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Ukraine, Malnutrition

One's Perspective of the Malnutrition in Ukraine

Hello! My name is Lexi and I attend George Washington High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I chose the country of Ukraine and the struggles they have with malnutrition. This topic is important to me because millions of people all over the world struggle from malnutrition. Even though there are many people who have enough food and access to resources, there are still millions of people out there struggling and fighting to survive. Is there anything we can do to help? What effects does malnutrition have on people?

So what exactly is malnutrition? Oxford dictionary defines malnutrition as “Lack of proper nutrition, caused by not having enough to eat, not eating enough of the right things, or being unable to use the food that one does eat.” “Nearly 67% of the country's population suffers from malnutrition.” What can happen if you're malnourished? Your body gets weak, extreme tiredness, reduced appetite etc. When you are malnourished you can only live up to about 8 to 21 days. Water alone will allow more time but people need food to survive.

Ukraine has 44.13 million people in which “29 million live in urban areas and 12.6 million live in rural areas”. 70% of people in the country are well educated. Most of the people get their food at shops, but many of them lack the money to buy food. Corn, wheat and barley are the main crops Ukraine produces. Typically the average family in Ukraine has about two children. 30% of children under the age of five go hungry in Ukraine. Half of the family's budget goes towards food, which usually consists of veggies, bread, dairy products, pork and beef, which are the most common meals. Soup is essential. If half of the family's budget goes towards food, will they have money to purchase other essentials? For instance clothes, school supplies for children. Let alone a space to live. These are all things Ukrainians have to take into consideration when they want to purchase something. They are living on a limited budget.

So how is Ukraine struggling with malnutrition if people are well educated and can purchase food? Typically the more educated a person is, the more qualified they will be in acquiring a better job. Despite the fact that they are well educated, salaries are still super low. The yearly average salary is around \$10,000 US dollars, which is very minute considering all their expenses and additional purchases. In addition \$10,000 dollars is a higher paying salary for Ukraine so imagine the lower paying job salaries. Ukraine relies strongly on imports from other countries and they export to other countries as well. Even though Ukraine is a major exporter, their equipment is outdated and they lack funding for better machinery. The government lacks commitment to provide food for Ukrainians citizens unlike other European countries who have the commitment. Ukraine is strongly reliant on their imports from other countries and over the years they've started purchasing less and less because they don't have the resources and money to afford it. Without the imports the country is already at a setback.

Alongside the malnutrition in Ukraine, they're facing even bigger issues right now. The president of Russia told the troops to invade Ukraine on February 24, 2022 and they have attacked military headquarters along with homes, buildings, schools, hospitals etc. People of Ukraine are trying to flee and get to shelter, roadways are crammed and train stations as well. It is not a world war yet as of Mar 9, 2022 . The people of Ukraine are trying to escape and go to neighboring countries. The refugee issue is going to need international assistance because there's mass amounts of refugees trying to flee their country to stay safe. The National Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO has sent in troops for defense. Numerous countries are interfering and stopping their communication with Russia. President Joe Biden of the United States of America has shut down oil imports from Russia. Since there are already high malnutrition rates in Ukraine just imagine how much of an impact this attack is having on those citizens. They have to spend who knows how much money on fleeing. Wherever they're going, they need to worry about food and necessities and more than anything, staying alive. Once they reach a destination, eventually they will need to find a job to start over again. Thousands of citizens are losing their homes, jobs and they are struggling to find food and places to stay.

So with all this being said, how can we make things better? One suggestion would be to start off with a fundraiser, something to get Ukraine going. This funding will go towards rebuilding the country and helping these people get on their feet again. It will support not only the country itself but also the people by rebuilding shelters, homes, clothes and food. As mentioned before, Ukraine lacks the government commitment to provide food for the Ukrainian people, so why not set up a program for the people? If the government doesn't have the commitment towards their people then someone else needs to show interest. The Ukraine government is extremely overwhelmed right now with everything going but in spite of that, before all of this the government never showed commitment. Other European countries still have their imports coming in. So as I said other people need to show interest in Ukraine won't.

Who would lead this project? Developed countries all over the world could play a major role in supporting the country of Ukraine. Oftentimes when you go to a store, whether it be a clothing store or grocery store, they ask you if you'd like to donate a certain amount of money or round up your total to go to a cause. What if stores in other countries started doing the same concept for Ukraine? It's a win-win situation for businesses because they're supporting a good cause and showing customers that they care as well. There could even be just a simple little box that is for donations. So instead of just rounding up your grocery bill, they could donate a little more or give spare change. Also as often as people all over the world go to any store it would be an easy way to help implement funding for a food program in Ukraine.

There is a non-profit organization called Action Against Hunger and they "ensure everyone can access clean water, food, training and healthcare". They are a fantastic non-profit and with funding from the checkout charity or a corporation like Macy's, Amazon, or Starbucks, etc. This funding and assistance can go towards Ukraine. It's a quick and easy way to raise money. Charity Navigator says, "55% reported that they enjoyed being asked to donate" and if everyone donates just a little bit when they have the opportunity, then Ukraine would have plenty of funding to take them farther. If checkout charity doesn't get decent donations, then businesses all around the world could implement something else. These businesses could choose a certain percentage and day, then when people come in and eat food or buy things, the percentage they choose would go towards Ukraine. So let's say Chick-fil-A decided they

wanted 10% of profit to go towards Ukraine, then whatever money they received that day, an automatic 10% of that revenue would go to Ukraine.

The people of Ukraine should have a program set up for food. With all the money raised from the checkout charity in other countries, then the money provided could go to a program that will set up food banks and food pantries all around Ukraine to ensure food accessibility. The people can stop in at the beginning of the week getting necessities for the upcoming week and they can return the following week. Currently Action Against Hunger is set up in bordering countries in Ukraine to provide food, water and sanitation to fleeing refugees. If this program has already helped support Ukraine in the crisis happening right now, then with funding from the check out charity, they can also continue to help support Ukraine by providing resources to stop malnutrition.

Alongside the money raised for the food banks, once enough money has been raised they can implement food programs at the schools to reduce lunch fees in Ukraine. At the school I attend, we have free and reduced lunch fees. That means families who meet certain income requirements might be able to afford lunch fees while others get reduced prices or even free. This allows students to get two good meals a day and they don't have to worry about feeling hungry. It would be a huge benefit for those students whose families barely have enough food on the table and struggle to make ends meet.

In addition, the community that I live in provides elementary, middle and high school children in need of special food resources. At the elementary school I attended, those children that qualified were sent home with a backpack filled with food for the weekend. At one particular middle school they provide a room called the "Grizzly Cove," where students have access to a washer and dryer, a room filled with clothes, and a pantry filled with food, both canned and refrigerated. Children can take home what they need. Finally, at Washington High School, where I currently attend, we offer the "Warrior Closet." This is a room filled with clothes in which those in need can take. Programs like these would be highly beneficial in the communities of Ukraine.

Since the war started between Russia and Ukraine back in February, things have changed dramatically. Like I mentioned above, the schools do not have a free and reduced lunch program for students. However, since this war started some schools said that Ukrainian refugee students are granted free lunch. But free lunch won't always be available to these students unless we implement some of the fundraising ideas.

Having enough money to purchase food isn't the only problem, it's also the low income the Ukrainians receive. Oftentimes they import food from other countries, however, they've done that less and less over the years because they don't have the money to afford it. Once Ukraine is a stable place and the government receives funding for the people, Ukraine needs to increase the income rate for all citizens. In addition to the checkout charity funding other resources of funding will need to be established.

As an example, many people all over the world use GoFundMe to raise money for fees for medical bills, graduations, weddings, illnesses, accidents, etc. So why can't people all over the world be able to donate to a GoFundMe towards helping Ukraine solve the food crisis? There would be a link or QR code posted up in restaurants, businesses, stores, and even online. People all over the world would be

able to access this somewhere and donate money to support the food pantries, food banks, school lunch programs, and even hopefully it will help raise money for raising incomes.

So what can you do to help? Start a GoFundMe, donate money when there's an opportunity, get some of the ideas started that I listed above. It only takes a few people to make a big difference. Just by donating a few dollars at the store can go a long way. You wouldn't want to see your family struggling like many families are in Ukraine, you don't want to have to worry about whether or not you're going to get your next meal. Make a change and help Ukraine, they have more than enough to worry about right now, so if we help them, then that's one less thing they have to worry about.

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her, Lauren Soucy Lauren Soucy is the VP of Marketing for Time Doctor, the world’s leading time tracking and productivity software. She has 15+ years of experience in marketing at fast-paced companies. Her first passion is SEO. “The Average Salary in Ukraine: Comparison, Outsourcing (2022).” *Biz 3.0*, <https://www.facebook.com/TimeDoctorSoftware/>, 23 July 2021, <https://biz30.timedoctor.com/average-salary-in-ukraine/>.

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