

Global Employee Headlines /

We Are Ukraine

(5) (25)

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By Helen Gall and Jerry Soverinsky

What's in it for you?

- Find out how Cisconians from across Europe are joining the Help Ukraine initiative.
- Donate to the Ukraine Humanitarian Assistance Fund page in Bright Funds.
- Join the Stand Up for Ukraine: Global Citizen Campaign.



Ukraine donations from across Europe are being sorted and distributed as quickly as possible.

When tens of thousands of Russian troops invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, escorting Ukrainians to safety became a project with life-or-death consequences.

“Three days after the invasion, we learned that one of our colleagues was approaching the Polish border with five children and two other women,” says Prem Kania, managing director, Cisco Poland.

“She had been traveling for three days and had to leave her car behind at one point, while her husband had to stay in Kyiv. (Men aged 18 to 60 are not permitted to leave the country.) We had posted a message to an informal Webex space that she would be approaching the border soon and was looking for drivers who could help them,” Prem adds.

Within five minutes, three Cisco employees volunteered to travel from Warsaw to the border, pick them up, and drive them to Warsaw. (That's at least a 10-hour drive in total.) Cisco has arranged accommodation and offered relocation to Krakow or Warsaw to all our employees in Ukraine and their household family members.

There are countless other stories like this

Cisconians from Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Portugal, France, and the U.K. — to name just a few — are mobilizing to help employees impacted by the war in Ukraine.

There is a collective desire to help in any way that they can — taking advantage of Cisco-provided Time2Give along with volunteering before and after work and over the weekends.

“The Cisco culture is amazing. This is not a matter of a leader asking someone to do something,” says Justyna Kycia Ferreira, regional IT lead at Cisco Krakow helping the effort.

“This is being driven by individual employees who have incredible energy and a willingness — eagerness — to provide support. Everyone is asking how they can help.”

Cisco Krakow was founded 10 years ago and has always been a site known for international flavor, the passionate intensity of its employees, and its desire to give back to the community, with more than half of all employees engaging in some form of giving back last year. Little could we have known that in the year of our ^{Read aloud} tenth anniversary, we would face the test of the character of our site like no other.

— Ramon Tancinco, DES leader at Cisco Krakow.

At the beginning of the conflict, the effort started as a very grassroots approach with employees frantically trying to provide humanitarian assistance. Many Webex groups were set up by the Cisco Poland team to help provide transport, accommodation, and donations.

Employees were grabbing a few sandwiches to provide emergency nourishment for refugees, driving 300 kilometers to the Ukraine border to support fellow employees and refugees desperate for help, and driving them back to the main cities of Poland to safety.

More than a half of the 2,500 employees in Poland have stepped forward to directly help refugees from Ukraine.

Whether it's assembling trucks of food, gathering and distributing clothing, or coordinating short and long-term housing, "No task is too big or small," says Agnes Gracka, finance manager and one of the first employees to volunteer.

Everything goes towards the same goal



Fran Katsoudas, Gerri Elliot, Pastora Valero, and Erin Connor visiting Poland recently. They met with employees, but also travelled to the border and met with Polish government officials to assess the help needed on the ground.

Before the invasion, there were already around 1 million Ukrainians living in Poland. With 2 million Ukrainian refugees having crossed into Poland in the last month, it's becoming more difficult to find accommodations for them with families in Poland. So, they are moving farther west.

Meanwhile, support offers from across Europe and the world have been pouring in. There was a massive collection of food, hygiene products, clothes, and goods for kids collected by the Cisco Portugal team. And we've even had colleagues in Mexico

and the U.S. offering accommodation to people willing to travel.

What you can do

Right now, there is sufficient clothing — but money, food, and other types of goods are urgently needed. So, while donating money may seem like a small and impersonal way to respond, it truly is the most immediate and effective way for all of us to get involved.

Organizations like UN Refugee Agency, Americares, NetHope, Mercy Corps, and World Central Kitchen are positioned to respond directly to people's needs. Their expertise and proximity means they are equipped to allocate resources in the most impactful way.

You can support their work directly or by making a donation through Bright Funds which will be matched by the Cisco Foundation.

As of April 5, 9,887 individuals have already generated over \$1.9 million in donations and matching gifts. When we reach 11,000 individual employee donations, Cisco will provide an additional match to the original Cisco Foundation match. So for every dollar donated, recipient organizations will receive three dollars.

We are hopeful that soon there will be a need to transition to peacetime support efforts and our team in Poland will be ready to help once again — and so will the rest of Cisco.

We are Ukraine.



Cisco technology in action

Cisco Crisis Response (formerly TacOps) is looking to establish networks in refugee centers so refugees can connect with their families. In Poland, network coverage is good. But in nearby countries like Moldova, infrastructure is less developed, so our technology will be crucial.

Coverage will also be critical for those who stayed in Ukraine. A request to help set up connectivity for bomb shelters in Ukraine came in from ISP Datagroup after reports that someone working on humanitarian efforts was risking their life stepping out of their bomb shelter to make calls.

A tiger team began exploring how best to donate Meraki equipment. Due to logistical and compliance issues, the quickest solution was to place an order with 100 percent discount. The challenge was how to ship the equipment.

None of our logistic partners were shipping to Ukraine. The Polish Sales team was able to secure passage of equipment to Ukraine with the help of the Polish Strategic Resaves Agency (RARS). They accepted the shipment in Poland and delivered it to Ukraine, where the ISP could collect the order.

Last month, Meraki equipment was sent to 30 shelters. Having validated this route, a much larger order for 300 shelters is in the works.

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Wszebor Boksa

This is big! We all know better be ready for the long run. Every help matters. Stay strong!

April 11, 2022 6:34 AM

Shamim Pirzada

Can we establish a "special" matching campaign for this so that this doesn't come out of the annual \$25k match limit?

April 08, 2022 3:32 PM

Leanne Scott-Williams

Thank you to all who are helping in these efforts!

April 08, 2022 9:17 AM

Jan Von Der Lage

You make the difference team. Thank you guys, I have the highest respect for you.

April 08, 2022 7:47 AM

Justyna Kycia

Amazing story! Super proud of the whole community in Cisco Poland... We REALLY rise the challenge together :-)

April 08, 2022 6:41 AM

Justyna Kycia

Comment was removed by the author on Fri Apr 08 2022 12:38:33 GMT+0200 (Central European Summer Time)

April 08, 2022 6:38 AM

Kathryn Baddeley

It's a true example of Cisco culture in action. Everyone coming together to help others. I'm so proud to work at Cisco at times like these.

April 08, 2022 6:37 AM

Andreas Kassitas

You are Great people!

April 08, 2022 6:08 AM

grinman

#WeAreCisco and this is how we show up

April 08, 2022 3:41 AM

Frank O'Reilly

Proud of us Cisco !

April 07, 2022 8:42 PM

Jon Bessell

Outstanding! :) :)

April 07, 2022 7:24 PM

Mohit Lad

Great to see the collaboration and support through this crisis. Stay strong Ukraine, we are with you.

April 07, 2022 6:08 PM

Michelle Diane Arellano

That's amazing. So very proud of Cisco leadership looking out for all of our fellow team members. <3

April 07, 2022 5:40 PM

Seanan Murphy

Thank you so much for helping Ukrainians fleeing the violence. I am so proud that Cisco engages to help.

April 07, 2022 4:46 PM

Vitoria Rose

Amazing and so proud.

April 07, 2022 0:48 AM

Leigh Leclair

This makes me so proud to be a Ciscoian. I donate to WCK every month, without fail. Thank you Cisco.

April 07, 2022 0:46 AM

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