The population of eastern Ukraine has been suffering under the conflict between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists since the beginning of 2014. Of the some four million people affected, more than 1.5 million are seeking shelter in other regions in the country. Some 300,000 Ukrainians are registered as internally displaced persons in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhya oblasts. The communities there are unable to cope with the task of taking in, caring for and integrating these refugees. Their existing social infrastructure is under very considerable pressure: kindergartens and schools do not have enough room for more children and young people, while hospitals and homes for the elderly do not have the capacity to accept all the patients in need. Building problems pose serious health and safety risks, for example due to leaking roofs and poorly insulated windows and the resulting damage from damp and mould. The local authorities have very limited resources of their own to rehabilitate and develop the premises.

It is not just the displaced persons who suffer – the local population also depends on being able to use the social infrastructure.

The challenge:
Inadequate rooms for services

The challenge is that the local authorities have very limited resources of their own to rehabilitate and develop the premises. It is not just the displaced persons who suffer – the local population also depends on being able to use the social infrastructure.

Our approach:
Creating better conditions

In 2015, the German Government launched the Initiatives of the Infrastructure Programme for Ukraine (IIPU) which supports towns, cities and communities in eastern Ukraine in dealing with the consequences of the conflict. As part of this programme, GIZ is working to improve the social infrastructure in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhya. GIZ and its partners are focusing on developing and rehabilitating existing public buildings, which are being repaired and fitted with new roofs, windows and insulation. After the construction measures have been completed, the local authorities can make full use of the buildings again; they can extend the social services offered and improve the quality of their services. This will benefit internally displaced persons and the local population alike: schoolchildren enjoy learning in a child-friendly environment, and patients can recover better in the modernised hospitals.
Halyna Ponomarenko is the headmistress at school no. 29. “On the first day of school, our children didn’t recognise the school,” she reports. “It was literally sparkling. The children are now motivated to learn here. The school management, children and parents are very grateful to the German Government for renovating the school and for the new furniture and sports equipment.”

Our results: Hundreds of thousands of people benefit

Over a period of two years, 16 medical institutions have been renovated and supplied with new equipment. A total of 340,000 people living nearby now benefit from modern facilities and better health care.

Around 130,000 people use the 55 renovated and newly established libraries, sports centres and cultural meeting places.

Thirty kindergartens and more than 50 schools have been renovated and, in some cases, provided with new furniture and sports equipment. This is benefiting around 35,000 children and young people, more than 1,400 of whom are internally displaced persons.

In 2017, three schools were renovated in Dnipro. The work benefits the 1,350 schoolchildren, who can now study in a child-friendly environment – with new windows and roofs, modern heating systems, LED lights, and adjustable tables and chairs. New sanitary facilities give children with disabilities access to toilets too.

Our results:
Hundreds of thousands of people benefit