

Sunflower Scotland appeal for donations to fund their new way of working in Ukraine

Sunflower Scotland is a charity set up earlier this year by Scots with families living in Ukraine. Their sole aim is to take aid to those people still living in Ukraine in villages up to 20kms from the front line – those who live in the so called Red Zone.

And they have recently completely changed the way they work.

Their initial trips to Ukraine earlier in the year included driving truckloads of humanitarian aid into the war torn country all the way from a loading point in East Lothian. But now they have realised that method is completely wrong as Ukrainian businesses trying to get back on their feet also need their help.



Sunflower Scotland help those living near the front line in Ukraine by delivering a month's worth of food which costs £6.50 wholesale in a Ukraine store. ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter

Their new way of helping is not to collect "stuff" but to invite [donations](#) of money to pay for the food bags which they distribute to those most in need of help. The food bags cost £6.50 each. Everything in the bag is purchased at wholesale outlets in Ukraine and the contents will help to feed a family for a month. This means that the charity is helping and not hurting the Ukraine economy. The bag includes staple foodstuffs like pasta, barley, sugar and salt.

Chair of [Sunflower Scotland](#), Edinburgh resident Oleg Dmitriev gave a talk at the offices of Morton Fraser Solicitors in Quatermile on Wednesday about the charity's work. Morton Fraser have employed two Ukrainian lawyers in their Edinburgh office and Iain Young, a partner in the firm, warmly welcomed Sunflower Scotland and their audience.

Dmitriev also referred to a live updating map which shows the red zone and what is actually happening on the ground. [You can view this here.](#)



Oleg Dmitriev Chair of Sunflower Scotland and Iain Young a partner at city lawyers Morton Fraser after the talk about Sunflower Scotland and their new approach to helping those living near the front line ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter
Oleg explained that it is a better use of the funds that the charity raises to buy food and other goods in Ukraine where the investment into the economy also helps those who continue to run businesses during the war.

He said: "It makes no sense to import food into Ukraine as the country is one of the top five food producers in the world. It is now right to buy it there and deliver it to the Red Zone. The Ukraine economy has shrunk by 30% this year so it does not help the country to take 'stuff' for distribution."

Oleg, who is just back from Ukraine, showed a video with some of the key moments of his trip, most of which you can view below. He also recounted that there appears to be a black market in items such as small generators, so that even if the charity was to transport goods to Ukraine it cannot be sure that they will reach the people who most need them. Instead, it appears that at least some of the goods donated for free are then sold for profit. This makes buying food for those who really need it an even more appropriate way of working.

The volunteers include people from Scotland who travel there to help distribute aid, and also people living in Kharkiv who help and who know first hand what is going on. Oleg also said that theirs is the only charity he knows whose volunteers are equipped with full military gear such as bullet proof vests to wear on their journeys to villages where about 40% of homes are destroyed almost beyond repair.

Neighbours are looking after neighbours in areas where people were already very poor before Putin's invasion.

You can donate [here](#).



Oleg Dmitriev Chair of Sunflower Scotland at city lawyers Morton Fraser delivering a talk about Sunflower Scotland and their new approach to helping those living near the front line ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter



Oleg Dmitriev Chair of Sunflower Scotland delivers a talk at city lawyers Morton Fraser about Sunflower Scotland and their new approach to helping those living near the front line ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter

<https://www.facebook.com/SunflowerScotland>

<https://www.instagram.com/sunflowerscotland/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/sunflower-scotland/>