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Foreign Aid in Ukraine

How can a country like Ukraine be so blessed with one of the most fertile top soil in the world also known as one of the breadbaskets in the world, be such a mess? Through the combination of constantly fighting with Russia over the Crimean Peninsula, the corrupt government, the nuclear contamination from the Chernobyl accident in 1986 and economic problems which caused 5.2 million people living in the war zone. In Ukraine, many families suffer from hunger, poverty, and lack of health care. They need help. I alone can't change their government system or their corrupt ways, but I can provide them with personal care kits for their personal health care. After or when an emergency like natural disasters and/or conflict arise, many families flee their homes, leaving little what they have behind. When they go to the place of safety, they are scared, vulnerable, and dirty from the travel. The simple items in a Personal Care Kit allow them to wash away the dirt and sweat, with the fresh scent of soap and the softness of a towel as reminder of someone's care and concern for them during their tragedy.

Ukraine families have on three to four kids on average. Ukrainian women are worn-out, run-down, and have very little time for themselves after work and house chores. Women make up nearly half of the country's labor field. The women are expected to physically take care of the family. While the women are taking care of the family, the men are either at work or farming.

Very poor families in Ukraine eat little, like bread and potatoes or nothing at all. Believe it or not, living in an Ukrainian orphanage is one step up. They get to eat a small amount of broth soups like borscht and salonka, vegetables, little fruit, and about three ounces of meat a week. I know this from experience, because I lived an orphanage in Ukraine. Compared to Americans meat intake, which is at least twelve ounces of meat per day. Kids all over America say "I'm starving," while impatiently waiting for the waitress to serve their fifteen dollar meal to them. According to Merriam Webster.com, starving is defined as "to suffer or die from lack of food, to suffer extreme hunger." Ukrainian teachers know right away who the rich and the poor students are in their classroom. The teachers can distinguish between the poor and rich students, because the poor students faint during class from hunger. Not only are the kids starving, they aren't getting the proper nutrients needed to function every day. This is vital for kids' growth. It is not hard to find families in Ukraine that are facing hunger problems.

In the United States, students take school for granted and wish their years away while some kids in Ukraine can't even attend school. The education system in Ukraine needs improvement. In Ukraine it is difficult for rural regions to gain access to schools. Schools are declining. More than 61 percent kids only have access to the preschools. The schools are outdated and in poor condition.

Many families that are poor cannot afford health care in Ukraine because it is so expensive. Even when the Ukrainians can afford it, some of the medical facility isn't fully trained. Most patients don't trust the doctors. Home remedies are done as much as possible when sick. This means not all children meet the care they really need. In Ukraine, the health care is overseen and funded by the government. Rarely does anyone have life insurance. In many cases, the medicines are diluted with water. This is to falsely stretch the doses before injections are done to sick patients.

Americans always complain how they have no money. In comparison, we sometimes do not have anything to complain about, because someone always has it worse like people in Ukraine. In Ukraine, people live on fifty dollars a month. After receiving loans of several billions dollars from the IMF,

Ukraine's economy struggled to recover from gaining independence in 1991. Wages started to fall which caused 24 percent of the population to live below the poverty line and caused the unemployment rate to rise up to 80 percent. Ukraine gets about \$0.30 cents per hour. Americans are complaining about getting \$8.00 a hour. Men in the Ukraine, unlike women in the Ukraine, get a higher wage of \$0.34 cents an hour and have better job opportunities. Wages have declined in Ukraine. An American's life expectancy is about eighty according to the The World: Life Expectancy (2016). Not only are the adults suffering, but the children are suffering, as well. Not only did this cause a lot of people to be without a job, but it also caused parents to give up their children because they could no longer put food on the table. Many kids were given to the orphanages in hopes to find a new home. I am one of the very few to personally experience this. I was put in the orphanage with a few of my other siblings because my family could no longer financially take care of us. I was adopted by an American family in 2002. Not all Ukrainian kids are as lucky as me, though. More than 93,000 children do not have parental care, thus they are placed in an institution or an orphanage. If they leave the institution or orphanage, the kids are not prepared to live on their own.

In Ukraine there are many small villages with markets where the citizens purchase their food. The markets consist of homegrown foods like vegetables, potatoes, corn, wheat, and rice. Most of the Ukrainians can't afford to buy any food, so instead they try to grow their own food in their little gardens. The richer Ukrainians can afford to go out to eat and have their own market to sell to the others that are less fortunate.

If you walk through poor villages, you will see that most of the Ukrainians have their own little garden. Their garden consists of a small area where they hand work the soil. In the garden, if they have enough money, they can produce potatoes, corn, wheat, and rice. Some Ukrainians have cows, pigs, and chickens if they have extra money in hopes to sell the animals' produce to other people. This is in hopes to have a few cents to have another meal on the table for their family.

Ukraine has one of the best black soils in the world because of its layer of chernozem. Chernozem is a black humus layer of soil, high in phosphoric acids, phosphorus, and ammonia. A majority of the land is owned by the government that hires a "community" to run the government's property. They can harvest a wide variety of products with very little commercial fertilizer like barley, maize, potatoes, rice, soybeans, sugar beets, and wheat. Ukraine's best products are beef, lamb, pork, chicken, horse, and rabbit. There has been a decrease in agricultural production in Ukraine because of the decrease in tractors, combines, and harvesters. The main reason why agricultural production is so low is because very few farmers in Ukraine have enough money to purchase the utilities. This is a waste of good soil if no one can farm on it.

Employment and earning a living wage is a major problem in Ukraine. The government will not allow private property land to be purchased by individuals. This reason is because the government is afraid if the property is up for sale, it will be purchased from the outsiders investors. The local Ukrainians can not afford to buy the land. They are afraid the outsiders will take over Ukraine after purchasing the land. Ukraine's government gives just enough to their people like their house and a little plot of land to put in a garden. This is barely enough to survive on. Ukraine citizens will never get ahead.

Without any money, Ukrainians can't buy food markets even though they have a wide selection of markets. Many poor Ukrainians try to start their own markets but aren't successful because very few people buy from them. They are better off keeping the food and feeding their family at home.

Ukrainians are so poor that they cannot afford to take care of their own bodies physically. Keeping your health up is greatly needed to keep up daily work. When you are not physically healthy, you can't physically or mentally work to your potential. This could cost Ukrainians their employment, which is

their income. Without any income, Ukrainians can't buy the best quality nutritional food, so they settle for what their budget can afford. No one should live like this.

We can help Ukrainian kids by sponsoring them through the SOS Children's Villages and by donating money for them to live at a home and pay for their education and health care. You are able to write and send small gifts. You also get updates about the child and see the difference you are making. You can make a difference.

Not only is poverty a major struggle for Ukraine, foreign aid is too. Ukraine's financial minister states that Ukraine expects to receive Ten million dollars from foreign sources this year. This will help Ukraine out tremendously while they try to get out of Russia's control. The United States has helped Ukraine by sending them money since 1992 to hopefully fix the corruption.

Foreign aid is very critical in Ukraine. The citizens in the war zone had to flee to safer places because their homes were destroyed, leaving with little to nothing. Personal care kits have been sent to nineteen other countries over the years. Ukraine was selected in 2015 to receive the personal care kits that our family and church packed. The Personal Care Kits are sent often to people who have lost everything. In the wake of an earthquake, or having fled from violence as their homes were overtaken, they clasp a towel from a farewell place, with a bar of soap, a toothbrush. While washing up, they know that they have not been forsaken by the world. The very simple gesture of giving a Personal Care Kit can give someone the encouragement to start anew, starting with a bath. You can share love by proving this simple comfort. Kits are given to Ukraine so the Personal Care Kits can provide dignity to those who receive them. The kits have reached over 30,000 people worldwide. Personally, my family and my local church in Delaware, Iowa Lutheran Church and other local churches have purchased, participated, and collected over 100 kits to donate.

The items in the kit contain; one dark color (recommended) lightweight bath towel (20'' x 40 to 52'' x 27''); two to three bars of bath soap, totaling eight to nine ounces (any brand, in original wrapping; no mimi or hotel size bars); one comb (heavy weight; no pick or fine toothed combs); one adult toothbrush (in original packaging) and one metal nail clipper (attached file optional).

After items were collected, they were sent to Minnesota and then forwarded to welfare safety places like Ukraine. Many other countries have benefitted from this mission project, too. Over 9,844 kits have been sent to Ukraine in September, 2015. Personal Care Kits are only sent to those in need. Ukraine needs help.

Foreign aid health care has gotten worse. Ukrainians are depressed and committing suicide. A fifty-five-year-old Ukrainian woman, Valentina, would say, 'There's nothing to eat, there's nothing to do, there's no point in life' recalled a neighbor. On December 23, Valentina hung herself. For this reason I feel the Personal Care Kits could help Ukrainians keep their self-worth until life improves.

I know that I have no magic solution, but with every kit I make, I know that I made one more person walk with dignity. My one valuable suggestion would be to add a mirror. I want a small compact mirror that would not break during shipping. My reasoning for adding a compact mirror is not for vanity purposes, but to look into the mirror to see their reflection of who they really are: a beautiful person. I want them to see that life is worth living and to know not to give up.

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