine Clinic for Refugees – Interfamily** had been opened. The clinic is very well located geographically: it is not too far from the center, it is practically surrounded by the hostels where IDP are dwelling now (mostly women with their children , elderly and disabled people) and after the war the hostels will be used by the students. There are up to 1000 people living there. The Clinic occupies the first floor of a new multi-story building that gives free access to the premises. And what is the most important, there are no other medical clinics in the vicinity.

4. Project description

The Interfamily Clinic is a unique medical institution in Ukraine. It serves two important missions: (1) to provide high quality and full spectrum care for IDP and refugee families, and (2) to serve as an excellent facility for medical education for student doctors and family practice residents. The team regards the Clinic as “a cadre forge”. Now after many months of the war Ukrainian doctors, residents and medical students have significant experience in providing medical humanitarian assistance to internally displaced people and local population during emergency situations. Their invaluable experience can be worth sharing with the international colleagues in both directions by hosting the international specialists here in Ukraine, the same as by their practicing abroad. Dr Kolesnyk also regards the possibility of promoting the clinic by inviting foreign family medicine experts who could come to work temporarily at the Clinic or to provide training and lectures. Since the beginning of the Clinic’s works four medical experts from the USA, United Kingdom, France and Spain have visited the Clinic already.

Unless it gets the License (and hopefully it will happen in a month) the Clinic cannot function at its full capacity and cannot advertise itself. Nevertheless, due to the Clinic’s closeness to IDP’s settlements and thanks to the media, a number of patients visiting the Clinic during the first month of its work have exceeded any expectations. On the other hand, one may witness the growing number of doctors and residents from Uzhhorod,

occupied areas and other countries wishing to work and study at the Interfamily Clinic. The possibility of obtaining practical knowledge working with the patients attracts residents and medical students even from other faculties of Uzhhorod University. The administration has increased a number of specialist doctors on part time terms in accordance with the Clinic's requirements. Now other specialist doctors like dermatologist, ENT (Otolaryngologist) and pulmonologist were invited to work at the Clinic. In order to increase the flow of patients, together with the city hospital the Clinic organized a laboratory for free general and biochemical blood tests. The laboratory is to function 3 – times a week.

The residents take part in the work of the laboratory: their task is to regulate the stream of the patients or participate in analysis decipherment and by this getting their own professional niche. In order to rotate young doctors and residents professionally the Clinic has implemented the American and European hands-on- practice and hands-on -teaching system. Such a doctor-assistant system first, increases a number of the residents even from other clinics involved in the process and, secondly, gives them a real chance to test themselves in practical work. The “three pair eyes” rule (a doctor, a resident, a student) has been also implemented while treating one patient in order not to make a performance out of the process and not to embarrass a patient. As soon as a student gains experience he becomes an assistant. An assistant gets his scholarship while a student gets free education.

5. Financial projections

Now about how Interfamily Clinic may stay open without government funds and still remain sustainable. The staff of Interfamily Clinic includes: 12 family doctors, 20 doctor specialists and 11 residents. There are 4 working places in the Clinic that give the opportunity to provide medical service to 50 patients a day. But temporarily before being licensed the members of the staff work in shifts and part time occupying 1 of 4 available working places. In order to organize the work of the Clinic there were introduced a flexible work schedule for the whole staff.

To make the Clinic attractive to the staff the administration has to pay them at least \$3.00 volunteer /hour that may require a salary fund amounting \$ 6 000.00 a month. In case of a very difficult financial situation a number of doctors and residents per shift may be always reduced the same as a lower volunteer payment can be introduced , though, of course, it would be less attractive to the staff .

With the start of the Clinic the running cost (electricity, water, heating, ventilation, etc.) may be about \$1 000.00 a month depending on the season.

Thus, the monthly maintenance of the clinic including salary and running costs might cost about **\$ 7 000.00**. At its first stage of existence, the Clinic in a form of NGO will be financially dependent upon the donations and there will be a 6-12 month delay before IDPs can be reassigned to the Clinic and receive national medical insurance. After the war it will be possible to accumulate funds from the government by means of capitation fees for the assigned population of Uzhgorod and the IDP who will remain in the town and who would like to be assigned to the Clinic. Only after this the Clinic will be fully independent and sustainable. But during this first stage the staff is planned to get only small stipends according to the “Help the helpers” Project from spontaneous International donations.

According to the analytics, the war may last during the coming 12 months, Thus, to survive and to become sustainable International Clinic monthly maintenance may

amount \$ 7 000.00, accordingly \$ 42 000.00 for 6 months and 84 000.00 for 12 months. In order to help the Clinic survive we invite you to consider a possible donation for the International Family Clinic of Uzhhorod to the following account:

IF YOU PLAN THE MONEY DONATION TRANSFER PLEASE USE THIS INFORMATION:

For donations in USD please use this information:

Name: HAVOR PETRO
Bank Address: 4800 Vasarosnameny, Szabadsag square 33.
Address of Recipient: 90202 BEREHOVE B.HMELNICKIY STR.10/A UKRAINE
IBAN: HU84 1177 5441 4704 4012 0000 0000
SWIFT: OTPVHUB
Phone number: +380955772240
E-mail: gabor.peter1954@gmail.com
Purpose: Refugees in Uzhgorod, Pavlo Kolesnyk



For donations in EURO please use this information:

Name: HAVOR PETRO
Bank Address: 4800 Vasarosnameny, Szabadsag square 33.
Address of Recipient: 90202 BEREGOVE B.HMELNICKIY STR. 10/A UKRAINE
IBAN: HU63 1177 5441 2884 8886 0000 0000
SWIFT: OTPVHUB
Phone number: +380955772240
E-mail: gabor.peter1954@gmail.com
Purpose: Refugees in Uzhgorod, Pavlo Kolesnyk