

Clean water for Eastern Ukraine

Urgently needed repairs to water supply networks and water sources ensure that safe water is available in Eastern Ukraine's towns and villages

The challenge: The poor water supply in Eastern Ukraine

Since 2014, around four million people have been affected by the armed conflict between pro-Russian separatists and the Ukrainian military in Eastern Ukraine. Fighting continues to break out, and more than 1.5 million people have fled to other regions of Ukraine, including the port town of Mariupol and nearby municipalities. Like the 450,000 local residents, they live with the constant threat of renewed hostilities.

Every day life here is beset with challenges for those displaced people and the local community alike: the water supply situation is catastrophic, taking its toll on displaced persons and locals alike. Even before the conflict, up to 40 per cent of water was being lost through leaks in the dilapidated, poorly maintained and inefficient supply system. The conflict has exacerbated the situation: water mains running through combat areas have sustained repeated damage from artillery fire, for example.



Project name:	Maintaining access to water for local residents and displaced persons in the Mariupol area (UNICEF)
Commissioned by:	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implemented by:	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
National partners:	Local authorities, regional and municipal water utilities
Project area:	Western area of Donetsk Oblast
Overall term:	12/2016 to 12/2020
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If and when replacement parts are available, workers face great risks while carrying out repairs. Frequent power outages interrupt the water supply for hours and sometimes days.

Our approach: More efficient water utilities and rehabilitated water sources

With resources provided by the German Government, GIZ is working to improve the water supply in Mariupol, Wuhledar and Selydowe, and in nearby villages. On behalf of GIZ, this project is being implemented by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The project builds the capacities of the water utilities and assists them in making realistic estimates of how much water is required and in developing a strategy to avoid water losses. The water utilities are upgrading the system, replacing corroded pipes and procuring new equipment for pumping stations, for example. This reduces their costs, saves energy and increases the reliability of the water supply.



Repair works on water pipes in Mariupol

Access to drinking water has not only improved in the cities: in the villages, the project partners are rehabilitating local water sources, for example by repairing poorly maintained boreholes and wells and supplying kindergartens, schools and hospitals to ensure that children and young people have access to safe drinking water.

The measures benefit locals and displaced persons alike. They help to build peaceful relations between communities which would otherwise be competing for water, a scarce resource.



Especially kindergartens and schools are supplied with clean drinking water

Our results: Safe water for hundreds of thousands of people

By the time the project ends in 2020, 720,000 people, including 162,000 children and teenagers, in and around Mariupol will have access to a reliable supply of safe water.

In smaller towns and villages, 120,000 residents whose homes are not connected to a water supply network are being provided with water deliveries. Many of them also need water to grow fruit and vegetables.



Water deliveries for people without access to clean water



Lubov Denisova: „We often can't drink the water from the tap“

Lubov Denisova is 76 years old and, like many people in her neighbourhood, she is dependent on water deliveries:

„I use the water deliveries for cooking and drinking. I use it very sparingly as I can't afford to buy in extra water. I don't have the money for that. We often can't drink the water from the tap.“



Anjela Yaroshyuk: „We are always happy about a water delivery“

Valentin and Anjela Yaroshyuk do not have the means to buy water for their family and report:

„We are always thrilled to get a water delivery. It makes such a difference to our lives. If we don't have a delivery, we have to ask our friends from other villages to help us out. We can't afford to buy clean water.“

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