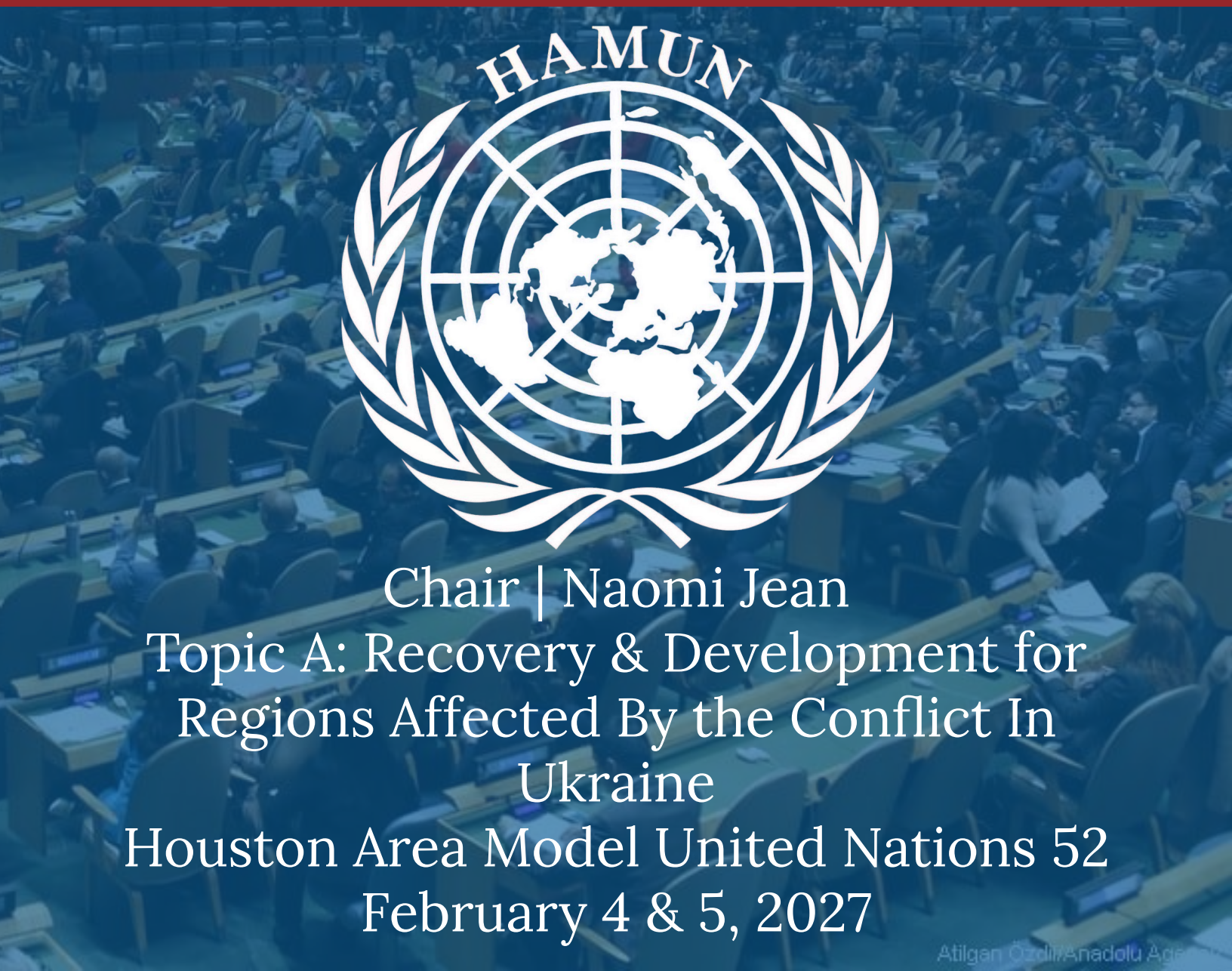
Houston Area Model United Nations
Standard Committee

UNDP



Chair | Naomi Jean
Topic A: Recovery & Development for Regions Affected By the Conflict In Ukraine
Houston Area Model United Nations 52
February 4 & 5, 2027

Atilgan Ozdil/Anadolu Ag

Chair Letter

Greetings Delegates!

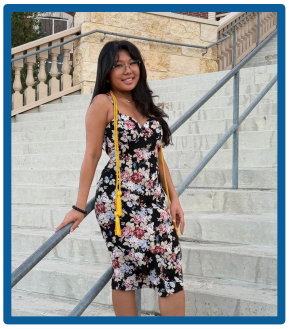
My name is Naomi Jean, your chair for the United Nations Development Programme. I am so excited to be running this committee, and I can't wait to meet you all!

I recently started my first year at the University of Houston, majoring in Political Science in the Honors program! I attended seven conferences when I was in high school, and even had the opportunity to chair some miniature MUNs in my district, but this will be my first time chairing a conference as big as HAMUN.

The UNDP is focused on long-term solutions, things that would have an impact on the countries in question for years to come. For a committee like this, my suggestion is to focus *less* on rapid-action aid and more on prolonged efforts, like restoring governments, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability.

MUN thrives off of lively discussion and compromise! We encourage you to share your ideas with others, while also keeping an open mind to the perspectives of other delegates.

I hope to reassure any first-timers that we are here to help you and make this conference a good experience! There's no reprimand for trying to participate or asking questions, we want you guys to try your best. I look forward to seeing you all in February! Feel free to contact me about any questions that you may have.



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Background Information

Committee History

Prior to the establishment of the UNDP in 1965, the United Nations' influential bodies consisted of countries within the former Allied powers of World War II. As the assembly grew from its original 51 founding states, the agenda of the UN expanded into addressing events and concerns across the globe, especially being the issue of aiding small, developed nations. The initial idea of a reserve of funds to provide socio economic assistance in developing countries was introduced in 1958 and led to the creation of the United Nations Special Fund. However, this fund only acted as a way for the UN to supply pre-investments to developing states. The direct ability to support nations with developmental projects fell within the responsibilities of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance.

These separate bodies coexisted within issues so often that the United Nations eventually decided to conjoin their abilities, creating the United Nations Development Programme.

Central Focus

The UNDP's central focus has been to eradicate poverty and improve the socioeconomic standing of impoverished countries. The programme still contributes to special funding, investing in public and private sector investments to support developing regions. Alongside direct funding, the UNDP has engaged in projects to improve education, provide clean energy, and establish fair governance to create sustainable and autonomous nations. While the UNDP's efforts fall under long term provisions, the committee's efforts are still greatly important in events of urgency. Drastic events like natural disasters or conflict often call for recovery and rehabilitation efforts. The UNDP also often coordinates with the UNHRC to address human rights crises, such as advocating for gender equality and women's rights.

OVERVIEW

Since its full-scale escalation in 2022, the conflict in Ukraine has caused widespread disruption to essential infrastructure and resources across the country. The warfare has destroyed essential institutions such as hospitals, transportation systems, and schools. Ukrainian businesses are forced to shut down due to unsustainable conditions, and those who remain within the nation's borders struggle to make a living.

While the scale of destruction has caused devastating effects for the current socioeconomic state of Ukraine, the ongoing nature of the war creates an even larger concern for the future standing and recovery of the nation. According to Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko, the overall cost of reconstruction is estimated to be $588 billion, nearly three times the amount of the nation's nominal GDP for 2025 [1]. The UNDP warns that nearly one-third of the population is below the national poverty line, and an additional 62% is projected to be at high risk of following suit [2].



Figure 1. According to UNICEF, more than 1,000 Ukrainian schools have been destroyed in the conflict.

With damage to education and transport facilities and Ukrainian businesses unable to operate at full capacity, the nation's economic stability is in a devastating position, with an extremely difficult road to recovery.

The economic strain from this conflict has spread throughout the region of Europe. Disruptions to transportation across Ukraine have impacted surrounding countries' trade networks, especially within the energy sector. Several countries within the European Union, most notably Italy and Germany, rely on the large share of oil and gas imports that Russia provides.

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1. World Bank. "Updated Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment Released." World Bank, 23 Feb. 2026, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2026/02/23/updated-ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-assessment-released
2. United Nations Development Programme. "Every Day of Delayed Peace Will Accelerate a Freefall into Poverty for Ukraine, Warns UNDP." UNDP, https://www.undp.org/ukraine/press-releases/every-day-delayed-peace-will-accelerate-freefall-poverty-ukraine-warns-undp

Millions of Ukrainians have been subject to displacement due to the conditions of the war. The influx has placed immediate pressure on host countries, affecting the

ability to provide adequate housing, healthcare, education, employment, and social services. The displacement tensions has impacted central states in Europe, such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain, who host a cumulative population of 1.85 million refugees [3]. However, the effects have disproportionately affected neighboring countries of Ukraine, who have experienced particularly high numbers of refugees relative to their populations. Poland, for example, endured significant medical resource strains due to its' position as a refugee entry state [4]

Within the population of displaced children from Ukraine, more than half have not been enrolled in their host country's school systems. Alongside limited access to proper learning institutions, the language barrier isolates and prevents millions of children from accessing necessary education.

The widespread effects of displacement are not the fault of the Ukrainian refugees, nor is it the fault of their host countries. Many of these international responses were designed to address the immediate emergency of the initial invasion. However, the ongoing nature of the conflict has required provisional aid to last four and a half years. Ukrainians who initially sought temporary shelter may now need stable housing, education, or employment, but cannot fully integrate themselves without the proper resources.



Figure 2. By March 2022, the number of Ukrainian refugees had reached 2.8 million. Abandoned buildings and supermarkets were converted into temporary shelters along the Polish-Ukrainian border.

HISTORY

Ukraine's current development challenges can be understood in the context of its

3. "Number of Ukrainian Refugees by Country." Statista, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1312584/ukrainian-refugees-by-country/
4. The Lancet Regional Health – Europe, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanepe/article/PIIS2666-7762(22)00072-2/fulltext

history of internal and external conflicts related to Russia. The nation declared independence in 1991, and shortly after gained sovereignty when the Soviet Union dissolved. The tensions with Russia began to escalate from Ukraine's growing relations with Western allies.

In 2004, Russia-endorsed Viktor Yanukovych defeated Western oriented Viktor Yushchenko in the Ukrainian presidential election. Many Ukrainians argued that Yanukovych won through fraudulent votes, leading to the Orange Revolution protests and Yushchenko's election. Yanukovych was re-elected in 2010, promising to cooperate with the European Union, but quickly reoriented the nation's direction toward Russia after taking office.

Ukrainians yet again criticized his shift in foreign policy in the Euromaidan protests of 2014, resulting in over 100 civilian casualties [5]. The internal political conflict in Ukraine was immediately followed by Russia's annexation of Crimea, beginning the ongoing war.



Figure 3. Protesters marched at Kyiv's Independence Square, or "Maidan", after President Yanukovych chose not to sign an agreement that would have integrated Ukraine into the European Union.

The effects of the Crimean annexation were already visible in Ukraine's infrastructure and public services during the initial years of conflict. The UNHCR estimated that more than 117,000 people had been internally displaced, with basic services and infrastructure in the Eastern region being heavily damaged or destroyed within the first 6 months [6]. By December 2014, the number had increased to approximately 514,000 [7]. Many of the schools on the Eastern front were destroyed, and those that remained open were heavily disrupted by damaged transportation routes and war debris. More than 750 educational facilities in Ukraine were damaged from the warfare by 2018, affecting more than 200,000 children enrolled in their districts [8].

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5. Open Society Foundations. "Understanding Ukraine's Euromaidan Protests." Open Society Foundations, www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/understanding-ukraines-euromaidan-protests
6. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Ukraine: Humanitarian Needs Rise as Internal Displacement Tops 117,000 People." UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/ukraine-humanitarian-needs-rise-internal-displacement-tops-117000-people
7. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Fighting Displaces More than Half a Million People inside Ukraine, Hundreds of Thousands Flee Abroad." UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/fighting-displaces-more-half-million-people-inside-ukraine-hundreds-thousands
8. United Nations Children's Fund. "Attacks on Schools Quadruple in Conflict-Hit Eastern Ukraine – UNICEF." UNICEF, www.unicef.org/press-releases/attacks-schools-quadruple-conflict-hit-eastern-ukraine-unicef

In response to the conflict, the UNHCR worked with the Ukrainian government to provide the displaced population with emergency assistance, such as providing food and hygiene products. However, by the end of 2014, more than half a million people were displaced [7]. Adequate housing and asylum for the sudden increase in civilians displaced to unaffected regions became a major concern.

Over the following years, efforts were gradually incorporated into longer-term development. The World Bank continued working with the Ukrainian government on programs intended for economic recovery in Eastern Ukraine. The Reconnect, Recover, Revitalize (3R) project, established in 2020, provided $100 million to rebuild roads and agricultural resources in conflict-affected areas [9]. The program reopened opportunities for economic growth by reconnecting areas of commerce and supporting agricultural production efforts.

Although the revitalization efforts were successful, the escalation of the conflict in February 2022 ultimately inflated the scale of Ukraine's existing challenges. Problems that had previously been concentrated near the Crimea expanded across a much larger portion of the country. Damage to housing, transportation, and healthcare facilities had now reached the entire Eastern front of Ukraine. By the end of 2022, approximately 5.9 million Ukrainians remained displaced internally, with another 5.7 million seeking asylum across Europe.

The effects of Russia's escalated pressure, as the UNHCR states, created the "fastest displacement crisis ... since the Second World War" [10].

In March 2022, the European Union activated its Temporary Protection Directive for Ukrainian refugees. This initiative gave Ukrainians immediate rights to essential services, such as housing, healthcare, education, and employment without having to file individual asylum applications. However, the directive is not intended for extended periods. The initial decision only provides

9. World Bank. "New World Bank Project to Help with Economic Recovery and Development of Eastern Ukraine." World Bank, 6 Nov. 2020, www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/11/06/new-world-bank-project-to-help-with-economic-recovery-and-development-of-eastern-ukraine
10. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022. UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/publications/global-trends-2022

these protections for a year, after which the EU Commission can propose an extension for up to one more year [11].

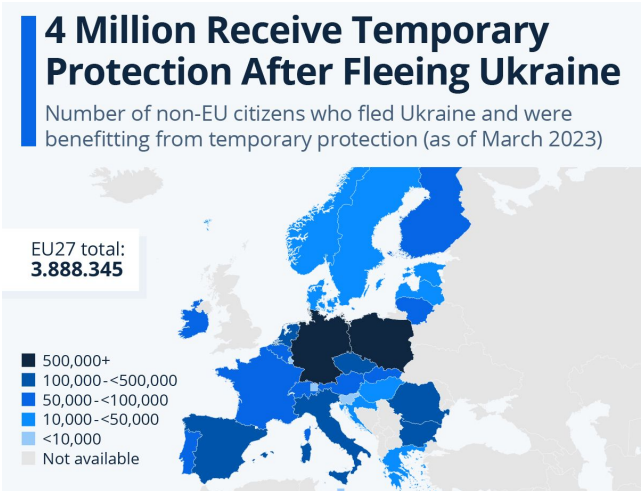


Figure 4. The directive provided protection to nearly 4 million Ukrainians within its first year, with Germany and Poland each hosting more than 1 million of those beneficiaries.

As the war progressed, international organizations began to recognize that Ukraine would require drastic recovery and redevelopment efforts. In 2024, the World Bank, European Commission, and United Nations estimated that Ukraine would require nearly $411 billion over the next decade, solely to rebuild the infrastructure the conflict had damaged [12]. The war had severely damaged or entirely destroyed housing, centers for transportation, hospitals, and energy infrastructure on the Eastern front, and many attacks left explosive remnants or hazards that needed proper management.



Figure 5. Housing and infrastructure damages accounted for more than half of Ukraine's initial estimated reconstruction costs.

In less than two years, that estimate has skyrocketed to the current $588 billion. The effects of a localized humanitarian crisis quickly became
an international strain on resources, and will continue if the war proceeds.

The ongoing nature of this conflict has created a significant blockage to reducing the damage. The 2024 recovery estimate increased to $486 billion. While Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal had expected the confiscation of frozen Russian assets to contribute to Ukraine's recovery, the

11. Council of the European Union. "Ukraine: Council Introduces Temporary Protection for Persons Fleeing the War." Council of the European Union, 4 Mar. 2022, www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/04/ukraine-council-introduces-temporary-protection-for-persons-fleeing-the-war/
12. World Bank. "Updated Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment." World Bank, 23 Mar. 2023, www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/03/23/updated-ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-assessment

estimate has continued to rise to the current $588 billion [13][14].

Case Example: Refugee Response Plans

The central challenge in responding to an ongoing crisis like the conflict in Ukraine is determining how long emergency assistance can remain effective before the extended socioeconomic strain becomes a concern. The United Nations has experimented with more thorough response frameworks, particularly with the coordination of Refugee Response Plans (RRPs).

The first RRP was established in Syria as the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), led by the UNDP and UNHCR [15]. The 3RP combined humanitarian assistance with more resilience efforts, bringing regional governments and NGOs together to strengthen public institutions and mitigate the resource strain on host communities.

While ongoing, the 3RP has resulted in positive impacts for both Syrian refugees and their host countries. By 2020, its contributors had provided "1.9 million people with food assistance, enrolled 1.1 million children in education and provided 3.4 million consultations in primary health care" [15].



Figure 6. Syrian refugees in Turkey were subject to harassment after the 2023 earthquakes. Locals vandalized temporary shelters, accusing refugees of stealing emergency aid from Turkish residents.

However, the solutions provided by the 3RP have not fully diminished the challenges of refugee crises. Jordan continues to experience a critical strain on water and municipal resources in Mafaq and Irbid, both of which are refugee-hosting cities for 3RP. Syrians in Turkey are subject to damaged shelters as the country struggles to recover from major earthquakes. High inflation in parts of Egypt push refugees into labor

13. United Nations in Ukraine. "Updated Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment Released." United Nations in Ukraine, ukraine.un.org/en/260758-updated-ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-assessment-released
14. World Bank. "Updated Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment Released." World Bank, 23 Feb. 2026, www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2026/02/23/updated-ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-assessment-released
15. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)." The Global Compact on Refugees, globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/regional-refugee-and-resilience-plan-3rp

without the employment protections that refugee plans provide [16].

The social, political, and economic environments of individual host countries greatly influence the success of a generalized response plan, and cannot simply be replicated for all refugee crises, which is apparent in the United Nations' response to Ukraine. The UNHCR coordinated a specific RRP to address similar concerns of resource distribution for Ukrainians seeking refuge in neighboring countries. The project united more than 190 partners across 10 countries to provide services such as food, healthcare, documentation, and protection to regions hosting asylum seekers [17).

However, with the final phase of the Ukrainian RRP ending in 2026, host countries are left to determine long-term integration for refugees on their own accord. Concerns for resource strain have shifted from emergency resources to more permanent public services. Access to language courses, job matching, reskilling, and enrollment in national education systems are all possible considerations that could reduce reliance on refugee aid, but they require host countries to provide additional surplus resources for new programs.

Additionally, refugee integration only addresses one side of Ukraine's broader development problem. Millions of Ukrainians remain within the country with destroyed infrastructure, with extremely limited access to essential services and education. The UNDP has consequently developed programs in Ukraine focused on economic recovery and revitalizing commerce, most notably helping nearly 18,000 MSMEs (micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises) improve their export initiatives [18]. The restoration of energy services and social service facilities has also provided more extensive livelihood security for Ukrainians. But the remaining damage and ongoing warfare limits what these individual programs can accomplish.

16. International Organization for Migration. "Syria Regional Refugee Resilience and Response Plan 2026." IOM Global Crisis Response Platform, 5 Feb. 2026, crisisresponse.iom.int/response/syria-regional-refugee-resilience-and-response-plan-2026
17. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "Regional Refugee Response Plans." Global Humanitarian Overview 2026, humanitarianaction.info/document/global-humanitarian-overview-2026/article/regional-refugee-response-plans-2
18. United Nations Development Programme. UNDP Ukraine Annual Report 2025: Resilient Recovery and Inclusive Development. UNDP, 22 Apr. 2026, www.undp.org/ukraine/publications/undp-ukraine-annual-report-2025-resilient-recovery-and-inclusive-development

Ukraine's near-devastating economic state is under extreme pressure to recover in the midst of fighting a war. RRPs can coordinate protection and basic assistance for refugees, development programs can attempt to minimize the damage to the nation's commercial activity, but neither of these approaches address the full scope of damage to Ukraine's socioeconomic position.

TOPIC A: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How can the nation of Ukraine mitigate the socioeconomic damages while conflict remains ongoing?
- Can previous programs, such as the Syrian 3RP, be adapted to Ukraine? What differences must be accounted for between the two distinct plans?
- How should international funding be balanced be balanced between supporting Ukrainian refugees across Europe recovering infrastructural and economic development within Ukraine?
- Should refugee response efforts turn towards long-term recovery? How can this be accomplished without placing additional pressure on local resources?
- How do we close the education and employment gaps for Ukrainian refugees that have not been integrated into their host countries' public services?

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