



**HOUSE** of  
**HELSENKI**

Since 2019

**HOUSE OF HELSENKI**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

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# BOARD 2022

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## Greetings from the chairperson



2022 has been a tough year for House of Helsinki Ry, and there are no plans to slow down next year either.

We have received a project grant for the next three years from STEA - Centre for Social and Health Organisations.

The REFUFIN volunteering project received 441 350€ for the period 2023-2025.

The project aims to support people fleeing the war in Ukraine in Finland through counselling, guidance and support measures. The project will train volunteers and produce support material. In practice, we will have two staff members for at least the next three years. This will allow us to consolidate our activities.

In January 2019, Irina, the current Vice Chairperson, and I sat down at the Oodi Central Library and thought it would be nice to have an organisation that could be run with real inclusivity, creativity and passion. We wanted to build a "house" that would become a home for creativity, new ideas, and people who would eventually form a new community.

**Artem Kuosti** - *Chairperson*

**Irina Levina** - *Vice-Chairperson*

**Daria Ten** - *Full Member*

As Chairperson and founding member of the House of Helsinki, I am grateful that we have been able to lead the organisation to this stage. The Refufin project is the first big step.

I would like to thank every volunteer, member, and partner for the work you have done with dedication, patience, and determination. Together, we have all made a difference in the lives of more than 6,000 people in just a few months.

I am also very grateful that the Board, Darya Gulik, and Veera Rautio have managed to articulate our activities and find a way to strengthen the organization's financial sustainability.

The next challenge for the Board is to update the financial management, recruitment, governance practices, and strategy.

It will be a lot of work, but I am confident we will continue succeeding!

During this long journey, we have faced all challenges with resilience and a sustainable approach to work. We now know that all this was just the beginning of the House of Helsinki Ry as we know it today.



# Advocacy and representation





# Helsinki-mitalit suojeluforsmedalier



Photo: Artem Kuosti receives the Helsinki Gold Medal, awarded to him in 2022.

## Helsinki City - Golden Medal

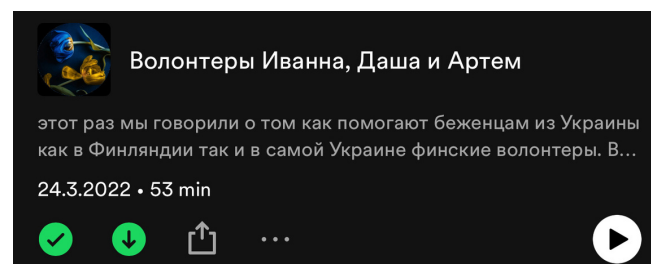
Thanks to our achievements, the House of Helsinki was in the spotlight with its Refufin project in 2022. This has brought much visibility and several invitations to lobbying and advocacy work.

The most significant achievement for the organisation was the award of the City of Helsinki Gold Medal on Helsinki Day to Artem Kuosti, Chairperson of the organisation. The Helsinki Gold Medal is the highest recognition of the City of Helsinki, and this was a great acknowledgement of the whole project and all the volunteers involved.

## Visiting the Lähiradio programme

Artem Kuosti, Darya Gulik and Ivanna Rukin, one of the founders of Auta Ukraine, were guests on the SK4 programme on March 2022. The programme "Samyj korotkij chas" was about the experience of volunteering and how ordinary people can help Ukrainians.

[A recording of the Russian-language programme can be found on Spotify.](#)



## Suomi Areena, MTV3

Finland's most significant social festival SuomiAreena, organized by MTV3 channel, invited the House of Helsinki to perform and talk about the Refufin project on 14 July in Pori.



Darya Gulik hosted the program "Ukraine crisis - volunteers in the shadows." The panel discussion included Artem Kuosti, Veera Rautio, and Veera Mustonen.

The SuomiAreena programs were broadcast live and recorded afterward. The program attracted 1036 viewers, and 226 watched the live broadcast.

The crisis in Ukraine has overwhelmed small organizations nationwide, and a wave of help has come from all directions.

We talked in Suomi Areena about Finland's readiness to provide assistance to individuals fleeing war and crisis in the future, and how volunteer efforts have played a significant role in this regard.

You can watch the recording on MTV's website.

*Photo: Veera Mustonen, Artem Kuosti, Veera Rautio and Darya Gulik performed at SuomiAreena in Pori.*







Photo: Alexander Foy, representatives of the Culture Foundation, Pekka Haavisto, Artem Kuosti, and Darya Gulik.

## Visit to Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Artem Kuosti and Darya Gulik were honored to attend the Minister of Foreign Affairs Pekka Haavisto.

The event was attended by dozens of representatives of the Russian-speaking community and discussed the situation and views of Finnish Russians and Russian speakers, as well as the impact of the Russian war of aggression on Russian speakers and Russians in Finland.

The event also included a presentation by the Culture Foundation on a survey of Russian speakers' opinions, followed by an informal discussion chaired by Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto.

## Capital Region Ukraine Crisis Partnership Network

House Of Helsinki participated in the "Helsinki Metropolitan Area Volunteer and NGO Partnership Network on the Ukraine Crisis" organized by the City of Helsinki, where practices and current information on crisis release work were shared under the guidance of the network's Leader and Development Specialist Eliisa Saarinen.

### YLE news

In March 2022, Darya Gulik discussed her volunteer work and the Refufin project.

Later, in August 2022, Artem Kuosti shared his experiences with the House of Helsinki organization and the Golden Medal of Helsinki City that he received in June.



# REFUFIN project

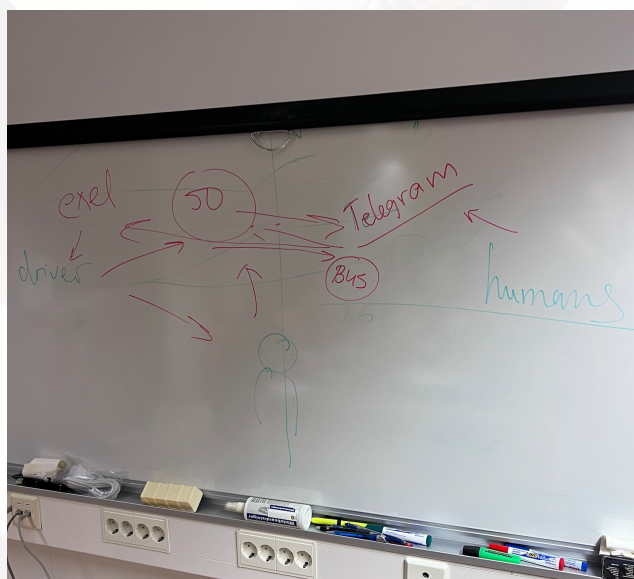
The Refufin project came to fruition almost spontaneously. After Russia invaded Ukraine, Darya Gulik assisted her friends in organizing a bus to transport Ukrainian refugees. Within a few days, Darya received hundreds of requests for help from her contacts. It was then decided to assist all who sought help, and the only requirements were to find volunteer bus drivers, buses, and sponsors.

*By the end of the first week, Darya had already gathered more than 50 volunteers to help.*

Buses and drivers were quickly found. Those in need received free bus rides to Finland and, at the same time, a sense of security through chat. As volunteer team grew, so did the need for an official representative and appointment.



*Photo: One of the 100 buses that brought Ukrainians from Warsaw to Finland.*



*Photo: Darya's first impression of the logistics and operation of Refufin.*

Who were these volunteers? Do you have the contact details of all of them? Who sets the rules? How could they have contacted official bodies and authorities without an official name and support? These questions were more strongly discussed in the second week of the action.

Observing these events from the periphery, Artem Kuosti offered his organization's services to act as a facilitator. House Of Helsinki Ry was a fledgling organization dedicated to supporting small cultural volunteer projects.

After a few discussions, on 13 March 2022, Refufin continued its activities as a House Of Helsinki Ry project.

The House of Helsinki provided the necessary support that Refufin needed, including creating a website with orientation material for each volunteer and advocating for the project, resulting in increased visibility and support.



The merger allowed Refufin to gain access to a network of essential partners, donations, and resources.

Darya was able to focus on volunteer coordination and transportation while Artem and the board handled policies, non-disclosure agreements, volunteer training, material translation, and more.

*The merger of the Refufin project and the House Of Helsinki brought more mobility and new opportunities.*



*Photo: Darya Gulik, Margo Roi, and Artem Kuosti at a joint meeting to agree on future cooperation.*

This also made it possible to obtain funding to continue our work for the next three years and to develop volunteering throughout Finland.



*Photo by Margo Roi and Eugenia Yagmur. The merger also allowed for support from partners and sponsors in the form of office space. Office space in Pasila was made available to the volunteers for two months by Slava Ukraini Ry and TEK.*

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, Refufin has reached over 6,000 people throughout Finland with its support chats and activities. Volunteers have organized transportation, booked accommodations, provided information on safety, travel, and legal rights, and even booked Forenom rooms for over 100 occasions, allowing Ukrainians to temporarily stay free of charge.

As the number of transports decreased towards the end of 2022, Refufin shifted its focus to providing support and information via the Refufin chat to those who had already arrived in Finland.



# REFUFIN project in numbers

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+80	Trained volunteers
+100	Bus trips
+3030	Persons fleeing the war safely moved to Finland
+5000	Volunteering hours
+6000	Counselations provided

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- Out of the 435 Ukrainians over half of the them (52%) felt that they received the necessary help and support from REFUFIN volunteers.
- Furthermore, 54% of those surveyed believed that they would require assistance with everyday issues as they settle into their new lives in Finland.
- In terms of volunteer satisfaction, 60% of REFUFIN volunteers (n=30) expressed the need for more comprehensive guidance and expert training/support to effectively fulfill their duties.



# The Good People project

During the Refufin project, the board of House Of Helsinki identified a clear and somewhat positive issue: there was a high demand for volunteers and they were easy to contact, but there was a lack of sufficient time and resources to provide them with quality training. The success of the Refufin project relied heavily on the involvement of new volunteers. In response, the board made a decision to prioritize accessibility, inclusivity, and modernization in their approach to volunteer recruitment and engagement. This involved creating a new induction process and reward structure to ensure that volunteering was a fulfilling and valuable experience for all involved.

House of Helsinki Ry received a €3000 membership grant from Moniheli Ry. The grant was applied for The Good People project idea to help Refufin volunteers by facilitating and organising their work better. Brix Ziemann was responsible for the design and implementation of the grant.

In 2022, the funding was used to create a website with a volunteer sign-up page, a workplace, an introductory page, and instructions for technical support.



*Photo: Nikolay Gofman, Veera Rautio, Artem Kuosti, and Darya Gulik talking about the Refufin project in the Capital Region Ukraine Crisis Volunteer and NGO Partnership Network.*

The grant has not yet been fully used, as the House of Helsinki received STEA funding for the Refufin project (2023-2025), and therefore part of the costs was logically transferred to the project.

The grant will be used to organise a more significant event for Refufin volunteers in spring 2023 to assess their well-being and willingness to continue volunteering and to reward them for their brave work in a crisis.

*Photo: participants of the 2022 Crisis Volunteer Partnership Network*



# Thank you all partners and networks!

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- City of Helsinki
- Capital Region Volunteer and Organizational Partnership Network on the Ukraine Crisis
- Association of Ukrainians in Finland Ry
- Moniheli Ry
- Slava Ukraini Ry
- Finnish Refugee Aid / MARE network
- Margo Roi / [FINUA.ORG](https://www.finua.org)
- Volunteer teams: Operation TOIVO, Operation HOPE, Operation Ukraine, Komandabobra, Piter proezdrom, Silta22
- University of Helsinki / Alexander Institute Volunteer Network
- Suomenoja Ukraine Aid / [autammesua.fi](https://autammesua.fi)
- Elisa, Telia, DNA, Anton&Anton, FLOAT, TEK, OctoBus, BLA BLA CAR, Staffomatic.



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