

OpenDoorUkraine.NL

Strengthening bonds between Ukraine and the Netherlands

OpenDoorUkraine.NL (ODU) was set up as a Dutch foundation (stichting) in December 2018 to bring actors and stakeholders from Ukraine and the Netherlands together, in order to promote cooperation among people and organisations from the two countries. To this end, ODU is actively organising and promoting activities through its three thematic tables, which focus on **Reconstruction & Economy**, **Humanitarian affairs**, and **Knowledge, Culture & Civil Society**.

The **Humanitarian table** has been instrumental in coordinating and facilitating relief activities of Dutch humanitarian organizations that are active in Ukraine. Directly at the start of the war, ODU helped to arrange the transport of Ukrainian refugees from the Polish border to the Netherlands. ODU also launched an **emergency assistance project** to help associations of house owners in Ukraine to rebuild the roofs on their apartment buildings before the winter sets in. Thanks to fundraising and sponsoring, the first two projects in Irpin near Kyiv are now almost completed, with more to follow as funding allows. ODU is now setting up a representation in Kyiv to support this and other humanitarian operations, and to enhance our general networking role with Ukrainian counterparts.



Fully reconstructed roof of the building at Novooskoska 40, Irpin, ODU's first reconstruction project.

Because of the war, the task of ODU's **Reconstruction & Economy Table** to help promote business exchanges has been coupled with efforts to help Ukraine overcome the ravages of war. Following a high-level roundtable debate on Europe's and Ukraine's energy security (organised just days before the war broke out), ODU now seeks to involve Dutch companies in the rebuilding of Ukraine, preferably together with Ukrainian counterparts. This has resulted in a first **Ukraine Reconstruction Business Forum** in Rotterdam on June 17, 2022, with a follow-up conference planned later this year.

The **Knowledge, Culture and Civil Society Table** is responding to the need for expert information on Ukraine in the Netherlands, which has only increased since the outbreak of the war. ODU will continue to inform Dutch actors and audiences during the dual process of supporting Ukraine's struggle and helping Ukrainians rebuild their country.

To this end, ODU is establishing and developing contacts in the cultural and social spheres with the Ukrainian community in the Netherlands, Dutch universities, cultural figures and institutions, etc. ODU has also joined **Clingendael Institute's** Russia and Eastern Europe Knowledge Alliance (REKA).

ODU's **website** provides an extensive database of activities and knowledge on Ukraine. Its online agenda offers a constantly updated overview of all Ukraine-related events on culture, local initiatives, academic discussions, business events, etc., both in the Netherlands and online.

As part of its outreach efforts, Information on Ukraine and on ODU's and other Dutch initiatives on Ukraine are shared via its **LinkedIn** and **Facebook** channels. ODU's Board and associated members – including chairman and first Dutch ambassador in Kyiv Robert Serry, and Board of Trustees chairman and former Defence Minister Joris Voorhoeve – are regularly giving media and public presentations.



Yulia Svyrydenko, Ukraine's First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development and Trade, speaking at ODU's 2022 Ukraine Reconstruction Business Forum.



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Donations:



Help Ukrainians Rebuild the Roofs above their Heads

Even as they are defending their country on the battlefield against brutal Russian aggression, Ukrainians are already rebuilding after the destructions caused by the invaders. In August 2022, Dutch foundation **OpenDoorUkraine.NL** (ODU) kickstarted its **early recovery projects** with housing repairs near Kyiv, ahead of the broader reconstruction efforts in Ukraine. Now, we are **upscaling our activities** to eastern regions affected by the war and to other parts in Ukraine.



ODU's first actions were aimed at the **restoration of residential buildings** that were only partly damaged during hostilities. Three roof repair projects were launched in **Irpin** near Kyiv: these apartment buildings were damaged by Russian tank shells and rockets during the occupation in March 2022.



Helped by a relatively mild winter so far, the works on re-roofing three residential buildings are practically completed. We are now working on their winterization through the provision of generators, isolation works, and repairs of the façades.

This was achieved by **providing direct funding to the beneficiaries** through the buildings' Homeowners' Associations. This allows them to conduct the repair works themselves. ODU's support was crucial, as local authorities – despite all their support – lack financial means and have many other priorities. Without external financing, the repair of recoverable war-damaged residential buildings is unlikely to take place.

ODU's first Irpin project: Novooskolska 2Ts building following the Russian shelling in March 2022 (top picture) and after the roof was restored.

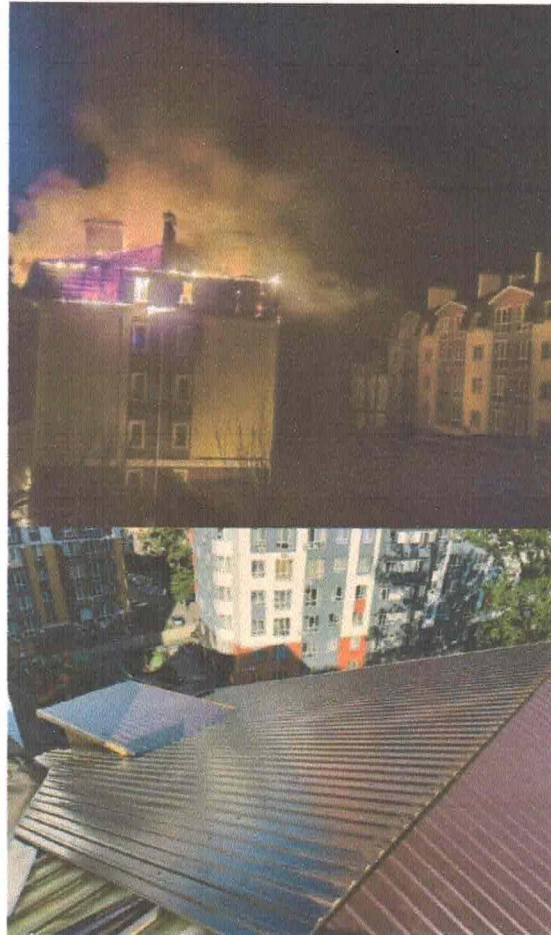
Irpin has demonstrated that **ODU's cheap and horizontal early recovery projects do work**, and this has helped us to attract more

support. Dutch humanitarian organization Vastenactie co-financed work on the second residential building in Irpin, while the Netherlands Embassy in Kyiv has agreed to fund the roof for the third one.

Dutch aid organisations Stichting Vluchteling and Oxfam Novib have agreed to support ODU, allowing us to **expand and upscale our activities**. ODU is presently setting up an office in Kyiv that will help us to identify projects in other parts of Ukraine.

To this end, ODU undertook a **project mission** late January 2023. In **Trostyanyets** in the northeastern province of Sumy, which suffered immensely under the Russian occupiers in March 2022, we delivered **generators** for several public service buildings. We also selected several potential projects: **roof repairs** of a residential building in the city, and in the nearby village of Soldatske a new roof for the local school and preparations for a building to house **Internally Displaced Persons**.

ODU also plans to expand its activities to towns **east of Kharkiv**, which have been temporarily occupied or heavily shelled during the fighting. The first two residential flat building re-roofing projects have already been identified in Chuhuiv and Balakliia, which will facilitate the return of hundreds of IDPs and refugees to their homes. In the near future, ODU also plans to identify further projects in **Mykolayiv** in southern Ukraine and **Chernihiv** in the north.



ODU's second Irpin project: the roof of Pushkinskaya 62G building on fire after a Russian strike (top picture), and its present reconstruction.

Our projects, though small in scale, are **bolstering the resilience** of the Ukrainians, and allow them to remain in relatively safe areas and to rebuild their livelihoods. They also help to alleviate the acute **shortage of housing** due to the war, contribute to the **local economy**, and **encourage the return of refugees** to their homes.

Ukraine's **Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Yuliya Sviridenko**, has expressed her support for ODU's initiative. She recognized that, if multiplied throughout Ukraine, this would have a trigger effect on early recovery efforts and on the economy.

ODU is grateful for all support received so far, but is still seeking additional funding to expand this successful set-up. Through our network in Ukraine, we can also help Dutch organisations to identify and support other humanitarian projects there.

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