

Sunflower Scotland – helping the wounded to rehabilitate in Ukraine

Sunflower Scotland is an Edinburgh-based charity which helps Ukrainians in Ukraine.

The organisation was set up two years ago and since 2024 it is aiming its assistance at the 50,000 maimed and wounded men and women in Ukraine who have lost limbs during the conflict.

There are two rehabilitation centres which the – one near Dnipro, Way to Health, and another in east Ukraine just 30 miles from the front line, Patriot.

Oleg Dmitriev, co-founder of Sunflower Scotland, and now the organisation's Chair, said: "It is important to know that Russia's invasion breaks down people's lives in so many ways. After losing their arm and leg, people in Ukraine cannot find a job. Often, they cannot even go out to the shops because most houses don't have lifts. War trauma is horrible: many people have severe burns, or suffer from neurological conditions (bullet wound to the head). That's why rehabilitation is so critical.

"Sunflower supports rehabilitation centres in two ways: we provide exercise machines and we fully fund therapy. Sunflower only supports rehabilitation centres, which provide treatment for free: we do not support clinics which profit from people's tragedy. We only help centres in east Ukraine, where the need is greatest. I personally travel to east Ukraine and I deliver aid right into the hands of those who need it. We make sure

it gets in the right hands.”



Oleg Dimitriev on the left delivering equipment to Ukraine
In April and June this year Oleg and his team delivered 20 exercise machines for rehabilitation including gym bikes, rowing machines and cross trainers.

In July 2024, NHS Lothian donated used equipment to Sunflower, and the charity delivered multiple rehabilitation machines from Edinburgh to Way to Health in Dnipro.





Maxim Beztalany

In August 2024, Oleg travelled again to Way to Health in Dnipro where Sunflower fully paid for the rehabilitation of three persons: two soldiers and a small child.

Oleg said: "Maxim (Ukrainian soldier) was wounded in his left leg. He applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding, but it took 11 hours before his comrades could drag him out of the fighting zone and to the doctors. Left without blood supply for so long, his leg was amputated. Thanks to Sunflower's funding, doctors in Way to Health gave him a prosthetic leg. Over three months, Maxim was taught to walk and was brought back to life."

Mark, a disabled child, had a tumour removed from his brain. As a result, he could barely move, until Doctors in Way to Health helped him to re-learn how to walk, regain mobility and play like a child of his age.



Mark Gapirov

Mikhailo, a Ukrainian soldier, survived after he was shot his both legs, and multiple bone fractures. Oleg said: "His legs were shattered, the muscles were tight in knots. He could not walk even on crutches. Thanks to Sunflower's funding, the specialists at Way to Health helped him to stand and walk. So far Mikhailo can walk on crutches, and drive a car! We want to continue his rehabilitation, if we can find more money."

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- Most of the funding for rehabilitation was provided by American army veteran, Major General Mark MacCarley. Sunflower asks Scottish businesses to help us fund rehabilitation therapy. It costs £2,000 per one injured person and that funding can bring someone back to life.

Ian Ritchie, CBE, a Scottish technology businessman – helped Sunflower to buy a Ford Transit van. It helped the charity to bring lots of large and heavy rehabilitation machines, and NHS equipment to east Ukraine.

Rehabilitation of heroes is only one of many Sunflower's projects.

Oleg concluded: "We continue delivering humanitarian aid to war-torn villages. We are supporting 47 disabled children with Down's syndrome with regular donations of food and cleaning supplies. We are helping frontline medis to save lives by providing first aid equipment, ambulances and evacuation vehicles.

"Please help us to pay for rehabilitation of more wounded heroes. It costs about £1,000 per person. This is very little compared with the NHS. But for Ukraine, this funding can bring a disabled veteran back to life. You can see that Sunflower Scotland is providing help directly to those who need it. We take the personal risk and travel to dangerous zones. Please

support our work with donations.”

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