

Warsaw, May 23rd, 2022

10,070 UK publisher donated books offer refuge for Ukrainian children

10,070 publisher donated children's books are now on their way from Book Aid International's South London warehouse bound for Polish literacy organization The Universal Reading Foundation in Warsaw. These books will help the foundation continue to offer much-needed support to 50,000 Ukrainian children who have fled the conflict.

Over six million Ukrainians have sought shelter in neighboring countries since the war began – and among them are 1.8 million children. They need support both to continue to learn and to process the trauma of escaping war.

The Universal Reading Foundation has been working with teachers, librarians and parents to increase literacy and advocate for more state investment in reading for years. With the outbreak of war they refocused on helping Ukrainian refugee children in Poland, which is home to over three million refugees.

Today they are working with an extensive network of orphanages, libraries, day care centers and schools in Poland which are sheltering Ukrainian children. The Foundation's CEO Maria Deskur spoke of the value of books for these children, saying:

“Books are a refuge. For small kids reading is a peaceful and close moment with someone they trust: a fundamental sign that they are ok, they can spare a moment to smile together over a book. For older children reading is a crucial mind opener; a huge empathy strengthening training; a great critical thinking lesson – which especially for teenagers is so immensely important! Thanks to the Book Aid International donation, we plan to start an extensive cooperation with refugee centers where Ukrainians stay on their way to other countries. We would love all these children to be able to get the chance to read at least one book.”

This shipment is only possible because of the many publishers who choose to support Book Aid International by donating brand new books, and the charity in particular thanks Oxford University Press and Green Bean Books for their financial contributions supporting this shipment of books. The charity's Chief Executive Alison Tweed spoke of this work saying:

“When conflict strikes books offer the chance to find hope and to continue to learn even while fleeing war. We think it is vital to support The Universal Reading Foundation's important work at this incredibly difficult time and we would like to warmly thank everyone who made this shipment possible. We could not send a single book without the support of publishers who donate these wonderful, brand new books to our charity.”

Book Aid International's work in Ukraine is part of its wider work offering people fleeing or living with conflict the opportunity to read. Last year, Book Aid International provided brand new, carefully selected books to 30 refugee camps in countries including Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia and provided thousands of books to people living with or recovering from conflict in Syria, the Cameroon, Iraq and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.



Much of the charity's work reaching out to refugees takes place in Africa and is supported by funds raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery and awarded through Postcode Education Trust. To find out more about Book Aid International, visit bookaid.org.

To learn more about the Universal Reading Foundation's important work supporting Ukrainian refugees, visit www.fpc.org.pl or email contact@fpc.org.pl.

About Book Aid International

Book Aid International is the UK's leading international book donation and library development charity. Every year, the charity aims to ship around one million brand new books to thousands of communities around the world where people have very few opportunities to access books and read.

Book Aid International works with an extensive network of libraries, schools, hospitals, NGOs and other partners to ensure that the books it sends reach as many people as possible. The charity estimates that the books it provides are available to 24 million people every year.

In addition, Book Aid International runs projects which build the capacity of librarians and teachers to support people and communities. Visit www.bookaid.org for more information or join the conversation on twitter: @book_aid.

About the Universal Reading Foundation

The Universal Reading Foundation's mission is to raise literacy primarily in Poland as a means to a better, more inclusive, and open society but also a stronger and more innovative economy. With the outbreak of the war, the charity turned its attention to helping Ukrainian refugee children in Poland and supporting publishers in Ukraine. To find out more visit www.fpc.org.pl or email contact@fpc.org.pl