

# FORWARD TOGETHER - meeting in Turku 6/2024

Project FORWARD TOGETHER aims to focus on the integration of Ukrainian war refugees into new communities.

Libraries, as community hubs, will play a crucial role in facilitating this integration. The project draws on successful past collaborations and the diverse experiences of partner countries (Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Denmark) to develop innovative strategies for supporting refugees.

Through workshops and meetings, knowledge and skills will be shared, fostering a cohesive approach to help refugees learn the language, culture, and essential skills for a new life in their host countries.



**IS THERE  
LIGHT IN  
THE  
LIBRARY?**

**FORWARD TOGETHER**

*with Ukrainians*

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# COMMITMENT OF FORWARD TOGETHER

## by libraries and co-partners

We don't leave Ukrainian refugees lonely when they immigrate to Europe.

We help Ukrainians find their place in a new and unfamiliar environment. Many refugees are highly educated, and we assist them in finding a home, securing a suitable job, and learning how to support their children in a different school system. We also help them relax and enjoy their free time.

Many do not have local friends in their communities who can help them with language training and understanding the habits and culture of their new country.

As librarians and library partners, we work together to develop ways to help Ukrainians integrate into new countries and communities.

Feeling a sense of belonging to their new community increases their sense of security and familiarity, thereby improving their well-being.



At some point, sooner or later, it will become clear that only your life is broken.

The rest of the world lives, moves and breathes.



## TURKU CITY SUPPORTING UKRAINE AND UKRAINIANS

The city of Turku has supported Ukraine since the beginning of the war both financially and with material donations. Turku has donated electricity and heating equipment, buses and other aid material to the twin city of Harkov.

"Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has continued two years. We must not forget that it is ultimately a war for all of us, where Ukrainians are still fighting for the security and future of the whole of Europe," says Turku Mayor Minna Arve in the city's press release.

Arve states that the support for Ukraine must continue and that it is also important to secure the daily lives of Ukrainians who are fleeing the war in Finland and Turku.

Quote from YLE news 23 February 2024



## INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY COOPERATION AND TURKU ABC

Libraries in Finland, Denmark, Estonia, and Latvia have established an international cooperation network to support Ukrainians in integrating into their new European communities. This network, in collaboration with local authorities and third-sector organizations, aims to provide Ukrainians with the best possible quality of life amid the challenges and uncertainties caused by the war.

At Turku City Library, a unique continuous support training program called TURKU ABC was launched in May 2022, shortly after the war began. This program helps Ukrainian refugees integrate into Finnish society through three main areas:

**A: Active Engagement in Language Learning** - Encourages speaking and everyday language learning through intensive monthly Zoom courses and daily language exercises.

**B: Information and Guidance** - Provides essential information on navigating the Finnish authority system, including state and municipal services, job opportunities, educational resources, healthcare, and housing.

**C: Cultural Integration** - Introduces participants to Turku and Finnish culture, customs, and opportunities for recreation and cultural enrichment, helping them gain strength and refreshment through cultural experiences.



TURKU ABC program has been developed with the help of international cooperation involving libraries from different countries and Ukrainians.

In addition to language teachers and librarians from Finland, the international TURKU ABC working group includes five Ukrainians, three of whom are continuously involved in the language teaching of the intensive courses as language and cultural interpreters, supporting independent language study.




More than 2,000 Finnish Ukrainians participate in the online teaching Facebook group, and several hundred people complete daily tasks. Over 700 people have participated in the monthly intensive courses since May 2022. TURKU ABC coaching and other support work for libraries aim to act as partners alongside other language and integration training, not as competitors.

The TURKU ABC program offers a learning environment where teachers and students collaboratively develop new and effective methods for practicing practical language skills on the internet.



- Participants' needs
- Participants' wishes
- Participant involvement
- Library's goals of democracy & literacy skills



<p>Independent and active practice of Finnish language is necessary in order to learn the Finnish language fluently.</p> <p><b>ALPHABETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● ABC COURSE GUIDES TO INDEPENDENT LANGUAGE STUDY</li><li>● THE ABC COURSE PROVIDES PRACTICE AND SUPPORTS STUDY</li></ul>	
<p>Life in Finland requires internet credentials, the ability to operate online, and knowledge of online services.</p> <p><b>BUREAUCRACY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● ABC COURSE SHARES INFORMATION ABOUT ACTING IN INTERNET</li><li>● ONLINE SERVICES IS PRACTICED ON THE ABC COURSE</li></ul>	
<p>Understanding Finnish culture helps in creating relationships with locals and getting attached to the Finnish community.</p> <p><b>CULTURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● ABC COURSE PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT FINNISH CULTURE AND FINLAND'S HISTORY</li><li>● IN ABC COURSE, HOW CULTURE INFLUENCES FINNISH LIFE, IS PRACTICED</li></ul>	

## LIBRARIES AS POTENTIAL RESOURCES IN HELPING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES - BENEFITS TO UKRAINIANS, COMMUNITIES AND WAR EFFORTS

There are 65,000 public libraries in Europe and 6.5 million refugees fleeing the Russian war of aggression.

Libraries can play a significant role in the integration process of a new large minority group.

Ukraine's aid helps both refugees and communities. Educated Ukrainians can build new communities for a better future for all. On the other hand, the well-being of Ukrainian refugees in the new country will help those who strive to overcome war in Ukraine.

## FORWARD TOGETHER - MEETING IN TURKU, 11.-14.6.2024

Libraries have the potential to be great assets in supporting Ukrainian refugees. However, they need tools, action plans and methods how to best provide this assistance. International cooperation is seeking answers to this question.

In addition to the libraries in the Turku area, seven library partners from Denmark, Estonia, and Latvia, along with various third-sector actors, are now involved in FORWARD TOGETHER. This international initiative aims to clear how libraries can support Ukrainians best way, focusing particularly on language learning support and cultural education. Libraries can play a significant role in integrating a new, large minority group.

A meeting in Turku is planned to further enhance this international cooperation and to develop methods for providing assistance.

The aim of the Turku meeting is to develop action methods that promote language learning, cultural familiarization, and mental well-being among mothers and families traumatized by the Russian invasion.

We want to contribute to the war effort in a way that benefits those now living as refugees and, importantly, the children who must grow up in the shadow of war. In homes where mothers strive to create conditions for a normal life, the well-being of mothers makes it easier for the children and for the fathers who are fighting in Ukraine.

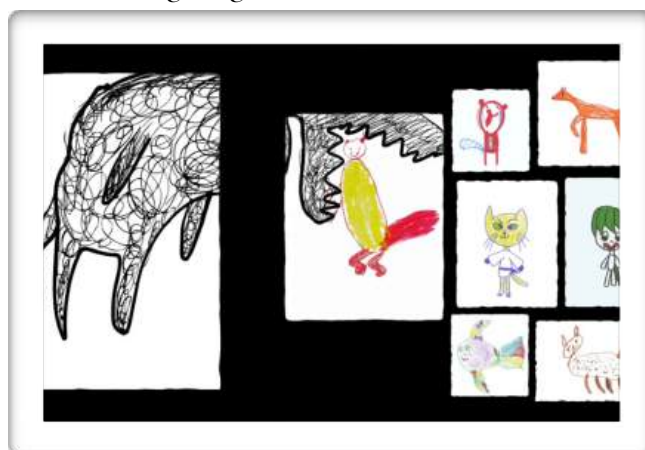
## WHY DO WE WANT TO HELP?

The war of aggression started by Russia is a war in which Ukrainians are fighting for the future of all of Europe. Libraries want to support the Ukrainian war effort by helping Ukrainian refugees. We don't leave Ukrainian people, onely, when living in our regions. We help them find their place in new environment.

Most of Ukrainians want to normalize their lives so good they can, most are educated, and we help them find a home, get a job and support their children in school and in their free time.

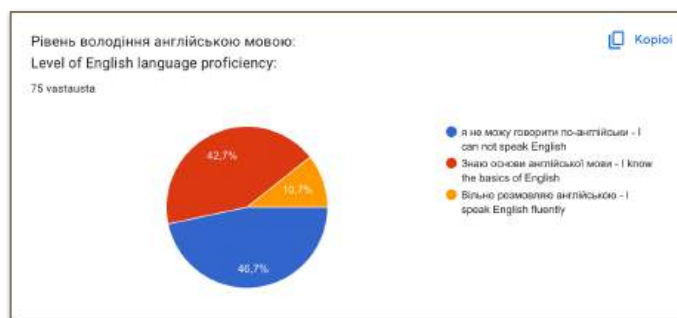
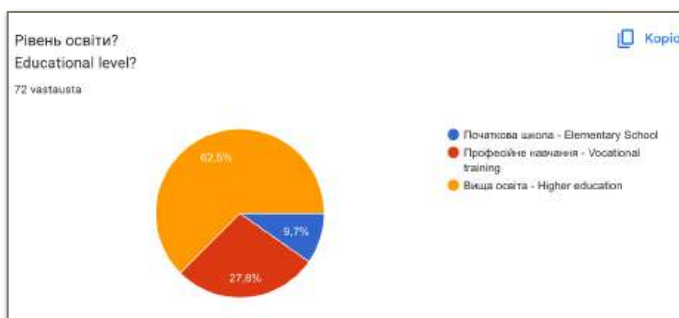
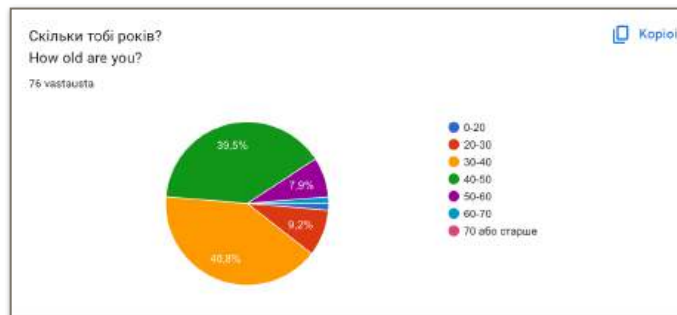
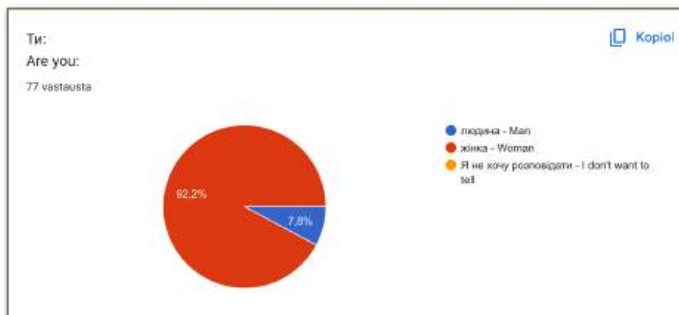
Many refugees do not have friends in their communities, and libraries work together to develop ways to help them get involved in the local community. Belonging to the community of the place of residence increases the feeling of security and familiarity and improves well-being. this is important - those children who have to live their childhood in the shadow of war in homes where mothers try to create the conditions for a normal life.

When mothers are well, it is easier for the children and the father who is fighting in Ukraine.



# TURKU ABC INQUIRIES FROM STUDENTS

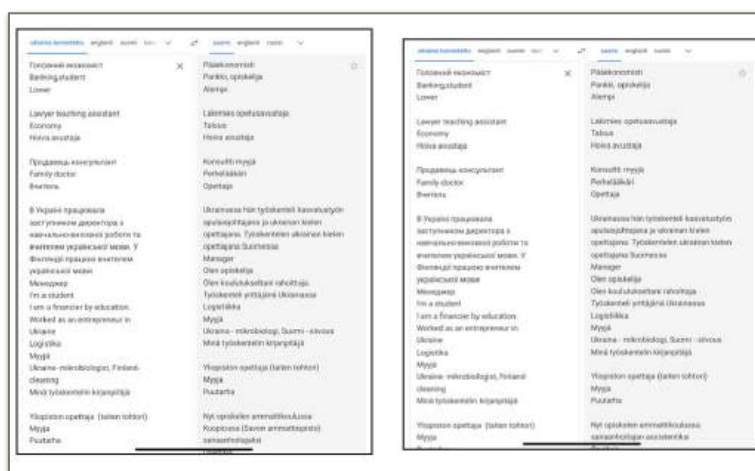
## GENDER, AGE AND EDUCATION?



### SUMMARY:

- the students are almost all women
- the students are mainly 30-50 years old
- almost all of the students have an education from Ukraine
- almost half do not know English at all

## WORK/ JOB/ STATUS IN UKRAINE?





# WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE PAST AND THE FUTURE?

