

Record fundraising – so the money reaches Ukraine

Fundraising for the Ukraine crisis reached record levels in March.

They explain how it is ensured that the money reaches the recipient and how the organizations' work is carried out in and around Ukraine.

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 Save



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Text



Charlotte Rydh, Secretary General of Giva Sweden, and Åsa Widell, Secretary General of UNHCR Sweden. **Photo:** Press / Christin Philipson / Joey Abrait

The Akelius Foundation's pledge to double donations of up to SEK 10 million to UNHCR and UNICEF in March, a campaign carried out in collaboration with Di, led to the two aid organizations together receiving SEK 1.7 billion.

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To ensure which organizations are safe to give contributions to, the industry organization Giva Sverige carries out annual checks of the organizations that cover ethical guidelines, finances, internal control and governance, and impact.

"It's not just about the money getting there, but when it does get there, it should also do the most good possible. Because you can send 100 percent of the gift but do the wrong things and then you still haven't received anything in return for the gifts," says Charlotte Rydh, Secretary General of Giva Sweden.

The figures from March show that the final total from Giva Sverige's members working in and around Ukraine, together with the donation from the Akelius Foundation, landed at 2.6 billion SEK.

"It is a sum that is unprecedented in history," says Charlotte Rydh.

The record-breaking donation now enables major efforts for those affected.

Petter Gustafsson, press secretary in Sweden for the UN children's fund Unicef, says that Unicef delivers several tons of supplies to Ukraine every day.

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"We had prepared ourselves before the war broke out for this to happen, so we had built up warehouses in Ukraine and neighboring countries so that we could reach out very quickly with the first deliveries. So far, we have received medicine and medical supplies that help 600,000 children and women get good care," he says.

Of UNICEF Sweden's fundraising, SEK 203 million before Roger Akelius' contribution, four-fifths go directly to Ukraine and the remainder to surrounding countries. With over 100 employees on site in Ukraine, UNICEF has a large network of local organizations and authorities that receive support from UNICEF to reach out with help.

"Unicef's plan is calculated based on the needs that we estimate people have and will have in the coming months. Then we expect that Unicef will reach 1.5 million children with healthcare," says Petter Gustafsson.

"Together with other organizations, including UNHCR, we help states and municipalities by coordinating these efforts. Otherwise, it can easily become chaotic," he says.

The UN refugee agency UNHCR's primary task in the refugee situation is to lead and coordinate protection work. In the acute crisis, it is about getting emergency aid out.

"An important part of our work is working with cash support for refugees. 90% of all those fleeing are women and children and it is of course important that they can pay for food and rent for temporary housing. This reduces the risk of them being subjected to trafficking," says Åsa Widell, Secretary General in Sweden for UNHCR.

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A big question when giving is how to ensure that the money reaches and ends up where it is supposed to. Charlotte Rydh says that a common wish among donors is that the money should not go to personnel costs. But there is a misconception here, she believes. It is precisely personnel that part of the money is needed for: personnel on site.

"They are the ones who make sure that something happens, that aid is distributed and that people receive medical care. The personnel cost is part of the purpose," she says.

With high fundraising amounts, several organizations can lower the administrative, so-called fundraising costs.

"Last year's admin costs were 15 percent. Now we have collected a lot more money but have the same organization, so we have not increased our costs. Our administrative costs as a percentage will drop a lot, probably below 10 percent," says Åsa Widell.

■ GIVE SWEDEN

- Industry association that works for safe giving.
- Of approximately 170 non-profit organizations, about twenty work in and around Ukraine
- During March they have collected 1.9 billion kronor
- Some of the organizations are UNHCR, Unicef, Save the Children, Red Cross

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