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DIGITAL COMICS OF MIGRATION

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INTERVIEWS

KING DANYLO UNIVERSITY



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INTERVIEW 1

Interviewer: Olya, tell us your story. Where exactly are you from and how did you end up moving to Germany?

Interviewee: I am originally from Frankivsk. At the beginning of the war, I was also here, we lived near Frankivsk, in Zahvzd, with my children. When the war started, on the first day of the full-scale invasion, we thought we needed to go somewhere, but then we heard that the borders were already closed, and we wanted to go with our family and my husband, so we postponed this decision but still hoped that everything would pass very quickly. It will end, as it probably will for everyone, and then some moments, when I remember very well, that almost every Thursday there was an event or an explosion or a plane taking off. Because we lived near the training area and we heard all the explosions, all the exercises. And my children reacted very strongly to that. I realized that the moment of departure was approaching. We weren't ready, but I prepared myself anyway and began to send my regimen to foreign institutions. I was working at the university in the academic field, and at the time of the war, I was on maternity leave. I was already planning to come out of the maternity leave, but there would be nowhere to go from this maternity leave. So I started looking for ways to get there. And then one day I got a positive decision from a technical university that they invited me to come. We already have ten Ukrainians here on scholarships for six months.

I mean, I knew I was not going anywhere, that a lot of people were going, but I was going, and there was still something waiting for me. That was my beginning. And so I packed up, I took my two kids, I took my mother.

It would have been difficult for me to organize my life alone with my children at the beginning. So we got in the car and left.

Interviewer: And what is life like in Germany now? How is your everyday life, your work, and your relationships with others in general?

Interviewee: Well, in two years we have kind of fully acclimatized. I have a full-time job at the university. The kids are in kindergarten. My first daughter will start school this year in September. So we have more or less adapted to a different life, different realities, and different rules. Well, I can say that a month ago it became a little easier to live. Before, everyone always thought that when we went abroad, everything was very nice, everything was easy, and they gave us a lot of money, but in fact, there are many moments when you start from scratch, it is very difficult.

Interviewer: Did you meet Ukrainians in Germany who also left Ukraine because of the war? Do you have your own social circle, your own community there?



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Interviewee: The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was very helpful in this regard. At the beginning of the war, they organized themselves in such a way that they made a kind of aid station for all those who came, all Ukrainians. Accordingly, they began to organize everyday life in such a way that there were various events for children. So every Sunday we see our community. By the way, this also helped a lot because there were not only those who had recently arrived but also those who had been living in Germany for a long time and they were very supportive in terms of organizing documents, in terms of telling us where to go, how to register, how to find a kindergarten because this is also a very complicated issue in Germany. They were very supportive with their tips and advice on how to make your life easier. I can't say that we found close friends there, but there is always support.

Interviewer: How did you travel? What transportation did you use? Were any of your friends, family, or relatives with you?

Interviewee: No, we just traveled with our family. We traveled with my mother, my father, and two children. We traveled in my father's car. Because he also had armor at that time, he was allowed to cross the border, so he drove us there, left us there, and had to go back himself because he had no intention of leaving the country. So it was just support for us to get the women to safety and for us to adjust a little bit to the new life.

Interviewer: Olya, where exactly are you working now in Germany? You've already talked a little bit about the tech industry at the beginning. Tell us more about it.

Interviewee: I am a postdoc at the Technical University of Munich. Our department is called "Non-Detachable Control". This is my background, what I studied in the field where I got my PhD. And I can say that I was very lucky to find a similar specialty there. And thanks to the professor who worked there, it was more of a personal merit, as I even said, that he was so willing to support the country that he said, "Yes, I'm willing to take a person on a scholarship. So the scholarship is not a place where there is a vacancy. For example, they found it and decided, okay, let's think of something and we'll find a new job for that person. And so I did an internship there. I really liked it, somehow I came very easily and adapted to the team.

A lot of new projects have opened up for me. I'm actually working on a project myself, for which I received funding through the government. This is a program I applied for. For the first six months, I was an intern, and six months later I was working on my own project. And now I plan to work on it for another two years and finish my work there.

Interviewer: Olya, how did moving and distance change your family?



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Interviewee: This is really a very difficult time for a family, for the relationship between husband and wife, I would say. It was such a tumultuous life because it was still a long-distance relationship. Later we managed to get my husband to come to us. But it was very difficult because I am the kind of person who needs family support.

We are very close to our parents, so we have a very good relationship. And we really miss them a lot. And every time there is an opportunity either for them to come to us or for us to come to them, at least for a couple of days. It takes two days to travel to spend one day together. So we still try to keep in touch. And within the family, it's the same. Not only we had to adjust to a new life, but also the family had to adjust to a new life because it was very difficult. It's really hard to be away from everyone, from everything, without friends, without support. And if I didn't have my family, for example, I don't know if I would have been able to adapt and stay there to work.

Interviewer: Olha, how do you feel when you meet other Ukrainians in Germany? Is there a feeling of something native? Are there common topics of conversation?

Interviewee: Yes, of course. Especially when they all speak Ukrainian. It's a very strong feeling that we are still us... Well, you could even say that we have similar problems. And no one will understand us better than Ukrainians who have gone abroad. Because everyone has gone through the same stages of adaptation. And they really always try to support each other. For example, last week we had a vacancy at our institute. And there were two applicants. There was a German-speaking woman and a Ukrainian woman. And accordingly, when she came and saw that there was someone from her own country, it was much easier for her. I tried to help her and she felt that support. And she also told me afterward, she said, you know, if I had come and I didn't know anybody here, I probably would have doubted more whether I should stay in this position or continue to look for it. And if you still have someone you know, it is much easier and much more comfortable to move on. That's why I think it's very important to stay connected to your Ukrainian community. It's not even about looking for friends, but it's at least some kind of connection, because you feel like you're on your own land a little bit, and you're not alone in this world.

Interviewer: Olya, do you have any kind of vision for the future? Do you plan to go back to Ukraine? Or are you already settled in Germany? These are all ties to work, to projects.

Interviewee: Well, at the moment I have decided for myself that I have a position that I am trying, because the war is not over and it is not clear when it will end, so the reconstruction will not start soon, but I am trying to



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promote cooperation with Ukraine in terms of economic cooperation between universities. Now I also came to talk to my alma mater. And we have worked out a plan for further cooperation with the university. That is, I try to tell everyone as much as possible, well, in all areas, that we have a lot of progressive things in Ukraine, that we are real people who are ready to work, who have a lot of experience. So now I am working in this area, I want to help promote projects, to look for funding for the development of science, because everything stopped when the war started. Education is very important and without any funding, we will fall behind the rest of the world.

Interviewer: Olya, would you recommend to the people who are living somewhere in the front-line zones and in the most dangerous areas of Ukraine to leave their homes and go abroad, as you have done? Or should they stay in their houses?

Interviewee: I want to say this as a mother, for example, in terms of, if you have children, safety is the most important thing, so I definitely recommend it. I'm not saying it's going to be a very easy life, it's going to be difficult at first, but in order to ensure safety, I think parents have to be able to do everything. So as long as there is an opportunity, as long as there is support from Germany, yes, it is not the same as it was in the beginning when everybody left, but it is still there. That means you will feel safe, there will be no insults or anything like that. Of course, what I recommend is that it shouldn't be such long stays, plans, but as such a time to stay, not to imitate yourself in safety, I think it's a very good option. Because we are all human beings, we can protect ourselves from everything, we are all strong, not broken, yes, but it still affects our psyche, and somewhere sooner or later we will get tired of it, and we will not be able to be such iron people, so we need a little bit of peace.

Interviewer: By the way, how do children adapt to the new realities? School, educational institutions, communication with friends? Do they even have friends?

Interviewee: In general, my children adapted very easily because at the time we left, my younger child was one year old and the older one was three years old. So they were still small, they may not have understood all the nuances yet, and they immediately started listening to the language. They were basically self-taught, and they had only recently started speaking, so the language might have been a problem at first, but later they adapted to it. My oldest daughter speaks German fluently, even though she didn't go to school, she learned it in kindergarten. But, for example, for children who have already been... We are very close friends with a family, they are also from Ukraine, and they have three children, thirteen, fifteen, and eight years old. And the youngest child adapted very easily. The language is easier to learn, but the older kids, always ask, "Mom, Dad, let's go back, we're not happy here, we have our friends there."



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They don't want to adapt. So it's also stressful for the child. The smaller the child, the easier it is to adapt to them. And it's also harder for adults to fit in. Similarly, for example, older children also have a harder time adapting.

Interviewer: Olha, after a full-scale invasion, what will not be the same as before? How do you think, how you feel, how you see the world in general?

Interviewee: It seems to me that nothing will be the same as before, because we have all changed a lot as people. Our priorities have changed a little bit. We used to put something off and now we try to live this life to the fullest. Because we realize that not every day is the same as it used to be. Personally, I value all my relationships with my family and friends more because it's really very holistic for me. In terms of work, for example, my vision of how to work here and there has completely changed.

I think we take into account the opportunities abroad. From the point of view of supply, they are much higher. But the human factor and the human attitude to work are completely different. That is why I really hope that as soon as the war is over, we will move to the level of support that is available abroad. But we will simply be the best country in the world with our human potential.



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INTERVIEW 2

Interviewee: Good afternoon. My name is Oksana. I was born in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk, but now I live with my family in Wroclaw.

Interviewer: Please tell us about your life before you immigrated. Is your profession, lifestyle, and leisure activities different from what you have now?

Interviewee: Before moving to another country, I was a mother and a psychologist, and I graduated from Precarpathian University. In fact, I worked in this specialty, but I went on maternity leave and looked after my children. Before I left, I started to go deeper, to work on myself, on psychology, to develop practically. And it was very interesting for me because just before I left for another country, I wanted to realize myself more as a psychologist, to continue this practice. After all, I worked as a practical psychologist at a school in Ivano Frankivsk. And I liked it.

Interviewer: How and under what circumstances did you decide to immigrate, and was it a difficult decision for you?

Interviewee: Well, I would say that when the Maidan was happening around 2014, my husband made this decision. Well, it was probably me who encouraged him. He went to Poland and said he had the opportunity. And I offered him because I understood that such things were happening in our country. And he left us alone, I was left alone with small children. He came to visit us from time to time and always asked me if I would return to Ukraine. And for some reason, I felt inside that no, I didn't want him to come back. But I understood that the kids were growing up and it was hard for everyone, so the children needed their dad. Well, first of all, I have a second son, a teenager. And it will be very valuable for him to have a father to raise him. Because Dad has knowledge and wisdom that he can pass on as a man. And this was probably the driving force behind my decision to move in with my husband. Because 4 years of living like this is also a crisis for the family, because, well, you get unaccustomed. And if I had a little bit more time, I would probably feel it and say, no, I'm fine here, I feel good. And I started studying psychology, working on myself even more deeply. And I thought that a little more and I would say, well, I'm done. And then the kids would say they wasted their time. I mean, you can't turn back time. That's why I decided to go to my husband so that the family could be together.

Interviewer: So the main reason was a family reunion? In another country, right?



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Interviewee: Yes, that was my main reason for the family reunion. But I was probably not ready to leave Ukraine internally, because I love it so much. And, probably, it was not a conscious migration. It was not a conscious migration where I said I want to, I'm getting ready, we're learning the language. I still had a different attitude towards this and internally I didn't want to move, but I did it for the sake of my family.

Interviewer: In general, here is the process of migration. How can you describe it and explain it to yourself? I understand that you are not alone but with children. I mean, the process itself, how complicated it is.

Interviewee: From my experience, the process of migration was very painful for me, so much so that I didn't feel inside what I wanted, I don't know. My soul must have been somewhere, you know, born in Ukraine, and it was its destiny to be in Ukraine. Somewhere in my mind, I had this attitude to the migration process, I didn't want it, it was hard for me. I have already mentioned this before. Unlike my husband, who left, he said that he felt it was easy from the very beginning because he had opportunities to learn the language with a friend who was a teacher. That is, if we compare my process with his, then at times he felt as if he had lived in Poland somewhere in his life. That is, when he listens to Polish music, he says that he really likes the songs, he is impressed. That is, he felt much better inside when he moved to another country, it was much easier for him. For me, it was completely different. I had some issues that were later felt in the fact that I came to a foreign country and it was hard for me. I left everything behind. It was a lot of psychological work on you when you had no documents. At that time, you couldn't go to Ukraine. I imagined that if I could move freely from one country to another, he (my husband) would come to visit me more often - okay. But when I realized that this was a closed space, then, probably, somewhere I started thinking about psychological work on myself to help me facilitate this adaptation. I asked as a psychologist what is there, what is not here. And I have been going through this process. The war and it was very...

Interviewer: So you left before the full-scale invasion, right?

Interviewee: I left before the full-scale invasion, but I got caught in this wave of COVID. This was also a different experience for me, it was not a war, but it also affected my adaptation. Because the borders were closed, you could not... It wasn't so easy and simple to survive this migration to another country and adapt because you had your limitations. Unlike these people who left before the Covid and had a different situation.



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Interviewer: Poland seems to be not far away, right? But there were delays at the border because of the difficulties. How long did your journey take from your home to your destination?

Interviewee: I don't really remember. Maybe now, but it took about a day. I was a little scared because it was the first time I took my children on such a long journey, and I was interested to see how they endured such a long journey. We had been there before, we had visited, but I don't even honestly remember how it happened.

Interviewer: And what about the children, did you observe how they perceived this journey? Probably more like an adventure, right?

Interviewee: I remember the moment when I told my children. My daughter was older than my son. He was in the second grade, and she was four years older, I told her that we were going to move in with her dad. At that time, she was attending the class of Oleksii Leydiuk, our actor. He plays plays with two birds with one stone. There were prospects, he was very good at drama, very good, the kids developed it, and I took her to English, and I took my son too. They went everywhere, they had everything for the children, we had all the prospects, development. When I said we were going to move, the child said, 'Mum, I want to be with my dad, I want to leave it all. Her priority was to be with her dad. And even she didn't look at the fact that there was a club or something else. For children, the importance is about seeing their dad. Well, I think my little son didn't care. He probably perceived it as a game, because he didn't understand anything yet. I was worried about him on the road because he was very fast. I remember that he went to the toilet, got off the bus by himself, and ran. I was scared, thinking, oh my God, I have such an active child. He was so brave, always the first to go everywhere. So somewhere in there, I was worried that the child was in the bus, that he hadn't run out of another door somewhere, and I hadn't lost him. I had such fears. And this is probably how a mother understands her child.

Interviewer: Can you recall your state and emotions after you arrived in a new place? That is, when you have already arrived, have already been reunited, have seen this new place, and have realized that you are going to live here. Can you describe your state?

Interviewee: In the beginning, it was hard for me because it was an adaptation, both physical and psychological. It was a crisis when the family was separated like that. So it was not very fun for me. And the feelings that I had, well, I felt, I was boasting, I was worrying a lot. That's why my health got worse. I had a cancer diagnosis and was sent to the hospital.



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And I would say that it was an adaptation for me when I arrived and I didn't understand what I was supposed to do, what I wanted to do. And then the COVID started. A lot of questions such as: Do I need to continue my life here, learn a language, do something, and work? This also gave me such tension in my body that I couldn't relax and feel happy. I came here with my husband by my side and, that is, it was a difficult period for me until I went to psychological therapy and took care of my health and it became much easier for me. And maybe somewhere along the way, I realized that the most important thing about this migration is that all I have is me. This is also what I know, my knowledge, skills, abilities, and my family. This is what I can put in this backpack and take with me. Because you can always create a cozy atmosphere in any home. The main thing is how you perceive it internally and what you take with you. Because you can't take your parents, you can't take the people who were in your space. But you are you. That's why it's probably not an easy path for me to understand and realize this.

Interviewer: Did you feel any difference in the cultural environment in a new city in a new country compared to Ukraine and Ivano-Frankivsk, where you lived?

Interviewee: Well, when I arrived, I was surely surprised. I said, our city (in Ukraine) is so beautiful, we have paving and architecture. I didn't like the city (abroad) at first, but then I started to get used to the city, to seeing a lot of interesting things in it, and every time I go even to the same places, I always find something new, I take pictures and I get inspired by this city.

I was also impressed that I looked at the school and the peeling walls. I remember that my child went to school and everything was there, including the dining room, and everything was very nice, you know, all the clubs were there. I could feel a difference even in the organization of education for children, and I thought, well, in Ukraine everything was the same. I felt a difference in the fact that teaching children is difficult. Because there is no opportunity, the clubs for children are expensive, if in our group a child goes more than once a week, here, for example, you can go only once. It was very expensive, and for me, it was also stressful that the kids didn't have all this. And as for the differences, well, I know, culturally, what can I say? At first, I felt a little uncomfortable. You speak Ukrainian and people look at you immediately, and you feel a little bit odd because you're talking to someone on the phone and they pay attention to you. It was like that at first. I just found my environment. There is a cultural center for Ukrainians here, organized by Ukrainians.



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Every Saturday there were classes for children. There we studied history, and the Ukrainian language, we danced and sang Ukrainian songs, we had various classes. There was also a Polish woman who helped Ukrainians a lot. And our Ukrainians, created a circle, a circle in Wroclaw that is very valuable. I started taking my kids there, and I felt that our culture was there, they supported us, and it was very valuable for me. Because, well, this is probably what gave me energy and strength, and to be in this environment, among Ukrainians.

Interviewer: Do you feel integrated into the culture, into the local community and do you feel accepted by the local community, this is more about the Ukrainian community in your city, right?

Interviewee: Yes, but if we talk about the Poles. We know a lady we know she is like a grandmother to us, to my children. She accepted us so cozily, and warmly, and loves us like a real grandmother. Everything has changed. There are a lot of Ukrainians around me, and when the war started, they were very understanding. In the beginning, there was a language barrier that I felt. Young people from all over the world came through to Wroclaw for one religious gathering. Poland fed them, families took them in to live with them and then gathered to pray. It was a special program. And I think that back then when Ukrainians came to the city, no one made a difference whether you knew the language or not. We were easily accepted. But there were moments when you were standing in a queue and talking, and people would stare at you or say something. Even my husband noticed these looks. It made you feel that you didn't know the language and it was hard to feel normal. And I had complexes about this. Because I was used to speaking openly and if you don't know something, you don't say anything. Although I have a friend who came to visit, she spoke Ukrainian and knew a few words of Polish, and she felt comfortable. Well, I have a language barrier, because I don't know the language, and this is probably the most significant thing for me, during my immigration.

Interviewer: What do you think of the local people? Are they caring? Did you feel supported? You have already said about your grandmother that she had a very good attitude, but if you generalize?

Interviewee: I would say that, in general, Poles always treat Ukrainians well. We are very grateful. I even managed to work on a project to help refugees who left after the war. One Polish family, a man and a woman, taught us in this project. But we didn't know they were Polish because they spoke Ukrainian. They used to study psychology in Ukraine. It was very valuable to learn about their attitude, and we didn't feel any



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difference. Later they told us that it all started in Poland. Almost all churches started organizing this help. We were very organized, and there was such openness when you listen and feel it. Because they really tried to help us somewhere. I probably felt this confirmation when the war started that the Poles were helping us and understanding us.

Interviewer: Did you find a job in your new city? Did you set this goal and did you achieve it?

Interviewee: When we arrived here, I had a job, my husband found me one because there was no other way. I looked after people, one of them had a psychological diagnosis. He was like a relative to me. So for me, this job was more or less normal. Even though I am a psychologist. But I set a goal when I came here, and it was probably valuable for me that I could negotiate with myself, while I didn't know the language, I imagined that I would work online with Ukrainians. And I did everything for that. Because I didn't know how to work on Facebook or Instagram, and I didn't know what it was. So I started studying at an online school with a coach named Aliona Shcherbyuk. And there I learned, I found myself. I learned how I can help people by working in online social networks. When this covid started, we valued things when people were at a distance. We learned how to meet different people at a distance, communicate with them, cooperate with them, and help them. This has been my goal until now. I still work online as a psychologist. It is very popular nowadays to work from home, anywhere in the world. But I also set other goals, I want to expand to work offline. Everything is step-by-step. In addition, I was trying to run my own practice. There is one problem with documents for Ukrainians - if you don't have an official job, it's hard to get documents.

Interviewer: What support do you need from the local community? Perhaps from social services, or local authorities. Do you need any support?

Interviewee: I don't know what to say, because I rely on myself. Remembering my experience when we worked with families, I helped, it was a great opportunity to research Ukrainians. And I'm not the only one, everyone needs such support. We even discussed this and did a survey. The issue of medicine is very difficult. It is difficult for us to make an appointment with a doctor so that we don't have to wait for him or her. This is probably the most important thing. Speaking about children, as my son is studying, there are difficulties because there is bullying in schools, sometimes by Ukrainians. There are even Ukrainians who bully their children, which is why the



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situation is so difficult. Secondly, the inability to transfer a child to another school. In this place, if you live in this neighborhood, you have to go to this school. So transferring to another school is the most difficult thing right now. And if you don't know the language, you probably need to find such teachers. But some Poles are eager to teach us. They want to. And I attend courses, they are very good. We also face difficulties with housing. It is difficult, for example, to buy an apartment, you need to have all these documents, all the grounds, and income. It takes a lot of money. There are problems with housing, with doctors, language barriers, you don't know the language or you don't have the documents. It is very important if you do not have a confirmed education at the level of Poland. We also face the fact that we are specialists working in jobs that do not correspond to our specialization. Because to get a document on higher education you need to go to school, and to study you need to pay money and know the language. But we have police schools here where you can also study. These schools are created for Ukrainians, you can go to university, you can get an additional specialization, and then you can have a document and work in Poland. They recognize that you are the one who really studied and already knows the language.

Interviewer: Has migration changed your family customs and relationships? What kind of adjustments did migration and your stay in another country make when the whole family is together?

Interviewee: Well, I think it's religious values. I exhaled a sigh of relief that there are Ukrainian traditions here and that I can celebrate Ukrainian holidays. I started celebrating Polish Christmas and Ukrainian Christmas, too, according to our traditions. And it was also valuable for me to learn about their culture. You see, there was a difference in our celebrations, a noticeable one. Because the Poles celebrated, and you don't celebrate. And you feel that you are different. Therefore, perhaps, honoring their traditions and customs was added somewhere. Just like us, they have days off for holidays. We are also accustomed to their culture. There are various events, we go and learn about their culture and a lot of things. We recently visited Miłoszrzy and they also told us that our children are Ukrainians and they are very knowledgeable about Polish culture. Living in this city, they learn these peculiarities and they have already got used to it and know a lot about Wrocław. It's very interesting. I also learned here and found out about the city, the gnomes, and why it is called that way. We are very fond of their gnomes, and then we are looking for more than 400 of them. We add each one with an official application. Even now we have started adding gnomes. These are small



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bronze figures made of bronze around the city, you have to look for them near every café. And these gnomes symbolize a certain value, a culture. There's a gnome with the Polish Constitution, someone is playing the guitar, and it's very valuable to learn about this culture and go to museums, and see how everything happens here. Their traditions and all that I have added for myself and my family is the interest in learning about the culture.

Interviewer: Do your children have friends and have they integrated? How did your children find this adaptation?

Interviewee: It was a bit difficult for my children because it was a covid. I just see the consequences of all this, what happened in every country when we were locked up like that, not allowed to leave. We arrived and the child finished the second grade. There is a tradition here that a child goes back to the same class in a Polish school. We refused to do so because the child was so knowledgeable that we did not see the need for this. But when the Covid started, the child did not attend school for a whole year. We didn't study online, we just received assignments in the mail, my child is a son, he couldn't read or write, and I had to teach him. He didn't go to school much, he didn't communicate much because there was no school. Then online learning started, but since he is studying at a school with special needs, and integration classes, it also affects the child. because the child needs to get used to the fact that there are children in the class who can shout. and this is not a normal class where we studied in Ukraine, so, in principle, at the beginning, the teacher spoke very openly. I'm talking about my son. The teacher said that he wanted to communicate and he did, but he didn't know how to convey to the children what he wanted, because he didn't know all the words, but in principle, he learned the language quickly. He adapted, it's easy for him, he doesn't have any difficulties with it. The problems in school are a little bit related to this situation, and I talked about bullying, which affects the relationship between children. And you can't say that here you have a friend forever, there is no such thing. My daughter was learning Polish, and it was also difficult for her to adapt. It's more about the psychology of the child, who has his or her own experiences. She was a teenager, she had to live her own life. But she also lost all her friends, and everything that was in Ukraine, and she came to an unfamiliar environment. But she managed to do it. As for her language skills, she's good. Finding a common language with others is probably the first thing children learn.

Interviewer: So you've been in Poland for 5 years now, right?



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Interviewee: Since the beginning of 2020.

Interviewer: It's very difficult to plan now, especially with the situation in Ukraine, but still, where do you see yourself in Poland next, or do you plan to return?

Interviewee: I don't even know what to say, because I understand that I can't return yet because of the war. My husband asked me a question: would you return if you had the opportunity to rebuild Ukraine? He asked me this question just a year ago. I answered that I didn't know yet. But he is already asking himself such questions. Of course, he can't leave, he's working and helping the country as much as he can. I don't know yet. I come to my parents, but there are issues there. And I think that for now I am here and I would like, it was probably my dream to live in a foreign country so that I could come to Ukraine. So that we could have weekends and holidays, could come to Ukraine and enjoy it. I want to know that I can freely enter and leave. This is probably the hardest thing for all of us immigrants who have been waiting for documents for years. For the first three and a half years of emigration, I did not see my mother, my sister, or anyone else. I couldn't come. it was very stressful for me. and when the war started, my mother came here with my sister. I saw them then. I'm glad that there is still online communication and there is the possibility of phone calls. It saves everyone. and it gives you inner peace that your parents are still alive and you can communicate with them in this way. In this unstable time, it is stressful for every Ukrainian to return without a husband and take children who have already adapted here to start in Ukraine in those conditions. Because of the war, the situation is unstable in all countries. And those who are in Poland do not think that they want to return home. Because there is nowhere to go, there is shooting. People think that the war may start even here (Poland).

Interviewer: And what advice would you give to those people who may be planning or thinking of migrating, based on your experience?

Interviewee: I was often asked, you know. I live in Wrocław. My husband used to answer that in order to move your family, you need to start with the lowest needs. Like Maslow's pyramid. You need to think about where you will live, whether you have a place to live, and what documents you have. The first thing is to discover and ask about this country. Read what other Ukrainians write, how they emigrated, what documents you need to have at the beginning, and learn a lot of things, based on which you can live here. This is probably the basis of the basics. You have to have



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a job. You have to have a place to live. You have to have children to study. You have to apply for documents, and then you can do it when you have this security. It is very important to remember your inner state, about your health. It is important to go to different psychotherapy groups, or even these groups that I mentioned, the circle of Ukrainians. You need to find your people so that you do not feel alone because it is psychologically pressuring. And then you can think when you have done all of it. And this will be the foundation. Step by step you can think about how to move on. For example, Ukrainians think about this and rent apartments, take out a loan to live in, change jobs, and go through their pyramid. In order to reach a certain level and say that yes, I am good here. I have realized myself, I work, I do what I love, and I open my own business. For me, it's wow. But in the beginning, you have to think about the lower needs, how to satisfy them, ask who did what, and collect this experience.



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INTERVIEW 3

Interviewee: Hello, I'm Vira, I'm from the Ternopil area.

Interviewer: What was your job, lifestyle, and leisure activities before your migration?

Interviewee: I can say that they were quite interesting because I am one of those people who are easygoing. I was involved in educational activities, which is my favorite thing, especially since I was involved in scientific work and journalism. I was always communicating with young people who inspired me to do something new, so my life before the war was quite interesting and eventful. Because I love my job and I always say that a happy person is a person who enjoys going to work and coming home from work. I can say that I had such a perfect life.

Interviewer: How and under what circumstances did you make the decision to migrate? Was it a difficult decision?

Interviewee: The decision was not difficult. There is a reason that I follow the principle that physical sustenance is not enough for humans. Why is that? We are used to the fact that we need to work, earn money, and live for something, but for me, spirituality is also of great importance, which is directly related to my family. Because love has no equal. If you have someone at the side who's willing to go above and beyond, you're willing to go above and beyond.

My life was such that my husband was in the Ukrainian Armed Forces, he was on the front line when he got a spinal injury. After the operation, he was sent to Germany for rehabilitation. So no one would hire him to come back to Ukraine and go to war, and he was unable to work. And he needed support, support from his family. And we decided that the family helps when they are together when there are children when there is a man, when there is a woman, and this is normal.

So it was kind of an easy decision for me. I always say that there will be a job, there will be something to do if I have the health and the desire. And if I do not follow my husband, I will lose the most important things in life, comfort and family coziness.

Interviewer: Maybe there were some concerns that you were leaving a country where everything was native to you, and you were still going to a different country?

Interviewee: Of course, I was worried because as they say, only a dead man doesn't worry. I was worried. I didn't know what to expect. And the worst thing is the language barrier, because if your knowledge of English gives you some comfort at the beginning, then later you realize that you need to learn the language of the country you are in.



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Because I always had this question. How can you live in Ukraine, be Ukrainian by nationality, and not speak your mother tongue? It's the same here in Germany. If you don't speak German, I will say, perhaps offensively for some, they call those who don't speak German French. And I want to say that I really felt like a Frenchwoman because I didn't know how to begin, I didn't know where to begin, what to learn, how to acquire knowledge of the German language. When I read that it's the poorest language in the world, it has only 10 thousand words, I thought, oh yeah, I'm going to learn it. But another language is not so easy to learn. You had to want it. And when Germans see that you are trying to speak German, that you are learning it, they treat you very well. And so whether it was difficult or easy to adapt, it was very easy to adapt. And again, it goes back to what I said, if you have support, if you have someone around you who doesn't make you feel like a stone wall, it's very easy and simple. My husband speaks German perfectly and the rehabilitation was offered to him by his friends, Germans, for whom he used to work. And it was very easy to adapt because Germans are the kind of people who want to help, they try to help. And they are on the side of Ukraine, because every time I meet them and they know that I have to come, they prepare some newspaper articles, some information about Ukraine and always say that we Germans are with you, but we will never be able to do it like you, because we have no one to fight. The Germans are not as brave as the Ukrainians. And they are aware that thanks to Ukrainians they are holding back the war in Germany. We wonder why the German government is so eager to help Ukraine. And here ordinary Germans are the ones who consciously tell us that Germans will not fight and defend their country like Ukrainians do.

Interviewer: Why did you choose this particular town? It is my understanding that the choice of this city was because your husband is in rehabilitation in this city. Yes.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Isn't that a big city in Germany?

Interviewee: It's not a big city, it's between two big cities, between Düsseldorf and Essen. It's 20 kilometers from Düsseldorf and 15 kilometers from Essen. It's a small picturesque town called Felber. It is very convenient in the sense that it is close to every big city, and it is well-developed. Ethnic Germans live here who do not have this past from the Soviet era. There are very few immigrants from Russia. Mostly only Germans live here, and it is very easy and comfortable to communicate with them.

Interviewer: Every migration process has its pros, cons, advantages, and disadvantages. Could you name yours in the migration process?

Interviewee: I can list the following disadvantages of what has happened to our family: the adaptation itself. There is a lot of talk about the fact that it



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is much easier for children to adjust than for adults. I wouldn't say that. Because the idea that it is easier and simpler for children is that adults decide everything. There is such a big disadvantage for those parents who think that way. It's easier for adults. Because adults who are responsible for their children always make it a priority. I have to, I can, I must. And it seems to them that the child is under their care because they give their children everything they need. In fact, it is very difficult for the children because they are joining a new team. They do not know anyone, it is unknown to them, but along with this interesting second problem is the language barrier. It is very good if a child knows basic English, it helps at first, but not for long. It is very difficult for a child to adapt to a foreign country because he or she withdraws into himself or herself, does not want to talk, has no friends, and cannot communicate because he or she does not know their language. When a child goes to school or kindergarten, everyone looks at him or her as an alien, and it's a big plus if there is someone else who speaks Ukrainian, then they become friends, and if there is no such child, it's a very big problem. And the problem is that the child just closes in on himself, and when you say, "If you don't like it, let's go back to Ukraine. She immediately panicked and feared how we would return to Ukraine, and I told all my friends that I had left, and maybe forever. Then such a barrier arose, and I came to the following conclusion about my child: you just need to be not only a mother, and a mentor, and help her, but just become a friend and communicate on her level.

Interviewer: How old is the child?

Interviewee: 13 years old. There were no such problems with my older daughter. She is 18 years old and likes everything. But the big plus here is that she is studying a foreign language. She is learning English, German, and French. So she speaks English perfectly, she speaks German quite well, and she felt much more comfortable than my younger daughter. So it took at least six months for her to at least realize and make a plan for the future and what will happen next, how will I continue to live here. And then she started to feel more comfortable. There is a problem with my friends who also live in Germany and have younger children, they say that the younger the child, the easier it is to adapt.

They have children aged five and eight. The boy who is five years old goes to the orphanage and he is just clinging to his mother's neck and saying, Don't leave me here. He was crying, he didn't want to go there, it was all unfamiliar, and scary for him, and he couldn't communicate with anybody. And they have been here for two years and just this year the boys have adapted. If they can speak and communicate a little bit, then there is a little adaptation. So the biggest problem in every country is communication.



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The worst thing is that we do not have enough knowledge of foreign languages, which is a big disadvantage for our education and for ourselves.

Interviewer: But did you notice a difference in the cultural environment of your new city?

Interviewee: Of course it is. First of all, it is the culture of behavior on the road. We're used to crossing the street in authorized cities, where there are traffic lights, and all the identification signs, we look around, because we're afraid of being run over and hit out of nowhere. And here there is a great culture of the street. Even if it's a pedestrian crossing or even places where you're not supposed to cross, cars don't drive around here. That is, they drive so carefully that when you cross the street, you never have to worry about being hit by a car. And I realized why there are not so many accidents here. A driver's license, if you don't park properly and don't know how to drive, no one will give it to you and you won't buy it. This is a great advantage. Next, I really like the culture of behavioral training. That is when people are talking and they want to ask something, they don't yell, you know? What? I mean, everything is polite here. Please and thank you are always used in conversation. Even in public transportation, when they check tickets and passports, and a person is busy making a phone call or reading, no one will push you or yell at you to show it. There is no such thing. They are waiting for you to pay attention to them and show them your ID, and they thank you for doing so. So that is the culture. There are no lines, no pushing. I mean, people realize that they have time to do everything, and that kind of culture of interacting with each other is very impressive to me. I mean, there is no sense that everything is based on some emotions and some negativity. In fact, it impresses me, I really like it. I like the attitude of men to women and women to men. Very often in Ukraine, we hear that Ukrainian women are so beautiful, everyone pays attention to them wherever they go, and Germans are such a nation that they are uninteresting and unattractive, and so on. This is absolutely not true. These are women who take good care of themselves. They're women who follow fashion and they're women who don't gossip or talk behind someone's back. I really like that too.

Interviewer: Please tell me, do you follow entertainment, maybe sports?

Interviewee: Of course it is. I mean, if you look at the culture of German behavior, you realize that life is really beautiful. A person works to live, and life is about making it interesting. Ukrainians don't have that, maybe because we always have other problems: how to live, what to live for, how to survive. And here people are protected by the state. That is, they know that if something happens to them, they have social protection. And here, yes, they have worked through the weekdays, and then the weekends come, and it's an active time. They go on vacation, to entertainment complexes, and you



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don't have to wait for the weekend to do sports, you can just go for a bike ride, which is something that people do all the time. Walking is a widespread form of leisure here, and every park has been made very beautiful, there are these bicycle paths, walking paths that go from one town to another, through fields, along the river, which are paved, well-lit, and of course, guarded. These paths can be 10, 15, or 20 kilometers long, and at every step, there is a sign: if you go this way, you can go that way, you can go that way, you can go that way, you can go that way. So you can walk all day and learn something new. There are many different entertainment centers. For example, we made a birthday present for our child and took her to a fantasy park not far from Cologne. It's at the price of Ukrainians, it's supposed to be expensive, but by German standards, it's not expensive. It's a huge park, similar to Disneyland, and the entrance fee is 80 euros, but you go all day and enjoy all the entertainment. The kid was thrilled with it.

Interviewer: Do you have a sense of integration, a real sense of being part of the culture, part of the local community, being accepted by the local community, or do you have such feelings?

Interviewee: Yes, of course, I do, I feel very comfortable here, I have made a lot of friends, actually among Germans, we communicate very well. When I came here, I realized that I didn't want to be registered in the social security system, because for any person in Europe, 500 euros of assistance is very little. That is, I am one of those women who think that half the world is not enough and the whole world is too much. That's why I realized that I'm not going to apply for social security. I won't go to language courses, because I am a Ukrainian philologist myself, I know the methodology, I can learn a new language by myself, maybe not so fast, and I have to look for a job. What can I do? Of course, you can be a companion to the elderly, or you can raise other people's children. That is, that is the sphere. When I was offered one of these jobs, a companion for two elderly people, a man, and a woman, they began to treat me like their child. That is, we had breakfast and lunch together, I went shopping with them, and they told me about their problems, about their lives. As a result, I found other jobs and I would like to keep these people. But I can't leave them just because of their good attitude and the fact that they were the first to help me a lot. And I feel like a part of this country, although of course, I want to go home because wherever we are, we are home.

Interviewer: Of course, any external circumstances change the internal microclimate in the family. Have these external circumstances, your displacement, your stay in another country, changed your family relationships within your family, and you are now distant from the rest of the family, right?

Interviewee: Our attitude toward each other has not changed. We can say that the war changed us. Because we started to appreciate the time we spent together more. Our values have changed. We must appreciate what we



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have now.
You have to live your life in such a way that it is rich and motivated by something, and not just live to work to get something, that is, this value has appeared, and it has appeared not in connection with moving to another country, but in connection with the war. We just started to appreciate each other more, that's all.

Interviewer: Is that a dream or a plan, since you said you still want to go back to your hometown?

Interviewee: Of course, dreams. I always say that a person lives when he dreams and when he has plans for the future. No matter how beautiful the ship of life is with good sails, without a dream there is no wind. Of course, I have dreams connected with Ukraine. No matter how cozy and comfortable it is here, we are always with Ukraine in our hearts and souls, with those we left behind, those we knew, and those we worked with. We are always in touch and always concerned about what is happening in Ukraine because it is ours, it is our home, and we cannot live without it. We have plans to return home. Although, again, both my husband and I can come home. But there is only one dream - victory so that finally Ukraine will be free, and we have plans to come home, to continue what we have been doing, to rebuild something, to plan something, to do something, of course, we have plans.

Interviewer: What would you advise people who are either thinking about or planning to migrate? I mean, I get it, the first tip is of course the language, but maybe there are other tips?

Interviewee: You definitely need to find out more information about where you are going, whether there are Ukrainians there, whether there are people who can help you. Because at the beginning of the war, the most important thing was to save your life, and most people took one suitcase, one or two suitcases, and went abroad, and there were many volunteers who really wanted to help. Nowadays the situation has changed a lot, because many countries, and I even follow what is happening in Germany, no longer accept refugees. That is, they are not willing to provide asylum or help. So in order to be able to take care of yourself, you have to try to find people who can help you, who can give you advice, and first of all, help with housing, because there is a very big problem with housing here. You have to look at everything, where to go and what to do there, because it will be extremely difficult to do it yourself. Especially I have seen cases that happen in Germany. Of course, there are many people who are not satisfied with the fact that there are internally displaced people from Ukraine. And these are, first of all, those who were once displaced in Germany, who sought asylum here, and they are not happy about it, because Germany is already dividing funds between Ukrainians and those who came here earlier. I don't mean Ukrainians. This is a big problem because everybody heard it, and the media reported, that in Düsseldorf two



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boys were attacked and stabbed by Syrian boys, and these two boys died.

There were cases here, also not far from Metman, when again not native Germans, but other immigrants who spoke Ukrainian were beaten because they were perceived as their competitors.

Interviewer: And how long have you been migrating overseas?

Interviewee: Ten months. That is, less than a year.

Interviewer: What do you think about immigration policy? What ideas or comments do you have on how we can make our country better in this regard?

Interviewee: First, the state must make sure that people do not leave the country. In other words, everything should be done to make people interested in something so that they stay and rebuild their country instead of fleeing. Unfortunately, our government is doing everything to make people flee. That's why the population is divided into rich and poor, cunning and wise. So there is a kind of paradox here. There is absolutely no incentive to return or stay in the country. This includes jobs. This is also our policy. It just makes us sad what we hear and see in our country.

Interviewer: What you see in Germany is better. Isn't it?

Interviewee: What I have seen is that the population is protected. Protected by the state. That is, any problem is social protection. That is, people here don't worry about what will happen when I get old and how I will live. What if I don't have a place to live, where will I go? There are no such problems here. People here know that they want to go to work. Why? Because if they work, they pay taxes. And when they pay taxes, it means they are giving something to the government, so if they have some situations, the government will pay them. And they are not worried about what will happen when they get old and what will happen next. They have no such problems. And here it's like, oh, I have a toothache. We go to the doctor and we have a problem: we don't have the money yet, we have to wait for our salary. Here there are no such problems, if a person pays the insurance, he goes to the doctor and gets treated. The doctor does not care if I have money or not. If I pay monthly, it means I have the money, so there is absolutely no such problem. Even for cars, which I like, it is a means of transportation. And in Ukraine, for example, not everyone can afford to buy a car. In Germany, everyone can afford it, because he can take a loan. He can borrow a car, for example, drive it for a year or two, and then say, "I don't want it anymore. He can sell the car and give it back. And the money he paid is just canceled, and that's it. There are no creditors coming after him, and you didn't pay. This is how they live.



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INTERVIEW 4

Interviewee: My name is Iryna. I'm from Ivano-Frankivsk.

Interviewer: You have experience with migration due to the full-scale invasion. Can you please tell us why and how it happened you decided to migrate and where did you go?

Interviewee: Certainly, my migration story is connected precisely with the beginning of the full-scale invasion. On March 3rd, my family and I, or more precisely, my minor children - my 12-year-old and 3-year-old sons - went abroad to Germany. Why Germany? Because we had acquaintances there. I probably wouldn't have dared to go to a country where I didn't have any friends or acquaintances.

Interviewer: Was it a little over a week after the full-scale invasion and the explosions in Ivano-Frankivsk?

Interviewee: Yes, there was a lot of panic at that time. We didn't know what to expect, and there was panic everywhere. Our acquaintance from Germany called and even insisted that we come to him, saying that he would take us in. Probably, otherwise, I wouldn't have dared. Especially since I was with two children and alone. But later, my mother joined this trip. My husband took us to the Polish border, and we crossed the border on our own.

Interviewer: Was the decision difficult to make?

Interviewee: Very difficult, but it was a spontaneous decision. It was made literally within half a day. Our acquaintance from Germany called us at noon, and by evening we had decided to go. So, early in the next morning, we woke up, packed, and went straight to the border.

Interviewer: Was there enough time to pack?

Interviewee: Well, it was evening hours, and we took a minimal set of things, everything we could gather. It wasn't much, of course, because we weren't traveling by car from start to finish, and we didn't know how the journey would unfold. So, we took only the most necessary things.

Interviewer: How long did the journey take?

Interviewee: The journey was really difficult. Especially since my children had never been abroad before. It was a whole adventure, especially since we crossed the pedestrian border, and there were extremely long queues.



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To be honest, my younger son was only one and a half years old at that time, and he traveled in a stroller. It took a very long time, about 8-9 hours, but it felt much longer to me.

Interviewer: And it was quite cold then, wasn't it?

Interviewee: Yes, it was quite cold. In early March, the child was in warm clothes, but my story is not that difficult compared to what I saw at the border. Especially when I saw a woman holding two six-month-old twins in her hands. Seeing that, well, many things traumatized my psyche and consciousness because I wasn't used to such things, but nevertheless, this is life. There was a lot of panic, great panic. But the Poles received us very well. Everything at the border was organized, which surprised me. The world, especially the Poles, welcomed us so well. Everything was organized, even for small children - baby food, for adults - sandwiches, hot tea, and coffee, such basic things.

Interviewer: If you could describe your feelings, and emotions related to the move for you and your family members who were with you and those who stayed behind?

Interviewee: Well, let's say, everyone had mixed feelings because no one knew what to expect. Honestly, when I was planning this trip, I thought we would be gone for a week at most. I was going to a foreign country, who would take us there? But, of course, everyone was worried, everything was very unclear. We were met by Polish volunteers with whom we had previously agreed. It was a husband and wife who came and waited for us for 5 hours because they didn't know how long it would take us to cross the border. They met us and took us from the border all the way to Wrocław. They didn't take a single penny for it, and they even fed us on the way. It was a wonderful attitude, which surprised me, with how well they treated Ukrainians. We were very tired, especially my older son. We woke up very early, at 5 AM, when we left home and crossed the border at 10-11 PM. He was so exhausted that he lay down on a bench at the border, and people looked at him. It was his first experience, but later he said it was a moment he remembered very well.

Interviewer: Can you describe your feelings and emotions after you arrived at the new place?

Interviewee: It is a friend of my parents who offered us to come to Germany. Of course, it was much easier when someone familiar to you, whom you've known for many years, welcomes you. It was very pleasant that



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someone was waiting for us and supporting us. A German named Tomasz came for us in Wroclaw and took us to Germany.

Interviewer: So you didn't need to find accommodation, someone was waiting for you?

Interviewee: Someone was waiting for us, which is very important. Many people dare to go where no one is waiting for them, just to save their lives and the lives of their children. In our case, it wasn't that scary because it was relatively safer for us. The panic from hearing the alarm for the first time while I was walking in the city with my child was scary. It was like a film, and then a helicopter flew over the city. It was a war. Thank God, we had never had such an experience before, but we did not know how it could end.

Interviewer: After all this time has passed, can you already assess the advantages and disadvantages of this migration process?

Interviewee: Well, as with everything, I think there are pros and cons. In this case, a huge disadvantage is, of course, that the family was divided. My husband stayed in Ukraine, due to the law that he couldn't leave the country, and we went to a foreign country. It was hard for me with two children. But it was good that I still had my mum by my side. The warm attitude, and the fact that the children were safe, the children were fed, were more of a plus. Indeed, the Germans themselves, and the country itself, were very warm. Everyone was surprised how it was possible to treat a foreign nation so well. It is known that a few years before, the Germans accepted Arabs as their own, and now they have treated Ukrainians in the same way, so this nation's gratitude to this people is simply boundless.

Interviewer: Did you feel a difference in the cultural environment in your new city?

Interviewee: Well, yes, of course, everything is completely different. Raising children, different cultures, many things. Germany even provided us with free housing and we had the opportunity to live and not pay for it. It was a huge surprise, but on the other hand, their children wake up early and go to bed quickly. As a young mother, it was very noticeable and very strange. Because you couldn't make noise in the apartment, the child has no right to run around, because there could be some complaints immediately. And we lived in a house with older people. It was uncomfortable. That's why we walked a lot. We walked all the time, but there were also advantages to this. Thanks to this, we explored. We did not see the whole city, but we explored a lot of districts and saw a lot of things.



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Interviewer: And it was a small city, right?

Interviewee: Well, 100 thousand people, not big and not small.

Interviewer: I just wanted to ask you if you paid attention to entertainment, maybe you found some kind of sport for yourself there or the boys?

Interviewee: Yes, well, the thing is that we didn't plan to stay long. The situation was not getting better. And I thought, if things are like this, maybe we'll stay for the summer and then go home. And my older son did not go to school, because here children are forced to, let's say, it is a mandatory requirement. But the Germans could not react so immediately to so many children. That's why he hadn't been enrolled in school yet, and I thought it was not good for a child to study remotely and stay at home all the time. So we found a basketball club for him. It was great, just the attitude towards the children was very good. They gave him T-shirts and even though he didn't understand the language, he tried to speak English. He adjusted somehow and seemed to succeed. I was even surprised at how easy it was. And when we were leaving, to be honest, what really, let's say, touched me during this process of entertainment. We told everyone and the coach that we were leaving for good, and he even hugged him. That is, the attitude was so warm. I thought, oh my God, some strange kid from a foreign country, who needs you there. But no, the attitude was very good. We also had the opportunity to go to the swimming pool. That was all the entertainment we had.

Interviewer: Did you feel integrated into the culture, into the local community, and accepted by the local community? Did you have such a feeling?

Interviewee: I can say that the Germans were very warm to us. At first, they were looking at what kind of nation we were and what kind of people we were. On the one hand, everything was good, but on the other hand, when you don't understand the language in a foreign country, I can't say that I integrated.

Interviewer: You didn't know German well when you left, did you?

Interviewee: No, no, because I studied English at school and at university. German is a difficult language, so I learned just a few words there. Later, I walked down the street when I was out with my children and downloaded an app on my phone to learn the most common phrases. And that was it.

Interviewer: Did the move change your family customs?



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Interviewee: No, probably nothing. We always talked on the phone with my husband and talked about each other's affairs and situations. Almost nothing has changed. We've seen a lot, but nothing has changed.

Interviewer: I see that you didn't have to look for a job. Because this is a small child it would have been very difficult, of course.

Interviewee: At first, this German friend said that I could go to work, for a few hours. On the one hand, I was happy, but on the other hand, I wondered if my mother would be able to look after the child. We discussed it again with Tomasz and found out that I couldn't. He was told that I could not work at this job. It's a job in the kitchen, in a nursing home, but they refused because I don't know the language at all. Unless you know the language, nothing will work. If I was single and had no children, then maybe. But in my case, I had a lot to do.

Interviewer: Has migration changed who you are? And if so, how?

Interviewee: From my professional point of view, I borrowed a lot because I am a designer, and I was interested in the issue of inclusion, I borrowed a lot here. I saw how older people are treated, how everything is organized here, the city is absolutely well thought out. I saw everything detailed because I was walking with my little son all the time. I didn't have a single problem with the stroller. I didn't have to lift it anywhere, everything was thought out, absolutely all trams, all, all paths, all with ramps. This is something that Ukrainians, especially now, during the war, need to borrow and actively adopt and implement in our society.

Interviewer: You were away for seven months, right?

Interviewee: 7 months, yes.

Interviewer: When the boys returned, what were your emotions?

Interviewee: My little Yarema even went to kindergarten. We managed to do a lot in 7 months. The German friend didn't help us much here, I was mostly on my own. I used to call the workers on the phone and ask them how to get into the kindergarten, and how to sign up. We were also one of the first to arrive, so they didn't know how to treat us, but the rules were common to everyone: we had to sign up online. We waited for 2 months until we were accepted. We were accepted and it's great. What do I remember? Yarema was an infant, he had a hard time getting used to kindergarten. And I was surprised that we don't have this: in Germany, men work in kindergartens. A lot of them. They are so handsome, so tall, broad-shouldered, beautiful men. And once, when Yarema was crying so hard, I came to pick him up, worried about him,



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but everything was fine. And I remember seeing a man in the kindergarten carrying my son, who was eating a cucumber right in his arms, and this man was holding him and calming him down. It was such a sight. The child missed his father. But the main thing is that he did not cry, he was calmed down in this way. Men here, in general, do all the work, but like women. In Ukraine mostly, there is a gender division of professions.

Interviewer: Now we have heavy fighting going on in the east, people are being evacuated and people who may not have thought about emigrating before are going to migrate. From your experience, what advice would you give to those people who are going to migrate? What should they prepare for? And how to perceive it?

Interviewee: Well, what can I advise? I can't speak for other countries, but for Germany, I just see that our people are well received, and indeed, you don't even feel that you are in another country. Because there are so many Ukrainians here now. The only thing that hurts me is that I won't hear Ukrainian language. I know they are Ukrainians, but they are from the east, from Kharkiv and Odesa. And unfortunately, no one is switching to Ukrainian, and it's very painful, and it's very sad. Therefore, if you integrate, you need to adapt more to the culture of the nation you are in, rather than making demands. You have to follow the rules of the country you live in.



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INTERVIEW 5

Interviewer: How did you decide to leave your home? How did you realize you had to leave? And from where exactly?

Interviewee: My husband is a soldier, and our house was located on the territory of a military unit. On 16 February, there were talks that the war would start today, etc. But I'm quite an optimist in my life, I didn't believe in it and didn't understand it at all. Even if the war started, how would it get to Mykolaiv right away? I mean, we have time in any case. And then every day it was escalating, but we had no information that we really needed to take our families out of there, that missiles were really coming, and so on. So we lived our lives in peace. On 23 February, we spent a wonderful day, and went to the zoo with the kids, we were in a good mood, painted in the evening, ate together, hugged each other, and fell asleep. I have three children, and each of them has their own room. The adult children were in their rooms, and the youngest daughter was with us. And we went to bed quietly, although in the evening some military guys said that the war would start tomorrow. But it didn't start on the 16th, and everything seemed to be fine. And before that, my parents came, I packed some of our things and sent them to the village. But again, I walked around the big house. Each child had everything in their room, and I didn't know what to pack. I walked around, looked, and thought that I would not pack, everything would be fine. And then on the 24th, at 4:24 am, the first two explosions occurred. My husband and I jumped up, he said it was the beginning of the war. We have a railway nearby. And I said those are probably railroad car. The railroad cars are rumbling, it happens in the middle of the night. Well, I realized that the sound was very loud, and that's it, the ground was shaking. And so I started, not knowing what was happening, but gathering my documents, laptops, money, and children, and that was it. I couldn't carry anything else.

Interviewer: Where did you go immediately?

Interviewee: We went to Mykolaiv region to my parents' village. There were eight explosions before we left, we were in the house, all the windows and doors were blown out, and everything was blown out. And we realized that, well, if it fell, we didn't know where it would. We were hiding the children in the corridor, there, because there are thick walls and no windows. So I thought I was saving them in this way. And after eight explosions, we ran out. I was just running with a baby carriage in my



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hands and a backpack on my back, with my older children, and I was praying to get away from the military unit so that there would be no explosions. But while we were running away, I told the children that there were ditches here, and they would jump and fall. By some miracle, while we were running, the explosions stopped. I mean, they were reloading or something, but there were no explosions. When we were somewhere in the middle of the city, a trolleybus was passing, and we were able to get away from the part of the city by trolleybus. Some people were calmly going to work, probably thinking that it was some kind of training. The explosions were clearly heard in the city, but somehow people were relatively calm, it was not clear. And then we went to the Mykolaiv region to a village where my parent's place is 100 kilometers away, and we were there, but on the second of March, all these... tanks and GRAD missiles and everything had already passed there.

We hid the children, well, in the basement. Then we realized that if we were hit in the basement, it would be even worse than hiding in the house. So we were hiding in the house, and thus we stayed in the village for almost a month on 21 March. We were falling asleep under the gunfire outside the windows and so on. The Russians were driven away from the village, they were defeated a little bit, but they were going to Voznesensk. There were battles with tanks, our soldiers were shooting back, it was all happening around us, but the village itself was not under occupation. As soon as the streets and town of Voznesensk were liberated, my husband's cousins lived here in Ivano-Frankivsk, and a man who had an apartment in Tysmenytsia served with them. And he was always on duty. And he said that my apartment was empty, and if you need to rescue a family with children, come. So we came, not knowing who to visit, my father brought us by car, me and three children. And so we were living in hope, every day at first we lived like, well, maybe a month, maybe two weeks, maybe a month, maybe two weeks, there, cherries are blooming, we'll eat at home, apples are blooming, we'll eat at home, and so, while living in this state, it was, of course, difficult. And then we just decided that we just live here and that's it. And when we started to adapt to the fact that you are just here, it became a little easier. We have already started to have some ideas and plans for some kind of implementation in the new city.

Interviewer: Where are you now?

Interviewee: We lived in Tysmenytsia for six months. Now we are in Ivano-Frankivsk.



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Interviewer: How is it here now? Have you adapted, do you have a job? Do you feel like you're in a new home?

Interviewee: Of course, it's a bit hard. Because you used to have your own place, and now you have to pay 12 thousand UAH every month. And when the government started paying money to IDPs (An internally displaced person (IDP)), it was at least a little bit enough to cover the rent. But at the moment, it's not very comfortable. In terms of work, I am still working online at school, as I have been working, but I want to quit this year. I will finish my work until the summer and then quit. At first, my children studied online at school. Then my eldest son finished the 9th grade and entered a college, well, Mykolaiv College, though he studied online. My daughter went to school here, she is already in the 7th grade. At first, it was difficult for me to enroll my younger daughter in a kindergarten, I couldn't find a place. Then I found one, but she doesn't have much of a desire to study. Since I work remotely, we can skip classes.

Interviewer: I also lived in Mykolaiv in 2017 and spoke Ukrainian, but I heard a lot of Russian around me. Did you have any problems or conflicts with the language here in Ivano-Frankivsk?

Interviewee: There was a situation once, but not for me. It wasn't difficult for me to switch straight to Ukrainian, my surzhyk (elements of the Ukrainian and Russian languages, combined artificially, without observing the norms of the literary language.) was like half of me. Once, at the playground, my younger daughter, was two and a half years old when the war started, so she had just learned to speak, and she spoke Russian. And when we came here, no matter how hard we tried to communicate with her in Ukrainian, she still translated and communicated with us in Russian. And now it is also happening, that is, she is already four and a half and still. Well, she can say some words in Ukrainian, but mostly she speaks Russian. And so we were on the playground, and there was this boy, I don't know, maybe 5-6 years old, he was quite tall, and he pushed her up the steps, up the slide. She fell, I looked at my mum, and my mum had no reaction. And I asked what have you done and why did you hurt the child?' She replied: "How are you talking to my child?". I said, "Do you think it's okay? He pushed the girl on the iron stairs, with her back to him, and you are silent." This mother replied that my child spoke Russian. I said, so now maybe we should trample on the fact that she speaks Russian? To cut a long story short, I met a woman who was not very adequate. The main thing for me was to calm my child down, so I asked her what we were



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going to do. She said let's go to the park, there are nice kids playing there.

Interviewer: Mrs Nadiya, were there any cases when you had help? Maybe some of the local residents of Ivano-Frankivsk?

Interviewee: When I lived in Tysmenytsia, I don't remember exactly, I came with my children and I had one bag of clothes and that was it. When we fled, I didn't even put on my underwear. So I didn't have any household needs. And when we were in the village, we couldn't go out to buy anything. I was worried that my child had a fever, what I could do? Because I couldn't just leave. So when we arrived here, I wrote to a local online chat room and asked for a stroller. About three girls responded and offered me a stroller for free. So I just chose the girl who was next to me, not far away. She gave me the stroller. We received humanitarian aid. Someone sent me clothes once. Volunteer organizations, when they found out that we were a large family, helped us. They also gave us food at the beginning and, of course, supported us, because at that time I did not have a stable job and nothing at all. Now my friend works for the Rakada Foundation, so they sometimes write that you can come here and take children's shoes or something else you need.

Interviewer: By the way, what about work? You've already talked about this a little bit, and you work at the school online, but is there any possibility of working somewhere here? And you also have a small child.

Interviewee: Yes, because Lera is still small, and she doesn't go to kindergarten regularly, so I can't get a full-time job. But working at a school like this, well, the salary is very small. So it makes no sense for me to work there. But this year I have been studying online all the time, and I was studying to become a SMM manager before. And this year, I passed the targeted advertising course, so I'm working a little bit. And now I've started running transformational games, and I also have some income from that. So when my older daughter is at home and not at school, she looks after my younger daughter, and I can run the game for a fee.

Interviewer: What about your relationship with your family in general, did the family split up?

Interviewee: We were separated from our parents, children, and my husband, who happened to be in the red zone fighting at first. But he has a disease, he is disabled, so he was sent to Frankivsk. We lived in Tysmenytsia, and he worked in Frankivsk nearby. We saw each other on weekends and



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went on dates, and when we started renting an apartment in Frankivsk, we all started living together, and everything is fine with us.

Interviewer: Is there anyone in the family who suddenly started supporting the other side of the conflict there? Against Ukraine?

Interviewee: No, we don't have anyone like that in our family. But my husband has relatives who live in Russia, so they don't quite understand. We only call my grandmother and wish her a happy birthday sometimes, and that's it, that's all the communication we have.

Interviewer: What has changed in you? Perhaps a different perception of the world, of the experience that happened? What did you realize? If you hadn't left home, what would you have done?

Interviewee: I would not have seen the horizons that I have built for myself now if we had not left home. I often use the phrase 'thanks to the war'. That is, my consciousness expanded thanks to the war. Before that, I was a hostage to some circumstances, working, raising children, and not thinking about anything more.

Interviewer: You made new friends here, right?

Interviewee: I communicated in different women's circles, often went to different events, and took a training course that was held in the winter for entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. I go out with girls any time.

Interviewer: What about kids? Can you tell us about them, how they react and are reacting to the new place of residence, the new school, everything new?

Interviewee: It was very difficult at first. When the war broke out and we moved, the military in our hometown broke into the house through the windows that were not there. They sent us some things. When we got the soft toys from the house, we hugged them and almost cried. It was a moment when old things were more valuable than new ones. As for communication, at first, they were in their cocoon and could not come out of it. They did not want to communicate with either their old classmates or the new ones. Perhaps it was also a matter of language. The eldest son still does not know how to speak Ukrainian, he does not speak Ukrainian. My daughter started speaking Ukrainian quickly. When she went to school, I was a little worried, of course, but I kept telling her that everything would be fine. She adapted quite easily, she has many friends, no conflicts, good relationships, and sometimes goes to play with her friends, as if it were normal, she leads an active life.



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And my younger daughter plays a little bit on the playgrounds, but she is still more of a homebody. She is not very active in socializing.

Interviewer: What are your plans for the future? Can we ask you this question?

Interviewee: We are planning to stay in Frankivsk if my husband is not transferred to another military unit or to another place of work. There are even plans that maybe my husband will retire because he has a 26-year-old disease that does not allow him to wear either a bulletproof vest or a helmet because his bones are fused. So, if he retires, we are definitely planning to stay here. In terms of implementation, if I plan to work there as a targetologist and conduct these transformational games, I like it. In terms of my profession, to work here as a teacher or lecturer - no. I have 18 years of teaching experience and I have the highest category. But I'm not satisfied with this salary at all, and that's why I probably don't plan to return to this field. I want to finish this year, quit, and develop a new activity.

Interviewer: Did you recommend, because you know someone who is thinking of traveling from somewhere near the frontline and so on, for example, to come to Ivano-Frankivsk and start a relatively quieter life here?

Interviewee: Of course, I don't understand even those who live in relatively calm conditions there, for example, in Mykolaiv, but there, two ballistic missiles arrive there every day, for example. Dogs and children run to the toilet unexpectedly, and they sit there waiting for something to happen, which disrupts the children's psyche, which is unlikely to recover later. I mean, as an adult, it took me about six months to recover and smile, I think. After a while, I had started to take care of myself somehow. At first, I didn't care what I was wearing or how I looked, the main thing was that all my children were alive and not torn to pieces, and I reassured myself like that. Then, little by little, I began to realize that I was alive. Now I say that it's not scary to leave, even if you're from the Mykolaiv region, if something should happen, they fly here too, accidents happen there, and anything can happen. Life is a filter, whether there is a war or not. People will have a bad day anyway. That's why I have no fear for my life, not for mine, not for my children, I believe that everything happens as it should and I just trust my life. And everything will be fine, as fine as it should be. But the frontline areas, well, I don't understand those people who are sitting there. I'm not talking about Ivano-Frankivsk itself, for example, because not everyone has or will have the opportunity to rent an apartment for 10 thousand in this city. And I wouldn't want to live in some gym or dormitory or something. The children who lived in relatively comfortable conditions each had their own space, and I don't



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want to change that. I also understand people who had their own home, their own coziness, and their own photo frames in the kitchen were in their places. And then they come and sit in some gym for six months. I think that these are not the conditions for adaptation. If you come here and rent an apartment in the conditions that are now here, it is expensive for people, I understand. They are scared, but maybe there are some smaller towns in the village and I wouldn't mind living somewhere in a village with relatively normal conditions. But now my husband works here, so we are here. The main thing for me is that the children feel comfortable. Because of the money I give for the apartment today, I could save a little and think about some future foundation for us, but now I just give it away and live from paycheck to paycheck.



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INTERVIEW 6

Interviewer: Natalia, where are you from and how did you have to leave your home?

Interviewee: We are all from Kharkiv. When our child was diagnosed with autism, we began to look for a place where it would be more comfortable to live with such a diagnosis. In 2008, we came to Koktybel, and we stayed there until 2017. It was rehabilitation for the child with dolphins, mountains, and more. With the Russian invasion of Crimea, it became not so comfortable there, and we started looking for a place where we could feel more comfortable. And we found a place in the Kherson region, also on the seashore, and we stayed there until 2022. When the Russians came to Kherson, we were in Kherson at the time, we stayed there and were under occupation until it became very scary and dangerous. In April 2022, we left Kherson. There were many unpleasant moments, and we were looking for a place to settle for a long time. We stayed in Chernivtsi for a while. We went to a rehabilitation center, and an orphanage, and lived in hostels and dormitories. Then we were in Yablunytsia, in a hostel, and then in Tysmenytsia, where we stayed with a community of children with disabilities. Around November 2022, we started looking for a place to settle down and stay. Now we are in Chernivtsi, near Ivano-Frankivsk.

Interviewer: How did you choose to come to the Ivano-Frankivsk region, did you know anyone, or did it happen by chance?

Interviewee: Yes, it happened by chance. When the Mission was taking us to the Romanian border, we stayed in Chernivtsi because we decided not to cross the border. And in Chernivtsi, it was difficult to find an apartment, we were looking for an apartment for a long time. So we lived in dormitories and hostels. It was very hard to find. On behalf of our NGO, we sent a lot of requests on the Internet, to various foundations and international funds. And then one international foundation, Global Autism, supported us, and it covered the costs for five months. The money was raised by American parents of children with autism. And it was in Tysmenytsia, near Frankivsk. When the program ended and the money from this organization ran out, we got used to living in Ivano-Frankivsk. Someone from our organization went to Odesa, and someone returned to Kherson, to their home. But we will not return to Kherson for now, because it is really dangerous there, there is shelling every day. So for now, it is Ivano-Frankivsk.



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Interviewer: How was the journey? Who helped you? You mentioned something about the UN mission.

Interviewee: When the Russians broke into my house, it was not very scary. They demanded documents. The next day I started looking for a way to leave. For a whole week, we were waiting for a car from Invasport because they were already starting to take disabled people and athletes from Kherson. For a whole week, the Russians provided a volunteer bus from Mykolaiv to Kherson. Every morning, we gathered and waited, only to be told in the evening that the bus was not allowed to pass. The UN mission called me at 11 pm and told me that tomorrow at 5 am I had to be there, on the other side of the city. I understood that I would have to go through the city, at night, during the curfew, through checkpoints. It was very dangerous, very scary, but we decided to go because it was even scarier to stay. And this UN mission brought us to the border from Romania. At that time, many people were taken out like that, many times.

Interviewer: About how many people were on the bus?

Interviewee: About 20 people.

Interviewer: How long did this trip last? And which of your friends and relatives were travelling with you?

Interviewee: We got on this bus at 5 am. Then we were transferred to a bigger bus in Mykolaiv. We got to Chernivtsi around 1 am.

Interviewer: And which of your friends and relatives travelled with you?

Interviewee: My daughter with a disability and my eldest son. My eldest son was 20 years old at the time. And I was very afraid that somewhere at the checkpoint the Russians would ask him something. There were, I think, 7 Russian checkpoints that we passed to Mykolaiv.

Interviewer: So you were also stopped there?

Interviewee: They stopped us at every checkpoint and checked the documents. I hid my son away. All men were asked to leave. He didn't go out, and that saved us. Because he was so young. And I was very worried that he would say something wrong to the Russians.

Interviewer: Very often people tell stories about families being divided, families being separated, and connections with friends being cut off because of the war. It was immediately clear who was on which side. Have there been any such cases in your story?



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Interviewee: Well, on 24 February, my husband went to war, even though he had an exemption because of his minus-9 eyesight. But he decided to go. And he went. Of course, we talk every day, we keep in touch. And we have a very good relationship. He has time off. A month ago he had time off. But he is still there. My child is very attached. Because a child with a disability is very attached to his friends who have the same diagnosis. So I tried to make sure that all of our friends who had left stayed together for some time. When we were given the opportunity to do so, with funding from Global Autism, I gathered all our friends in one city, in one hostel, and we spent 5 months together. And it was very supportive for both children and parents. And it was a very strong support for each other. I keep in touch with other friends, classmates, and classmates, through Facebook and other messengers. And among my friends, everyone is on our side. That is, everyone understands that this is a war of aggression. And we still need to unite, hold on, and somehow resist. Almost all my friends supported me, especially Kherson when it was liberated. All my friends, acquaintances, classmates, and classmates donated and sent humanitarian aid. And when there was a flood in Kakhovka, everyone also supported me. Well, I don't have anyone who supports the enemy.

Interviewer: How do you live here in Cherniiv now? What is the situation with housing, and work, what difficulties do you face, and what have you encountered in general?

Interviewee: When we first arrived, I was very pleased with the way people treated us at the Centers of Providing Administrative Services. They immediately provided us with humanitarian aid and offered to come back on New Year's Eve and give gifts to the child. We went to a school in Cherniiv to knit camouflage nets. The attitude was very good. As for work, I have a child with a severe disability and I cannot leave him. Therefore, I can only work online. While I am not working, we are trying to do some workshops in different organizations, to volunteer somehow. We went to Maria Chervak's 'United by Love' to knit nets and hold workshops. Another organization, Rokada, helped us a lot. In the first years, they organized equine-assisted therapy for us and helped us with clothes and shoes. And then our organization cooperated with foreign organizations. Firstly, the 'Helping hands'. Secondly, those parents are from Seattle. I don't know for sure if it's a religious organization or not. Caritas helped us a lot. For example, we gathered all our Kherson families and with the help of Caritas, we went to Yablunytsia twice for psychological rehabilitation. When families live under constant shelling, they need to



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somehow recover with the help of beautiful landscapes and so on. Caritas helped us the first time for free, and the second time we were looking for grants to pay for this stay.

Interviewer: Do such visits help?

Interviewee: Of course, we feel it. We have psychologists working with us, art therapy, body-oriented therapy, yoga is compulsory, and music classes. Of course, it helps. It is difficult for a person to be constantly stressed, and it affects their health and emotional state. When there is an opportunity to be in such a team and it is easier for the children, it is great. First of all, we do all this for the sake of the children, to bring them to a more or less stable state, but parents also need it very, very much.

Interviewer: How did this move, this resettlement, affect your family relationships? Will it never be the same again?

Interviewee: The first thing that happened was that I live without my husband, my husband is in the Armed Forces, and I am without him. It is very difficult for me. The support of a man is the foundation of my life, I don't know how else to describe it. Everything is hard. It's hard to be alone. When he was on holiday with me for a little while, I felt like I used to feel before the war. Secondly, it is very difficult to live not in your own house. The house we were given has water and heat, and it's comfortable, but I understand that it's not mine, I can't feel fully alive here, because it's not mine. I mean, I still want to go home, I still want to go to my own house, a much more comfortable one. I still have my mother and sister in Kharkiv, and we talk every day. Of course, I am very worried about them because of the shelling. I've asked them several times to come here, but they don't want to, they don't want to change their normal life. Well, I understand them, it's hard to leave everything behind, to go into the unknown. But I am constantly stressed about how they are doing. Every morning we talk about the explosions there. My husband's mother is also there. Yesterday, the windows in her apartment were smashed by the blast wave, it's stressful. And I don't know how it will be after the war. Will it be the same as it was before or not? Most likely not, because the stress that we have experienced will not be forgotten. No matter what kind of life we have afterward, our memories will bring us fear. I want to say for myself that I still haven't recovered from the life in danger I experienced in Kherson during the occupation. When you go to the market soldiers are standing next to you, with weapons. This cortisol and adrenaline that is released at that time -



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affects the psyche a lot. Now I live in Ivano-Frankivsk, but sometimes I catch myself tensing up and looking around on the street. I can't understand why I'm looking back. And these are all memories of those moments when it was dangerous. Of course, this all happens for a reason.

Interviewer: Natalia, do you have any friends here? Maybe some of those who moved from the frontline areas, from the occupied territories? Or perhaps you have already found friends here among the residents from Halychyna?

Interviewee: Yes, I have many friends. Firstly, three families from our NGO are now in Frankivsk. These are our friends from Kherson. We communicate and attend various events together. We organize our walks or excursions together. Unfortunately, no new friends have appeared here. I attend many group therapy sessions with IDPs and locals. I have some good friendships. But I have only old friends with whom I communicate via Facebook and messengers.

Interviewer: Would you advise people who live in the frontline area to leave for the Ivano-Frankivsk region or other places?

Interviewee: I think so, I believe 100% that it is necessary to leave dangerous cities. I felt it myself while I was under occupation, how tense I was. I didn't realize it then, how tense I was. Now I realize how dangerous it was for the psyche to be in such conditions. And I advise everyone, and all my friends, everyone who stayed in the red zone and in Kharkiv, to leave. But, well, people have their circumstances. Some people may have old parents who don't want to leave and any other circumstances. So I understand why they don't leave. Well, my advice is that you have to leave when there is danger. When we left Crimea, we bought a plot of land by the sea in the Kherson region. Now it is still under occupation. It is near Skadovsk. That's where our house is. But we lived a lot in Kherson because my children studied in Kherson. We rented an apartment there.

Interviewer: Since the occupation, how much time have you spent in the occupation itself?

Interviewee: On 1 March, the Russians entered Kherson and left on 17 April. We lived under occupation for more than 1.5 months.

Interviewer: How did the order in the city change then?

Interviewee: Well, firstly, we did not leave the house for about two weeks. I was afraid to leave the house because there was a checkpoint under our



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windows, and Russian soldiers were constantly on duty there. Then our people started to go to protests. I did not go to the first two demonstrations. Because I could see from the windows that there were a lot of Russians there. When more and more people came out to the rallies, we also decided to come out. And for about 2 months we went out every day with Ukrainian flags. The shelling of these protests started.

And then, of course, I didn't go out anymore. One boy was injured. Some of my friends were injured during the rally, and they were treated for a long time. In the morning, I ran to the market to buy bread. There were Russian soldiers there. It was very scary, I want to say. I was constantly worried about my life and the lives of others. And then, when they came into the house, they started checking documents. They were armed people demanding something from you, it was very scary. The city was empty. I saw people only at the market. The wind blew a lot of rubbish, everything was destroyed. I saw the Russians looting the shops. There are a jewelry store near my house and large shops with household appliances and electronics. Every evening there were shots. They destroyed shop windows. It was a terrible feeling. It was so scary when I was sitting and hearing the shots, and I didn't understand what kind of shots they were. Then I realized that they were robbing the shops. Unpleasant memories, to be honest.

Interviewer: What would you suggest for those people who have left for safer areas of Ukraine or abroad? What are your wishes?

Interviewee: Well, my only wish is that Putin were dead, we win and everyone returns home. That's my only wish. I think it's for the best anyway. No matter where you are accepted by the community, no matter how comfortable you are, no matter how you are treated, you still want to go home because it is better at home. I want everyone who wants to come home safely.



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INTERVIEW 7

Interviewer: Veronika, how did your story begin when you left your home? Why?

Interviewee: My situation is not very dramatic. I lived near a factory where there had already been two invasions, and I knew that neither of them had hit the target and that there would be another one. That's why we moved as a family last year to a village in Prykarpattia. After living there for three months, we traveled to Frankivsk a couple of times and realized that we would be very comfortable living there. The whole family decided to move here. Then we successfully sold our house in Dnipro and bought one here, and that's how I ended up here.

Interviewer: When exactly did you move?

Interviewee: In October 2023.

Interviewer: And when you moved to the Ivano-Frankivsk region, what difficulties did you face?

Interviewee: In general, there were no difficulties. Because after living through about a year and a half of war, a year and two or three months to be exact, endless sirens, and shelling, we had a feeling of paradise, so there were absolutely no difficulties. We are not very picky. We lived in a simple house heated by a stove. We had the internet, and that was enough for us because my husband and I were working remotely at the time.

Interviewer: Who exactly did you move with?

Interviewee: Together with my husband.

Interviewer: Was there any assistance for you? Or did you leave as an internally displaced person?

Interviewee: No, we did not need any financial assistance. I mean, my husband works in IT as a programmer. I'm a senior HR manager, so we didn't need any help at all, because we actively help the military and our relatives who are at the front. So we didn't need any help.

Interviewer: Unfortunately, the war has become a catalyst for many people to find themselves on different sides of the barricade. Have you ever had a situation where your family, or families, or a very old friendship, was divided?



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Interviewee: They were. This tragedy is in my family. My older sister moved a long time ago, somewhere in the late 1990s. She and her husband moved to the city of Surugut in the Tyumen region because he was a military man. At the beginning of the war, she worked at the military enlistment office in Surugut. Roughly speaking, she sent killers to us here. We stopped communicating with her because she is a classic Russian woman who says: 'It's not so clear, we don't know the truth.' These are her exact words. I mean, as I remember now, on 16 March 2022, bombs were dropped on a drama theatre in Mariupol. I told her about this situation. She asked how we knew it was Russians and not Ukrainians. And after that, I blocked her everywhere and stopped communicating with her. Also, my father, who lives in the Dnipro region, supports Russia, but, you know, not aggressively, quietly. But he constantly watches Russian news, these Russian bloggers. That's how I faced this and I can't communicate with him.

Interviewer: Do you somehow hope that these close people can change their point of view? That there will be a re-awakening.

Interviewee: Well, if a rocket comes and my father loses his leg, then maybe then. I don't know about anything else. Because rockets flew into that city, and everything exploded near me. And now, you see, I have moved. Nothing changes because he is Russian by nationality. That's it, and it doesn't change anything. As for my sister, I don't even know. Because her whole family is here, in Ukraine, her mum and dad, and we are all sisters. And she doesn't seem to be actively supporting us. I mean, she hasn't written to us. But she doesn't trust the information that the Russians did commit genocide here. So I'm not sure that anything will change in my family. So I decided not to communicate with them, because I cannot communicate with them.

Interviewer: Would you recommend someone to move here? for example, someone who is in the frontline area, would you recommend moving here to Ivano-Frankivsk?

Interviewee: You see, the situation here is that it will be very difficult for those Russian speakers who do not want to switch to Ukrainian, for various reasons. I feel super comfortable here because I am 100% pro-Ukrainian, I like the Ukrainian language. Even though I went to a Russian school all my life and we all worked and spoke Russian at work. It is not difficult for me. But I understand that there is a very negative attitude to Russian speaking here. So those who are not ready will have a hard time. Well, because I live in a residential complex where people can write in Russian in the neighbor's chat. There is so much hate. So I wouldn't recommend it to those who tend to the



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Russian language. But for everyone else, I think it will be great here. Because I feel very comfortable here. Even today I went out for the first time with a local group of people.

Interviewer: Can I ask you about any plans for the future, your vision of it, your dreams, and your future stay?

Interviewee: I don't plan to move anywhere at the moment. Although I used to think about going abroad. But I realized that I feel very comfortable here: both in terms of climate and infrastructure. I live in the center of the city, and I like everything here. That's why we are now making our lives here. All our plans are focused on the Ivano-Frankivsk region, one hundred percent. I think that even if I had the opportunity to leave, I would not. Although I used to want to go to the United States and maybe Canada, now I don't have such a goal.

Interviewer: Are there any social difficulties now?

Interviewee: I don't have any at all, because the company I work for is owned by locals who were born in Ivano-Frankivsk. Most of the team here are also local. And I have never experienced any discrimination. I am treated like a native. I remember an unpleasant situation in Dnipro. In 2014, the war broke out and refugees from Donetsk and Luhansk came to Dnipro, so we treated them with a little bit of a doubtness. Because these people are a little different from us in terms of mentality. And we had such discrimination, which I am very ashamed of now. And here I found myself in the same situation. And I have never experienced anything like this. On the contrary, I came here because I liked the people. When I was living in the village, I just fell in love with the Hutsuls. We had a great relationship, and they treated us very well. The locals here are also very nice. I feel absolutely comfortable from all sides. Maybe because I am such a person. I am very open and sincere. I remember the proverb: Honesty is the best policy. I'm fine here. I'm doing well here.



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INTERVIEW 8

Interviewee: Good afternoon, my name is Yulia. My family and I came from Kharkiv to Ivano-Frankivsk.

Interviewer: Before you migrated, what were your profession, lifestyle, and leisure activities like?

Interviewee: We had a great life. In Kharkiv, we had a family business. My husband and I have been studying and working in the artistic field all our lives. We graduated from an art school and the Academy of Design and Arts. We worked in this field for many years, painting interiors and exteriors. It was my favorite profession because I have been drawing since the first grade. I adore my profession. There were always clients in Kharkiv, and there was always enough work and I enjoyed it. We renovated our apartment and made a childhood dream come true. We have two little boys. Unfortunately, we had to leave our home.

Interviewer: How and under what circumstances did you decide to migrate? Was it a difficult decision?

Interviewee: It was very spontaneous, very spontaneous. We were not fully aware of everything that was happening. We left Kharkiv on the 6th day of the war. We were taken by my husband's parents in a car. And after the whole city had no communication for a day and a half, no mobile phone, no internet, nothing happened. And before that, we spent two days in the basement of our house, but it was terrible. Because the basement is not equipped as a bomb shelter. There was an earthen floor and all the residents of the five-storey building were downstairs. There were two children, very active boys, you couldn't make them sit still, they were running around. There was a lot of dust, and everyone was nervous, and that's why they felt discomfort. The children started coughing terribly because of the dust. My eldest son has a health condition. Then we moved to the first floor of the building. On the sixth day, my husband's parents arrived, gathered us and we went nowhere for the first time.

Interviewer: So you left and didn't even know where you were going, right?

Interviewee: We were just leaving the city, thinking that we would stay somewhere near Kharkiv, then somewhere in Poltava. There were traffic jams, even though it was the sixth day of the war, there were still traffic jams. There was almost no fuel. It was good that my parents' fuel tank was half full. They were driving, driving, driving, and stopped wherever they could, and took us in. Thank God we had people along the way who helped us as much as possible and supported us as much



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as possible. Because the children are small, I have never received so much support from strangers. We stopped at a church to spend the night. And people cooked something and brought toys to the children to cheer them up. Now the children are six and a half and five years old, well, at that time they were, accordingly, younger. They did not realize everything. It was like an adventure for them.

Interviewer: Did they feel your feelings?

Interviewee: We tried not to show it as much as possible, but I think they felt it anyway. My husband's parents left. And my mother, sister, and niece stayed in Kharkiv. They are still there. And every day, every night, including tonight, we read all the messages from telegram news channels about the number of missiles or shahids, everything that is flying towards Kharkiv. We periodically send messages to check if they are alive and safe.

Interviewer: hey don't plan to leave, do they?

Interviewee: My mum doesn't plan to leave, she has health problems, hearing problems. My sister is an ambulance doctor. She works with people who suffer from the wreckage. They do not hear air raid warnings regularly from those who have left. But in Kharkiv, first, there is an explosion, and then the air raid is activated. They're used to it, and my mum keeps working despite her age.

Interviewer: And your mum is working, right?

Interviewee: My mother still works, yes. And she holds on as much as possible. Work is probably the main thing that keeps them going for those people in Kharkiv it distracts them somehow in fact. If it wasn't for that, you could just leave without a reason if you didn't have something to do.

Interviewer: Going back to your trip, how long did it take?

Interviewee: We traveled for 5 days. We stopped wherever we needed to. My husband's parents have an old car. Twice we were pulled by a cable to the workshop. They stopped somewhere along the way to try to fix it. We stayed overnight near Kyiv. There was an opportunity to fix it there. There were problems with the car. It was the end of winter, it was cold, and the car was stalling. Gradually, it becomes very cold in the car. Small children and it's very nerve-wracking. But thank God, there was not such a long time when the car was out of order. We had constant help. We were hosted by many people who were very, very helpful, and helped us with the car. And we stayed overnight. There



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was time for the car to be repaired so that we could go. So our journey towards Western Ukraine lasted for 5 days.

Interviewer: Here we come to the question of why you chose the city of Ivano-Frankivsk.

Interviewee: It happened spontaneously. When we were leaving Kharkiv, we had no goal to get to Frankivsk. We had no idea what was going on. Then we drove towards Western Ukraine. My husband's father mentioned that he had distant relatives in Frankivsk with whom he had had to contact several times in his life. But they found a connection with those relatives.

And we found out about a flat in Frankivsk. We thought that we were very lucky. We did not expect so much help from people. And it so happened that there was an apartment of distant relatives in Frankivsk. This apartment had been empty for two or three years before the war started. It was the apartment of an old lady, and her husband and grandchildren had taken her abroad. And we still live here, and we pay for utilities.

Yes, unfortunately, we do not have a permanent, stable income. Although my husband's is more or less stable. I don't, because I have two children and the eldest has health problems. We have to be busy all the time. Children have to go to school and many clubs, and it always takes a lot of money. Now, my husband has almost a stable income. He had to change his job and retrain for computer graphics. Before that, he had been working in the field of murals for about 19 years.

It took us five days to get to Frankivsk. We stayed in Frankivsk together for probably less than three weeks. My children, my husband, and my husband's parents. Then I went to France with my children and my husband's parents. We stayed there for five months. My husband stayed in Frankivsk.

My husband's older brother is in the United States of America. They invited us because of the war. But it was quite difficult to get a visa there. At that time, the option of opening a visa to Canada was considered. To get a visa, you had to submit documents in Europe. So we went to France to get a visa there. We did not plan to stay in France for a long time. We thought we would arrive and apply for a visa in about a week, get a visa, and then go on to Canada. And thank God, everything happened in such a way that, first of all, I had never faced this before. I had been abroad two or three times before the war. We thought it would be faster, and easier, but the whole process took a long time. There were also restrictions, language barriers, and constant queues to make appointments with various organizations to get such



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documents.

We ended up in France, in a city called Erce. Why there? Because I have a classmate there. She said that it was no problem, you could stay there until you had your documents sorted out. She said that you can stay with the whole family, we can take you in. We applied for a visa, and three weeks passed while we waited for the result. And then, as luck would, they opened a visa to Canada for everyone except me. I don't know how it happened. Even my young children and my husband's parents were granted visas, but I was not. But thank God that it happened. Because I can't imagine if we were on another continent altogether, so far from home. The visa was not granted and we decided that whatever happens, happens for the best. I constantly was worrying about my family in Kharkiv, my husband in Ukraine, in Frankivsk. You are constantly worried, you are constantly depressed, and you can't even talk to anyone to discuss it.

So we went to the mayor's office in Erce and explained the situation. There was an opportunity there. There was a lady who was in charge of accommodating families, people who had left Ukraine. We were accommodated in a house. We were taken in by a French family, all five of us, me, two small children, and my husband's parents. I stayed there with my children for five months. My husband's parents are still in France, but they had to change their place of residence. We were received very hospitably, we were treated well. They helped us as much as possible. It was difficult because the two boys were young. Germans themselves expressed a desire to help Ukrainians. They left at night before we arrived, and there was a statement from this family at the city hall that they were able to take everyone, and that their living space allowed them to take everyone. A commission came there to see if they were able to take in young children. They went through various commissions. We stayed there for five months. I was eventually granted a visa. But we realized that it was quite dangerous to return to a new country. We decided to stay in France. I had to enroll my children in a local kindergarten because it is compulsory there.

We met a Russian-speaking family. The boy is from Russia, but he came to France to study. He met his wife, who is German. They started a family there and lived in France for 9 years before the war started. Since this man Artem is a Russian speaker, we had the opportunity to communicate. I also communicated with my classmate Olena. We communicated with the owners of the house through an Google translator.

Interviewer: So you didn't know French?



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Interviewee: They didn't know any English at all and had a very, very poor level. But many people there don't speak English fluently, and a fairly small percentage of people have some basic knowledge of English, but it didn't help at all. All communication was through Google Translate. The attitude of the locals was very good. There was even a case when I was walking with the boys down the street and a couple of elderly French people, a man and a woman, were coming to meet us. They heard us talking and somehow found out that we were speaking Ukrainian. Then we also used Google Translate to communicate with them. They asked how we were, how we were doing. One of the first things they said was, I'm sorry, it was not very polite, but they said that Putin is a d***... Old people...

Interviewer: So they showed support in this way, right?

Interviewee: Yes. And they tried to give us 20 euros, they told us to buy sweets for the children. It was so unusual. We have always had a good life and we still, even though we have gone through several stages, do not know how to accept help, it is very strange. When you've always lived well and tried to help everyone because you had the opportunity, and here you are in this situation. People help you, you don't ask for it, but they offer you help from everywhere, and you don't know how to accept it. And you just stand there crying because you can't cope with your emotions. The local French were very supportive.

Interviewer: Did you also meet with pro-Russian people?

Interviewee: No. Artem, who was born in Russia, was aware of all the news. He was very supportive, as was his German wife Caroline. They watched all the news in France. They saw what was happening. Artem his parents and sister are now in Russia. During every communication, he tried to explain the situation as it is, to open the eyes of his parents who watch the local news and are completely led by everything they say. They are constantly fighting with their parents because of this. And we did not have to meet and talk to people who spoke out about the Russian position.

Interviewer: And yet, why did you decide to return from France to Ivano-Frankivsk?

Interviewee: We went to kindergarten there until the end of June. Then there were two months of summer holidays. I realized that it was very difficult for children there. My eldest son has two surgically repaired congenital heart defects. As it was later diagnosed, after returning from France, my son was diagnosed with a nervous disorder and told that it was due to mental tension. They said to observe him for six months. A year and



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a half ago, he was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in Frankivsk. He was issued with a disability certificate due to numerous birth defects. My son constantly needs to be observed by a neurologist, a cardiologist, and a psychologist. In France, it is very difficult. Firstly, it is the situation with medicine. Secondly, it is the education and development of children. They went to kindergartens, but it was harder because of the Russian language. After returning from France, we switched to Ukrainian because we had been speaking and communicating in Russian all our adult lives. In Kharkiv, from the 1st grade I attended a school that became Ukrainian. But until the 3rd grade, we still studied with Russian textbooks. We switched to Ukrainian consciously after returning from France. It's easier for children to adapt to kindergarten when they hear Ukrainian at home all the time. At this stage, the children do not have any problems at all and have never had any, thank God. Because they say that there is harassment and bullying in kindergarten, in children's groups. Even children can be cruel sometimes. Not everyone wants to understand due to certain circumstances.

Interviewer: Did you have problems with French? In a French kindergarten?

Interviewee: Yes, of course. At first, they liked it very much because they had had the experience of a kindergarten in Kharkiv. Six months before the war began, the children started attending kindergarten, but not full-time, only in the morning. There were older teachers there and there was strict discipline. They were forced to be disciplined and to sleep on schedule. They didn't like this routine. In France, kindergarten is completely different. Because there is no schedule, they do whatever they want there. In the morning, they have complete freedom. There are no restrictions. The problem started later. The teacher started making comments to me. The thing is that she sat the children around her and told a fairy tale. All the children sat and listened, because the story was in French, of course. And my child, who is hyperactive, jumps on the bed and attracts attention to himself as much as possible. And he tends to attract attention in negative ways. He can't understand anything, so he can't sit still and listen. We spent the summer holidays there. My husband and I took a closer look at the situation and realized that it was possible to study and be more or less safe in Western Ukraine. The children needed both education and communication with their peers. On 13 September, my children and I returned to Frankivsk. The husband's parents stayed in Erce.

Interviewer: Do you keep in touch with them?



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Interviewee: Yes, every other day, sometimes they call every day.

Interviewer: What about their language? How do they solve these issues?

Interviewee: My husband's father had the opportunity to attend language courses for about 1.5 years. He knows the language at an elementary level. It helped him a little, but he couldn't find a job. Because you need to be fluent in the language to work there officially. My husband's mother is a primary school teacher. She has her students in Ukraine, with whom she works online several times a week. In France, she teaches Ukrainian once a week at a Ukrainian Christian school. Father helps to set up the educational and technical processes. She has some part-time work, ironing something for the French once a week. But they are good, they grab all possible job opportunities. They have somehow already got involved in the whole working atmosphere. For example, in Kharkiv, my husband's father lost his job. The organization disbanded when the war started. And his mother, there are no offline classes at her school. Now they have at least some activity. Not that they are happy there, but they are now used to it and cannot return to Kharkiv under the explosion.

Interviewer: What do you think of Ivano-Frankivsk after France? What are your feelings, and emotions, how did it happen?

Interviewee: You know, we like Frankivsk. We like it. After France, you bring back to what you love. You understand everything, you can ask people everything. I still don't know the city well, even though Ivano-Frankivsk is a small city. But at least you can look at Google Maps. You can ask anything and anyone, there are no language restrictions. And it is very, very important for us, for our family, that there is a possibility of excellent medical care and a great education for children, the possibility of studying. On 13 September, we returned to Frankivsk. At that time, we did not find places in public schools, so for 2.5 or 3 months the children attended a private kindergarten. But it was insanely expensive because we had two children at once. But we managed, thank God. Eventually, there were added two additional groups, and there was room in the public kindergarten. Since January 2023, my two children started to attend the state kindergarten and are very pleased with it. It's incredible because the kindergarten is amazing. It's 15 minutes from home. All the kindergartens in Frankivsk are so cool. In Kharkiv, based on our previous experience, children are hysterical, relatively speaking. And here they go with pleasure. There is leisure and education in a public kindergarten, twice a week English, once a fortnight, puppet theatre, and music concerts. They are very interested, they like it very much.



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We were very well embraced. There were no conflicts from the very beginning. At the same time as the medical examination, we were examined for neurology and now we are also undergoing it. We have settled everything with physical activity. They go to gymnastics twice a week. This is how the hyperactivity is directed in a safe direction. We also go to the swimming pool. We have the opportunity to learn English and work with psychologists from time to time. A lot of things are paid for, but it used to be free. Now it is paid for, because now the opportunities are a little better. Before that, it was possible to enroll children for free in school preparation from Caritas, and classes with a child psychologist were also free. And many organizations provided this support and assistance. I really like Frankivsk. It's not exactly my city now, but at least once a day you can see a familiar face and feel a little bit like home. Here in Frankivsk, we have no relatives or friends, those who would move with us, whom we have known for a long time. And since we have children, we don't have the opportunity to get to know someone. In the beginning, I was depressed and had no desire to meet anyone, to communicate, or to talk to anyone, because it was very emotionally difficult. But now it's getting a little bit easier.

Interviewer: But the cultural life in Ivano-Frankivsk is quite active. You have already said that you are not able to attend evening events because of your family situation. But in general, do you feel integrated into the social, civic, and cultural life of Ivano-Frankivsk?

Interviewee: I am very, very much saved by the fact that I hold masterclasses once a week in a public organization. I held a lot of Easter workshops on Easter egg dying. I need self-realization, a very, very active need. Such questions are painful at the moment. All this time I was with my children. Despite the war, I'm an introverted person, it's always a weekday and a routine. And now, when the children have gone through the first period of adaptation: they attend school for a week, then get sick for two weeks, but everyone does. Now, thank God, they go steadily until 16.30, and they have classes in the kindergarten. And I have the physical ability to fully participate in my work. My husband and I used to paint interiors together in Kharkiv. We got caught up in the wave of painting IT company offices. And because of word of mouth - everyone recommended us, one company to colleagues from another company, and there was always a demand for our services. In Frankivsk, it's scenery painting, this particular area, that is not in demand at the same level as in Kharkiv. I work with my husband on interior murals, and right now, after a year and a half, I have the opportunity to work on my own. But it doesn't



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work out, because somehow I haven't made myself known yet, and I don't think I have enough advertising. I took several business courses and received a grant for partial equipment, to upgrade my work equipment. This also helps a lot, because you get to know people. In a year and a half to two years, in Frankivsk, we have completed two projects with interior painting. My husband was invited to Bukovel, and there was a small mural there. Currently, he has been working on the mural for almost a week, with his partner in the Mykolaiv region. He completed his second degree at the Kharkiv Academy of Design and Arts, he is a mural artist. There are many of his murals in Kharkiv. In the Kyiv region, now in the Mykolaiv region, they are being implemented. The situation hasn't exactly changed in terms of work orders. But not in the way I would have liked, because everything is outside of Frankivsk, and it turns out that I stay with the children but my husband with his partner. Secondly, I don't feel fulfilled enough. Six months before the war started, I was the head of a creative workshop in Kharkiv. And in Frankivsk, I held workshops at Frida, Winged Dreams, and other art studios. And now, before Easter, with these masterclasses on Easter eggs, I seemed to go crazy. I've been asking for free workshops everywhere I can. Only there, in the 'Winged Dreams' art studio, I had a salary. And the rest of them were free. I enjoy the process so much that I take my materials everywhere. In the kindergarten where my eldest son goes to school, in his group, I held a masterclass too. From 1 September, my eldest son will attend a lyceum. I met his future teacher. And she is now in the 4th grade, so I gave a masterclass on Easter eggs to those children. I did it for a public organization and students. Well, I asked everywhere, because it is important for me to feel the need for myself. It's a maternal feeling when you seem to be doing something at home from morning to evening, but for many years you don't see any results. I would really like to restore the Frankivsk paintings on the territory so that we can work together. In the evening, my husband would stay there to finish the work, and I would be able to run after 4:00 to pick up the children and continue working with them.

Interviewer: Could you tell me what kind of support you need from the local community? From social services, maybe from the authorities. What kind of support?

Interviewee: We need to resume our business related to interior painting. So that we can take care of children despite our circumstances. Even though there are other jobs. I was registered at the employment center, and during all this time I had only one offer - as a cook's assistant in a kindergarten. And despite having two degrees in art, which have



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nothing to do with this, I understand the martial law situation. I was thinking that it's a job possibility that I have, and it's good that I have it. When I went to that kindergarten, they said no, this vacancy is closed, pass it on, they didn't send me to us anymore, so they had some kind of misunderstanding. My education is highly valued. And there are many art studios where I could have worked, but, again, these are personal circumstances. Everyone, logically, after school, after studying, after work, has the opportunity to attend those masterclasses in the evening, but I don't have the opportunity to conduct them. I'm very limited to professional realization in interior painting and the daytime. I just have a very narrowly focused specialization in which I am a high-level specialist, and I don't see any point in retraining for something else. I have been consciously studying and doing this all my life. And there is much less demand in Frankivsk than in Kharkiv. Everyone is somehow more conservative and stereotypically believes that it is very expensive, even though ordering Italian designer wallpaper is one and a half, sometimes two times more expensive than hand-painted professional artistic painting. But it is simply not popular in Frankivsk right now. We will think about advertising or look for other opportunities in this direction.

Interviewer: Has migration changed your family customs in any way? Has it changed your daily routine?

Interviewee: But this is something personal, we are introverts. Sometimes we don't have the opportunity, and not always, there is a need for it. But sometimes, yes. There is a question that it is communication that is lacking. Because all my friends have either traveled the world or stayed in Kharkiv. And we have no close people with whom we can talk frankly. We have no family here. Sometimes we have the opportunity to leave our children with grandmother at least for 3-4 hours at the weekend. So we are glad that we can be alone somewhere, just apart from the children. They are very active, the older one is hyperactive. And they are the center of our family's universe, our children. I understand that it will not always be like this for a while, but for now, yes, it is a bit difficult.

Interviewer: Has migration changed who you are?

Interviewee: There was a professional devaluation. As I said I used to be the head of a creative workshop. Six months seems to be a short period, but I had employment, and fulfillment, and I started to develop in this direction after such a long maternity leave. My husband was able to work all the time. There were no contracts in



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Frankivsk, but now they are slowly appearing. And the feeling that no one needs me, but...

Interviewer: There's a certain vacuum, a kind of unfilled void right now, isn't there?

Interviewee: Teaching art and making crafts using different watercolor techniques with felt in a non-governmental organization is a great moral support for me. And you see that people come to you, and they enjoy it. They come out of your classes full and completely different. They come because, to be honest, those classes in the NGO are not for those who paint. And they are not for people to learn to draw. They are held in the daytime. The time that is convenient for me, when I have the opportunity to do it. And 80 percent of the participants are IDPs. For women, there is 'house 4824', a space provided for women, where I hold those creative workshops. And they come because they need to communicate first and foremost. And I understand them perfectly because I am like that. And they come a little bit discouraged, a little bit stiff at first. They say that the last time they painted was at school. But they would like to try themselves in this. And people want to be active. But they are still, well, the girls who come to my classes, they are mostly 55+ - the age group of my girls. And they come first of all to communicate, to be filled with it. But after the class, they come out and they are so happy. Wow, I did it, they say to themselves. And 70 percent of the same girls who keep registering keep coming, because they are satisfied with the result. They enjoy the process of the creative activity, and they enjoy the communication. And I am very, very inspired by this, and it is very important to feel the need for yourself.

Interviewer: What do you think about migration policy? How would you make our country better in this regard?

Interviewee: I would say that in Frankivsk it is at a fairly high level, I mean, NGOs and organizations that help with various needs, including humanitarian aid, psychological assistance, and various events for communication, for meeting people, for some kind of activity. Well, it seems to me that this is at a fairly high level in Frankivsk. Some payments for IDPs. Many cities are suffering, very much so. People who left from the very beginning, have the opportunity, frankly speaking, to find a job. Because people from the East of Ukraine have a slightly different rhythm. The rhythm of a big city. It is very different from Frankivsk. In the beginning, we noticed that everyone was so slow. And many people moved their businesses here, who came here when the war started. There are opportunities. Also, in the beginning, we had some difficulties with the locals. Perhaps it is better to say misunderstanding, unwillingness to



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understand our situation. At the very beginning, there were morally killing moments. A person could say something, and you would cry for a week afterward.

Interviewer: But that was only the beginning, do you face such things now?

Interviewee: I don't. We have adapted and there are no language issues. After returning from France, I was hurt not because of myself, but because of my children. There was a situation when children who had consciously spoken Russian all their short lives spoke Russian. They came to the first lesson of some kind of club there and said a Russian word. And one of the parents said the phrase 'damn Muscovites'. And you understand that the child did not hear it, he did not understand that it was addressed to him, he did not pay attention to it. But, well, personally, it hurt me so much. And there were similar situations in the supermarket. And there was an elderly lady who also said something about the language. Now there is no such thing. They adapted very easily, and we seem to try to make it easier for them at home. Also, it is a conscious choice.

Interviewer: Do you want to return to Kharkiv and what are your dreams for the future?

Interviewee: Yes, this is a very painful question, and it was very, very difficult for us to even make such an important decision for our family. My eldest son will be seven years old in the middle of the summer. He should have already finished the first grade. But he has certain health issues. And, well, I think that at the age of seven, it's not too late to go to school. We could not decide for ourselves. Because we were very attached to the presence of our own house in Kharkiv, and it was renovated. We have invested so much there, and childhood dreams with toys, a bunk bed, and a sports corner for our boys. Well, everything is as we dreamed. And the circumstances now are very radical. Thank God, we have housing, but it is in very poor condition. We can't afford to invest in repairs, it's not our apartment. And how long will we stay there? Maybe, well, until the war is over? But, well, the owner has the right to own the apartment. Circumstances may arise, and I understand perfectly well that a person may want to sell that apartment. We are not the owners. And we can't even, well, invest financially in repairs. And here, the state of the house is almost an emergency. There is no proper bathroom. Well, these are, in fact, that's a small matter. Because you can do without everything. If only it wasn't for those rockets, like at the beginning. And it was a very difficult decision for us. We decided for ourselves that we were going to stay in Frankivsk for



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three years. Because the child definitely has to go to the first grade on 1 September. And there are some neurological peculiarities. And it's not an option to stay away for a year. He will get used to the team, make friends, and have some contact with the teacher. It is difficult to change this. So we decided to stay in Frankivsk for at least primary school, four grades.

Interviewer: In the future, do you see yourself in your hometown, in Kharkiv?

Interviewee: All our lives we did. We loved that very much, and we love our city. My husband's parents had a house in Olkhovka, and Olkhovka was occupied. Now it is de-occupied. The house was destroyed, it is simply nothing there. And there is no possibility of going out of town to the countryside with children to feel safe and relaxed. As for safety, I don't know how many decades will have to pass for me to feel safe and secure there and not be afraid for my children. In terms of Frankivsk, it's like heaven and earth. Well, there's the nature here, and half an hour away, and you will arrive at the Carpathians. We will study here, and the most important thing is safety.