



CONFLICT IN UKRAINE: THE SECTORS RESPONSE AND THE RAMIFICATIONS

Report of Meeting 20th October 2022



This event was held virtually with 22 registrants.

Kimberley Moreno – Opening Remarks

PARN Membership & Communications Coordinator
CPD Forum and Accreditation SIG Coordinator

Good morning, everybody. Thank you for joining us for this discussion today. I'm Kimberley. I'm the membership and Communications Coordinator here at PARN. And for those of you that perhaps aren't that familiar with us, I know there's some non-members with us today. We are a not-for-profit membership organisation for professional bodies, the aim of this event is to bring together members and non-members alike to learn from each other and share our experiences in relation to events in Ukraine, discussing both challenges and solutions. We're very kindly joined today by both one of PARN's own, Alex, one of our dedicated researchers. Alex will be sharing some of the research we gathered on the sector's initial response, along with some wider desk research, then the lovely Sara [from ICON, the Institute of Conservation](#). Sara will be sharing their initial response alongside some of their member led groups and a little bit more of where they are now and how the ramifications are affecting them. And Shaun is bringing us a bit of a different take on the sector. He's both a member of the [Institute of Interim Management](#), but also the co-founder of an organisation called [TechLink Ukraine](#) and Irredesk.

Alex Witt, PARN Researcher

PARN's Research on the Sectors Initial Response and Further Desk Research

I'm Alex, a fairly recent addition to the team here at PARN, I've been working with the team for about a year now, so I'm still so new to the sector, but I hope that my research is shows plenty of strengths. I also have some background in research in Ukraine as well, performing my thesis in the University of Bristol on Ukraine, particularly between Anglo Ukrainian relations.

We will be starting off with an initial response discussion, particularly through research conducted by PARN. Kimberley's already kind of provided a little bit more of a background to who PARN is, that is the Professional Associations Research Network – PARN Global. We offer primarily a benchmarking service, but we provide a variety of different options for our members, as well as having non-members commission work with us. We provide networking, research, events, and much more.

For this topic we decided to follow a two lines of research. In this instance, we launched an ATN, which for those who aren't familiar, is an ask the network survey, where we



consulted our members on their views and attitudes towards the invasion of Ukraine. We then felt it was prudent to follow this up with some further research to amplify the results.

Section 1: The Supporting Ukraine Ask the Network Survey

- Conducted from 24th March (beginning exactly one month from the invasion date) to 14th April 2022. (To give professional bodies time to deliberate and enact their response, if any)
- 15 respondents from PARN members- (seven small, four medium, and four large organisations (by membership size)
- Conducted at the joint request of PARN staff and the British Veterinary Association (BVA) (original questions and research outcomes cannot be attributed to the BVA and were only involved in the commissioning of the research)
- Key Aims- To answer the following questions
 - What activities are professional bodies doing to support Ukraine?
 - How are professional bodies supporting Ukrainians members and/or staff?
 - If professional bodies work with Ukrainian organisations, how are they working with them?

To begin with, a demographic background to the respondents. This information won't necessarily impact how we went about analysing the research but might be useful to include to highlight some of the sector response rates. Most respondents were categorised by other, at PARN this remains outside the parameters of business, health, and engineering, so can relate to anything else. We equally have a very broad selection of organisation sizes, although we can see a slightly larger representation of small organisations from our membership.

So, the core question, naturally was simply 'was your organisation planning to or at least undertaking at this moment in time activities to support Ukraine'. This was met with a rather resounding yes, at 93%, with only one not planning to at that moment in time.

We provided a small selection of potential activities organisations could be enacting. Bearing in mind the invasion had only recently occurred, one may argue there were somewhat less options available at the time. There was an interest with organisations working with other Ukrainian organisations, particularly those they are affiliated with within their sector. There were fewer supporting the 'Homes for Ukraine' initiative. I would add to that one organisation stated they would provide a compiled list of all of their members who were exceptionally interested in hosting or Ukrainians, highlighting evidence of internal support within their organisation's membership to support Ukraine. Unsurprisingly, fundraisers were also mentioned, as well as general support from members and staff. Again, these are relatively overarching terms.

What was somewhat interesting is there were several others who exposed other forms of support. One launched a collective appeal on behalf of an international organisation and various charities, such as UNICEF, Save the Children. This will become a recurrent theme throughout the research. There were increased opportunities for welcoming refugees beyond the scope of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, particularly supporting Ukrainians to enter employment. Whether that be through a fast-tracking system or offering



complimentary membership, it appeared these professional bodies were aiming to help Ukrainians acclimatise to the into the UK without feeling left ragged and bruised a very traumatic experience. There were also instances where organisations were promoting certain campaigns, again, from either the government or from other professional bodies, as well as various signposting measures, linking to support bases for issues such as mental health. These were extended to both refugees and migrants as well as for members affected by events within the UK, here I refer to Ukrainian migrants or those who have friends or family living in Ukraine. Interestingly, there was some representation of organisations lobbying the government, particularly providing advice for how the government should proceed with its international relations and what they could do to support Ukraine directly.

Moving on, we decided to inquire more into whether it was members and staff that were providing more of a voice for action. The reality displayed it was largely based at an organisation level. There are various ways one could read into this; given it was the early stages of the invasion, it was still relatively fresh, the amount of opportunities and sources available, were only just starting to take hold; so it might be that members and staff may not necessarily have felt equipped to respond.

Most respondents also support refugees based in the UK in other conflicts. So what we see here is that professional bodies followed a significant precedent, working to support individuals internationally.

The ATN itself was a rather short but interesting piece of research and it particularly motivated us to continue our research further, looking to broaden it, and give a better representation of the sector...

Section 2: Desk Research

- Conducted in May 2022 (to allow more professional bodies time to react)
- Surveyed 40 organisations, via their websites- randomly generated list (some PARN members are included but not specifically selected, these professional bodies did not respond to the original ATN)

Interestingly, only slight majority were found to be providing any form of support for Ukraine. This could have various factors influencing this; by the time this research was produced, the media storm generated because of the invasion, was slowly decreasing. Some may well have already provided their response in the short term and therefore felt that they had already produced enough. Nevertheless, this research focused on the 22 that produced or continued providing support for Ukraine.

We start off by finding eight organisations gave official statements. That is not to say the remaining organisations did not provide any statement at all, these just gave an official organisation statement that summarised their thoughts and views. I've taken a few examples of the type of terminology and words used to describe their attitudes towards the situation. Undeniably, and rather, unsurprisingly, there is an emotive connection with the events. Naturally, there are messages of solidarity and unity amongst professional bodies in direct support to Ukraine. But there can also be discerned an element of legal undertones within the statements, the rights to self-determination, and justice and



peace. Again, this harkens to a general, and unsurprisingly unanimous discrediting of Russian aggression. This highlights that organisations are not only wishing to protect and support Ukrainians at an individual level, but also to make a political stand and display unity against Russia.

I have provided a list of charities and organisations that were referenced by these organisations. Those featured are largely humanitarian in origin: the Disasters Emergency Committee and their Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal, UNICEF, Save the Children, etc. I will add that PARN is not connected to any of these particular charities. Huge you decide to support them in any way that you know, we do not wish to.

Other alternative ways that organisations have lent their support by providing specific services. This included information and resources and guidance and regulations. This provides a more personal approach to the situation. One organisation provided consultation, others provided a case for legal and clinical representation for migrating Ukrainians as well as providing advice on finance and well-being. Again, this covers both Ukrainians and individuals who have a particularly deep connection with Ukraine via family or other means. Providing platforms for networking and peer support, this generates a relatively simple but effective way to show solidarity amongst professional bodies as well as towards members.

Equally, there was sector wide advice circulated; information on sanctions on Russia and to a lesser extent with Belarus; how professional bodies can support victims and respond to war trauma; various reports from Reuters; sector insights as well, for example trade, business, and investment.

Perhaps the most pressing factor that appears here, especially now for the UK, is how to respond to the energy crisis and how this will affect the economy. Obviously, this has been a hugely defining factor for the UK, one that will not be discussed here. No doubt the conflict and the crisis go hand-in-hand.

On sanctions, it is important at this point to touch upon how the event would affect Russia and Belarus. As evidenced by the mobilisation efforts produced by Putin, it highlighted how the war was exceptionally divisive within the country, thus it is important to recognise that there are Russians who will be suffering, obviously, quite not at the hands of Russian military actions but from political crackdowns. The wave of migration coming out of Russia and the border issues that they produced, highlights how it also affects individuals within the aggressive state.

With Russia and Belarus therefore in mind, we organisations cancel exams for these nationals' students, financial sanctions, refusal to work with Russian clientele, and suspending relations of business.

A continued support for government schemes appeared, particularly Ukrainian Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine. There was support for the NHS and working with national medical departments to lend their hand and support their sister organisations.



Several organisations attended international or national conferences, emergency council sessions, discussions on psychology and trauma, how recent events would seep into studies into modern conflicts.

There were several motions to support Ukraine by condemning Russia broadly, with various resolutions condemning the invasion. In a unique scenario, a joint appeal was produced by one organisation to prevent an international conference from being held in St. Petersburg: the appeal was successful and was instead conducted online and outside of Russia. Another scenario alluded to international trade routes, particularly establishing makers within the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov to protect shipping routes.

There were several organisations collaborating specifically with Ukraine, with one organisation stating they had members travelling up to Ukraine to help support the efforts on the grounds. Others meanwhile hosted events to provide further information for those wishing to support Ukraine, some increased job vacancies throughout Europe, others provided webinars.

So, as we can see, there was a very large amount of support within this snapshot of the professional body. The variety of types of supports, was certainly expected, and support was presented on the individual and national front. Again, I remind you that this covers the first three months of the conflict, therefore, it would certainly be interesting to see whether these policies have continued up to this point. Obviously, the conflict has recently resurfaced in tandem with the energy crisis, but it will certainly be interesting to see whether these have continued.

Questions and Answers

Should Russian bodies be suspended whilst Russia continues its war with Ukraine?

The enquiring body is a professional body and a charity, being members of the European and international networks affiliated with their sector. Experience shows that neither overarching organisations will not make any decisions on this matter, avoiding any decision that could be considered contentious. Currently, the sector still has both Ukrainian and Russian members. To continue working with an organisation that still maintains a relationship with Russia is a big ethical issue. Is planning to conduct a survey of members as some members may not wish to be a part of an organisation who by proxy has links to a Russian entity. It appears people are too anxious about taking a stand or making a political statement, with the European bodies rarely ever doing so. Recognises that Russian individuals do not support Putin's actions but cannot speak out for fear of prosecution. Therefore, they ask the participants for advice, experience, or answers.

Answer 1 - Have had a slightly different situation, having individuals and firms who are based in Russia; we made a rather agonised decision that the organisation would not remove Russians from membership; partly due to a lack of legal method but also as the action would lead to a breaking of the organisation's own laws and regulations. Equally they agree that there are several Russians who do not support Putin's actions but are not in a position to speak out. As such, theirs is a different position to take without having to work with Russians who are supportive of the state's actions, therefore they have come down on the other said of the assertion, that they would not seek to penalise or remove individual Russians



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Answer 2 - Another organisation experienced both situations. Their organisation is a member of a European network with a Russian representative also a member. They lobbied with other European representatives to have the Russian representative removed. The reason being the representatives were backed by the Russian government, so felt it was inappropriate to continue to have a relationship with a Russian government body. They have since been suspended until the cessation of activities. From an individual perspective, having individual members, we also have commercial relationships with training providers on a global basis. So, for the individuals, we took the same approach as the other respondent, it is not the individual's fault, it is not about individual Russians, so we have retained them as part of our membership. Some of them have had issues with paying their membership fee, so the organisation has allowed them to retain their membership without having paid for the time being because again, it's not their fault. However, they have a training partner, based in Russia, in fact, it has Russian as part of their trading name. They have suspended relations with them. Similarly, with the international global training bodies affiliated, they have asked them to cease delivering approved training with our branding on it within Russia or to Russian nationals. Therefore, the approach is to walk a line whereby we're still supporting individuals, but not maintaining commercial relationships with state organisations

Answer 3 - It's pertinent to underline that we're not persecuting the individuals, there are a lot of Russians who do not support the state and are actively fighting against the regime themselves. So, it's better to support individuals where possible.



Sara Crofts, CEO, Institute of Conservation (Icon)

Icon's Initial Response, Member Led "Basecamps" & The Ramifications

My talk will concern a few reflections on dealing with an expected, unprecedented situation if you're a very small membership body. We have currently about 2300 members, with no Russian or Ukrainian members, and eight members of staff. You might ask yourself why would Icon have some role in this situation? The answer is, this (see slide four of presentation two): this is a screenshot because it's a live resource, but it is a Google Map, which is being updated regularly, with information about sites of cultural heritage that have been damaged as a result of the war in Ukraine. And this is probably not something you've seen a lot about on the television, because it's one of the aspects of war that hasn't had a lot of coverage in this instance.

Cultural heritage is always under threat for several reasons. It's at risk from collateral damage, buildings can be destroyed, and some are important historic monuments. There's also of course, deliberate targeting of cultural heritage, for various reasons, such as erasing the identity of the country and or an invasion supplanting that with the identity and cultural trappings of the aggressor. We need only think back to the Second World War to get a sense of that in a historical perspective. There is a financial aspect too, cultural heritage can be of financial value, as well as cultural, therefore looting, appropriation, etc, is a big issue. So that's from a policy point of view.

Certainly in the early days of the conflict, we came together with a fairly loose coalition of other heritage bodies, and did a little bit of policy work, essentially, drawing attention to the 1954 Hague Convention, which basically talks about the protection of cultural heritage in times of war, and that there is an agreement signed by many countries that says that cultural heritage should not be attacked as part of an aggressive action. Needless to say, Russia has not honoured those commitments, and therefore, we were trying to call attention to that. This policy work is very much in collaboration with other organisations such as UNESCO.

If I then discuss just our professional body, what did we do? Well, actually, the answer is almost nothing but not quite. As I said, we are very small, we have very limited capacity, but we have very engaged and active members. Very quickly, my inbox became flooded with calls from my membership to do something. Knowing that we don't have the capacity to take on additional work, the course of action I ended up pursuing was to call us at a town hall meeting online. We said if people want to come and have a conversation about what could be done, join us online, and we will see what actions arise from that discussion. We had about 60 people come along, but 80 people registered. What came out of it was the idea of what we as an organisation could do to facilitate volunteers within our membership to take action: this generated a series of Basecamp teams.

Basecamp is a collaboration platform. It's an online cloud-based space where people can chat, post documents, work collaboratively, and use various tools that are designed to allow easy collaboration. There were three themes that people were interested in: one was providing guidance on how to look after cultural heritage in times of war, the second was to provide materials to support the protection of cultural heritage such as fire



extinguishers, packing crates, materials that people could use to try and keep border culture heritage safe, whilst it is under potential attack, the third group was set up to help people who wanted to be involved in sponsoring refugees.

So, three very separate groups, some crossover between them in terms of the people who got involved. At that point, I stepped back and let the volunteers get on with it. And there was a very active few months where a great deal of collaboration happened. Looking back, that was one of the really interesting things to see, a bunch of organisations that people who wouldn't normally work together actually coming together on a shared online space because they had a common interest. There were tangible outcomes from the work that was done by volunteers using Basecamp as their communication tool. So, there was a series of three guidance notes that were written by our members. There's one on protecting Icon's status, one on putting out small fires in historic buildings, and one on how you deal with soot and smoke damage. There's also a supporting piece of guidance on how to use the fire extinguishers that were gathered up and sent out to Ukraine by mostly a group of museum professionals working together. We were then able to be a channel to help disseminate that guidance to other organisations through our international link. So, there was a little bit of joining of dots for organisations. And that's so there was a lot of activity for about two or three months.

The interesting thing for me is that this has gone very quiet in recent months. I moderate our base camp platforms only in a very light touch sense. I try and help people to communicate and do a little bit of signposting where I can. I noticed that in late August, one of our members who's actively been the sort of lead volunteer coordinator put out a call across all three groups, asking for volunteers to help coordinate. It's quite a specific role description and a quite specific ask, and it's had no response whatsoever. I think there's a reflection there, which has something to do with human nature. I guess, the initial interest in a topic, the initial desire to act, which may or may not be sustainable, over the long term. I think there's also perhaps something which has to do with volunteer fatigue. And I think that's particularly because the longer-term impacts of the war in Ukraine is doing all sorts of strange things in terms of world economies; we're dealing with our cost-of-living crisis, and suddenly, the tension is very much focused back on the UK.

So, we had a brief few months of being very engaged with our international colleagues and thinking globally. But because of events much closer to home, the tension has very much switched from my members back to what's happening in the UK. It will be interesting to see how things develop again. I had thought perhaps a week or so ago, with the aggression stepped up with museums, monuments, cultural heritage was very much in the firing line, again, whether that might generate a sort of fresh flurry of interest. But that doesn't seem to have transpired, so a very interesting learning experience for us.

Positives for the future: hopefully, are that organisations who didn't talk to each other before, are now in a conversation. My part of the professional sector, the cultural heritage sector is incredibly fragmented. There is definite lack of leadership, particularly when it comes to dealing with these sort of cross border issues. So perhaps it has had some positive impact in terms of nudging people to try and address that. And



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partnerships have sprung up where they weren't before. So, there's a few reflections from the point of view of a small organisation.

Questions and Answers

Are you getting the message of destruction of heritage out to the wider press, as it's certainly not in the news? Reference to the conflicts in Iraq and the Middle East generally.

Answer 1 - Yeah, I think it's a good point and I think that's partly what I'm thinking about doing. When I say that there's a lack of leadership, we could share those messages. In the absence of anyone else doing it, perhaps we ought to, there is an organisation called Blue Shield UK, which is was set up in support of the 1954 Hague Convention. It should probably be people like that, who are making more of this story, but they are small, smaller than we are. So there's definitely a capacity issue more broadly. Even UNESCO, UK, I think, struggles to get its voice heard. I think some of those messages come across clearer elsewhere in Europe, where there is there is much more of an effort. So, I do voluntary work as it happens with an organisation called Europa Nostra, they have been much more, they've done a lot more work to draw attention to the loss of cultural heritage.



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Shaun Taylor, Member of the Institute of Interim Management

How TechLink Ukraine supported displaced residents

I am a technologist by trade, and I was working very closely this time last year with a team of 100 developers based in Kyiv. I spent a lot of time in Kyiv itself and one of the constant topics we had team dinners was what was happening with Russia. I was quite surprised because the view I was that people not in Ukraine knew more about Russia than Ukrainians. So, the whole team was completely dumbstruck when the war broke out. Up until Christmas there was no fear or danger. These experiences compelled me to come together with several colleagues from the technology sector to form a charity business basically called Tech link Ukraine.

The idea was to be a signposting business, to be able to support the technology sector within Ukraine, and help people displaced by conflict and find opportunities for employment. We found a lot of companies were very supportive of what we were trying to do. We bought a few people across from Ukraine into roles within London and within in Dublin. What we found they were very probing before coming across, very keen on finding work and supporting their families. It wasn't until they arrived in Britain that they decompressed and realised the impact and magnitude of what they've been through, thus were not ready to go back into the workplace.

So, we provided them support, links into their families. We had a number of people run wider opportunities in the tech sector across the UK and across Europe as part of the wider initiatives. As part of that, we also supported the UNHCR. UNHCR had relief centres across Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Moldova, and Romania. We were setting up relief points and communication hubs Ukrainians had a place to go. So, they could set up base camp, they could get SIM cards, they could get prepaid top of cards, prepaid bank cards, so they could actually have a point of getting to a relief centre and pivoting to a point of safety. This was highly successful. The UNHCR, as they normally do, they did an absolute amazing job in setting these relief points up and actually providing this support and the tech sector came together to do some really pragmatic work on the ground and to provide much needed relief to those people that are displaced.

What I found with the tech sector in Ukraine is that it's highly resilient, it's been business as usual. Most of them are still working in some form or other in terms of either cyber defence work to support the nation, flying drones or still partially working in their day job to support GDP. And what's happened is that companies that were initially affected by the impacts most impact areas most impacted by the missile attacks at the beginning, pivoted into Krakow, Poland and set up a base of operations, up into this last set of drone attacks, have been starting to go back into Kyiv. So I've been incredibly impressed just how pragmatic and resilient the tech sector workforce has been in Ukraine, and how they've just got on with it.

TechLink Ukraine is starting to wind down now because the principal relief piece has gone. We've set up the signposting and the ability for people to find opportunities and find work. We're now doing more of a light touch support piece around those who need our need our help and wider within the industry.



These facts came to me this week, and I was staggered by them. If the reports are true, so far, Russia has sustained more losses than the US did in 20 years of the Vietnam War in a much, much shorter time. Equipment losses add up day by day and it's quite clear with the use of suicide drones that they are running out of sophisticated weaponry. They're now using unsophisticated drones where you can launch them on mass, with some getting through as between 80-85% are usually shot down. Fortunately, the ones getting through are not precise, so they're not pinpoint accurate, so it's not as bad as sophisticated weaponry. But still, this is putting pressure on Putin back in Moscow. Combined with the mass mobilisation, today's announcement where they're using martial law on certain areas, it no longer feels like a special operation in Russia, it's starting to feel like war in a traditional sense.

Just going back to the Ukrainian IT Sector, it's at a 28% year on year improvement in the first quarter of 2022. Just before the conflict, they had a revenue of 2 billion into the economy from the tech sector. The amount of people engaged in tech centres in Ukraine was growing year on year, becoming the chosen place to go to for capability in Europe. I've used capabilities across Romania, Hungary, Poland, etc. I found the technology group I inherited in Ukraine to be the best educated, the best command of English language, very pragmatic. They were people who engaged in a problem and solved it and came to you with better ideas. It was a pleasure to work with them. What's really interesting is that very few Ukrainian IT companies have actually ceased trading, I think around about 2%, which shows how resilient they are in terms of standing up to this onslaught. 35% of the economy flows from technology, I think only second to agriculture.

The message Ukraine is sending out is that it is very much open for business. It is not an economy that is war torn from top to tail. There are there are pockets of the country that they're relatively unimpacted by the conflict. And they are still very much supporting lots of businesses. I'm still using Ukrainian resources for a number of projects. It's 4% of the GDP and ranked very highly in the world. Leading brands like Microsoft, Sony, Samsung, Amazon are all very much key partners with the major IT providers in Ukraine. Hitachi bought a company in November last year, called Global logic they have 40% of their business based in Ukraine; that transaction was \$9 billion. It shows the strength of Ukraine technologies.

Agriculture meanwhile, has been the one that's been most hit with grain supplies and wheat, barley, and other crops have been constrained by the conflict. I'm also doing work within the agricultural sector, particularly food security. In Ukraine, food security is becoming more weaponized than the issue around fuel. 12% of our combined food exports, food calories, traded globally come from Russia and Ukraine. Key crops like wheat, barley, maize, sunflower, oil, etc, come from those two countries. With climate change hitting harder, food will become a major issue in Ukraine and Russia.

As a result of that, we're working on a precision irrigation application for high value crops. This is having a particular focus at governmental and EU level where significant funding is coming in to offset the risk of food security. Countries are now looking at food security as a national issue in order to protect themselves from the impacts of what they've seen



from the weaponizing of fuel of oil and gas. And that's a brief snapshot from me and my experiences.

Further comments

- At least from my own knowledge and experience. There's definitely a discourse there on agriculture, and how it impacts Ukraine as would obviously be any case in any war. But I do find it interesting to draw upon parallels within previous invasions and the factors surrounding them, be it political, cultural, sociological. Russia seems to always prioritise the agricultural value that Ukraine provides, at least historically. Ukraine has always been the breadbasket, especially with grain. I think it is interesting, and I speak slightly tangentially to discuss my own research, how in the 1930s, through collectivization, the Soviet Union was able to completely devastate Ukrainian agriculture. Modern actions by Putin seem to have a very prominent echo of the kind of strategy that is being implemented by Stalin in targeting these areas. Such actions grossly effect the global market, and our discussion doesn't even begin to include the gas crisis that has been generated because of it. So, whilst it's not particularly anything interesting, I thought it might be at least worth alluding to the fact that, and, as a historian I hate using this phrase but "history is repeating itself", especially with the tactics being used. If anything, it could be used as further ammunition to further justify action against Russia, or at the very least be asserted in support of Ukraine. Certainly, comparing the support for Ukraine from Britain in the 21st century to the 1930s, the contrast is exponential.
 - I completely agree. I think if you look at the military strategy to annex landlocked Ukraine, to make exports of grain and wheat more difficult, I think your 100% right. Unfortunately, that flows through to higher food costs. If you look at around in the news reports, throughout the world people relying on food banks more, people are reducing the amount of food they eat; parents are prioritising children over their own food. As all these inflationary pressures come through, food becomes more expensive, and the situation gets worse.

Other Key Discussion Points

- Talking about all the work that the tech and the telco industry has done, particularly in country, I'm afraid we're a little bit late to the party as an engineering profession. My role is focused on the mentoring to refugees and entering the employment space. We are matching up offers with candidates as we speak, getting them to employment or to Chartered Bank status, trying to match their qualifications.
- The one thing that surprised me over the past six or twelve months is not just the resilience, but how fiercely patriotic Ukrainians are. All of them are seeing this as a temporary pivot with a real intent to go back to Ukraine. The fact of actually moving away from Ukraine permanently is just not on their agenda. We see that with the candidates that are coming from Ukraine, they see it as a temporary measure that is necessitated by you know, this terrible war. And they are quite different to some of the other refugees that are maybe from the Yemen or from Egypt, who want to settle in the UK permanently.



- I don't think the British press are actually highlighting that. It would be the subject negative in the press. The Ukrainians are naturally displaced but want to pivot back. If messages like that would do something to actually soften the thoughts that people have on refugees coming into the UK.
- Completely agree; that's an interesting perspective. I was thinking about it the other day, we live in a very small rural area and one of the local towns has a number of people that applied successfully for the homes for Ukraine scheme. My niece highlighted to me the other day saying that there are several Ukrainian students in school with her. And while they seem to have adapted fairly well, many as yet cannot speak English, at least conversationally. So, they're in quite a unique little group supporting one another which whilst lovely, does make me wonder about the future, particularly for the families that are choosing to remain in the UK, and what support or additional support we might be able to provide for those young people. I suppose we all have to play that by ear, but very reassuring to know that, particularly within just this small group that there is a fundamental amount of support there for those individuals.
- We've heard about the early focus of volunteer work or support that organisations were giving surrounding people who were displaced, helping them to find jobs and financially. I suppose, now we've moved on more into a world where the difficulty is continuing the grinding progress, with the war which has no ending in sight. I know that members of our organisation periodically get in touch and say they're interested in helping, but the kind of skills that we have in our organisation are more going to be focused towards, you know, hopefully, rebuilding the future.
- I wonder whether any of you have any knowledge over what's been helpful; what would be the most helpful things that organisations could be doing at the moment, whether there are good organisations within Ukraine that we should be reaching out to to see whether our members can help?
 - One of the things that we found really difficult actually was trying to figure out who was where and what the networks were. So we knew that there were people working in cultural heritage in Ukraine. But it became apparent that a lot of the international communication structures just weren't there. So there's a long term lesson there. When we're talking about disaster preparedness, it's not just guidance and approaches and toolkits, it's having in place the personal relationships and the kind of mental map of who's where.
 - I think the best we've managed to do is just start to talk to people and then connect to other people to try and eventually get to the person who can say 'what we need is X'. That was the request for fire extinguishers. But that was going through many, many links in a chain to get there. So in the future, if we had the luxury, we'd probably invest in trying to have better network so that that communication can happen more quickly, more effectively, and get off the ground quicker.
 - I think we've had similar difficulties; we don't seem to have an analogous kind of direct organisation that does a similar thing to us. These people



have much better things to than talking to me about what members can do to help.

- I think it that's a good point that when, if you're already in a tough situation and struggling day to day, having 20 organisations all ask you the same question is probably not helpful. So, there's a bigger of how we collaborate to better both sides.
- Think I'll equally echo the importance of communication but in addition to that, whilst it wouldn't necessarily be helpful for Ukrainians, at least, information or being able to produce or provide information on what is actually going on, or what facilities are available to members to help. My network is rather small, so I do appreciate that this might not be far reaching or anything but speaking to people day to day, they're not keeping up with the news. It's not surprising that you hear about what's going on, but you don't hear about exactly what is really being done to help, by organisations or the government. You hear that we're sending weaponry, but a lot of people at this moment in time will be like, 'oh, I don't feel we should be really investing so much in defence and or military exercises', when obviously, everybody is absolutely terrified of the growing economic crisis.
- So, I think providing as much detail as what you feel is necessary, but information for members should they decide to take any action and being able to effectively communicate with the realities of what is going on. Using that as a foundation to form communication with organisations, either within Ukraine, or nationally or internationally. So a better sort of platform to provide support would help to ensure that members are at least informed about the relevant areas and topics, which can then form a basis of moving forward should individuals or organisations wish to.
- We were very pleased when we found our sector was very quick to condemn the warfare. There were a lot of different reactions within the sector as some are more international, some are more UK based. There was a lot of talk about supporting the individuals, not the commercial organisations that could be supporting the regime. And so, there's a myriad of different approaches, but I do think it's been excellent how the engineering profession has really talked to each other about how we approach this and pulled ideas together. Now we've got our act together about mentoring refugees, I think we could do more. I have seen the number of volunteers coming forward who give up their time, and their expertise has been unprecedented. So, I'm really pleased that we can make a positive impact for people's lives who are fleeing from the terrible conflict.
- It's great to hear the sector is in consensus. I think that also highlights what we have discussed before. Using that community approach to underline for Ukrainians that 'you are not alone; people want to help and provide support'. So, it's good to reach out, even if you fall on deaf ears. No harm in trying to create a sort of homogenous community where everybody realistically does want to support Ukraine but may not necessarily be financially able to do so.
- We did the same thing with offering free membership to affected members. Again, same thing of not penalising the individual.



- We've been asked by some of our members to look at a more inclusive policy for refugees and I was wondering if the support you guys are all offering if you extend that to others and how you actually define. Are we prioritising refugees from Ukraine over those from Afghanistan? What about when there's a conflict in Syria for example, are you offering the same type of support? How do you put those measurements in place for things happening across the globe where our members and organisations need equal support?
 - I am not sure if this is going to help or not but we had calls to give free memberships to Ukrainians in the early weeks of the invasion. I had to say no, partly because of exactly that point, we hadn't really taken much interest in conflicts elsewhere. My view is I want it to be fair: if we're going to support refugees, we support all refugees. As an organisation, we don't have the capacity to be that generous, we don't have a Benevolent Fund or anything like that because we're only a very new and small professional body. So we did take quite a hard line on it in many ways. It was a sentiment that was actually echoed by one of our members who wrote in our magazine, she supported the fact that we had taken some action with regard to Ukraine, but pointed out that no one had taken any interest in any previous conflicts, and quite rightly, that raises questions that we haven't actually got very good answers to.
 - That's a really pertinent comment there. And it's kind of fulfils what I was trying to articulate earlier in that there are some organisations that had an existing refugee policy, which they simply adapted to extend that support to the Ukraine, but those that didn't have those foundations in place, and hadn't necessarily been involved in supporting those sorts of conflicts before, albeit this one a little bit closer to home than many are used to, it was the first occasion in which they were getting involved in that sort of support. It's good of you to use that sort of foresight, you didn't just provide a reactive response.
- I just wanted to briefly share what we have tried to do. In direct response to our members really wanting to do something, like many other organisations, we released a statement to start with, and we thought about what else we could do. We set up a hub called Planners Beyond Boundaries, which was directly in response to the Ukrainian situation, but we took a view that that could be open to all refugees that would contact us, supporting our profession. So this was mainly directed at refugees who had come into the UK with a right to work and we've worked with other organisations who specialised in welcoming refugees, who have rights to work in the UK. And although quite a lot of the initial contact we had with refugees were from Ukraine, we also had inquiries from other refugees, professionals from Hong Kong, for instance.
- We wanted to have an initial response to put them in touch with this partner. We then used other organisations who are specialised in matching agencies between potential employers and refugee to try and place refugees who have a right to work in the UK. We also wanted to link up with our sector's education and be a representative of providing information on what the profession and academia were doing to support refugees. So, if we knew any of our accredited institutions



were offering a scheme or specific help, we would try to signpost to other organisations and partners who are supporting refugees. We also linked to organisation that we are aware of within Ukraine.

- Did you have any further stipulations other than the right to work in the UK? Did you make any adaptations to perhaps the type of qualifications that they held that you were able to then to accept to work them onto that scheme?
- So what we're trying to do is with our education team, is to see whether we have specific inquiries through our hub, to see how we can link up with and help with the type of qualification they have. I know in some instances we're looking at equivalents and trying to provide as much help and support that we can. If there are any sort of courses that might be helpful in terms of transitioning, we'll recommend them. Some of our materials can be accessed freely, so if that's suitable, our education team can consign posts to further information or resources available.
- It's interesting to hear that there were similar actions throughout different professions. With regards to Hong Kong and other instances, I must admit, researching this topic, perhaps it's because I was not necessarily looking out for it, but I didn't encounter anything specifically addressing refugees or other sort of similar action points with regards to the original question on wider refugee support. As for our organisation, we are a member organisation for member organisations, we don't necessarily offer anything ourselves with regards to supporting refugees, with exception to our members requesting research into the subject matter.
- One of the follow up questions PARNGlobal would like to explore in the sector. Should there be a standard or should professional bodies have a sort of firm role in lending support in international crises? in whatever capacity it is, whether this be in the form of the kind of support that is lent to previous international events that have happened prior to Ukraine, because as we've discussed, Ukraine seemed to be a major turning point with regards to the type of support and the amount of support that was given.
- For the purposes of further research, if any of our guests here would be able to explain in as much detail as you like, what your organisation or members or staff did in kind of response to the invasion, whether that be from familiar the initial response or over time. If you didn't do anything as an organisation that would equally be helpful to know, but it would be great to kind of get some more insight into what other people have done.