Webinar

ULI Toronto: Real Estate Industry Support for Ukrainian Crisis
Date: April 01, 2022

00:00:11 --> 00:00:15: Good afternoon and thank you all for joining this special
00:00:15 --> 00:00:19: Joint Industry Association webinar to inform you our
00:00:19 --> 00:00:22: the efforts are underway in this 5th week of the
00:00:22 --> 00:00:22: global
00:00:23 --> 00:00:25: crisis that is the war in Ukraine.
00:00:25 --> 00:00:29: We'll leave for another few seconds for people to enter
00:00:29 --> 00:00:30: the zoom session.
00:00:30 --> 00:00:33: I just give it a couple.
00:00:33 --> 00:00:35: I'll give it a 10 seconds or so.
00:00:41 --> 00:00:44: Well, we'll start now. My name is Mark Kindrachuk and
00:00:44 --> 00:00:47: I'm a member of the ULI Toronto Governance Committee
00:00:47 --> 00:00:49: and
00:00:49 --> 00:00:52: I want to thank you again for taking the time
00:00:52 --> 00:00:55: to join us this afternoon for a special information session
00:00:55 --> 00:00:59: to inform members of the planning real estate development
00:00:59 --> 00:01:02: industry
00:01:02 --> 00:01:03: about the efforts that are being led by the Canadian
00:01:03 --> 00:01:06: Ukrainian community.
00:01:06 --> 00:01:11: Local governments. Indeed, members of our broader.
00:01:11 --> 00:01:15: Industry support the fast expanding relief efforts related to
00:01:15 --> 00:01:18: the
00:01:18 --> 00:01:20: Ukrainian crisis here in Toronto region and across Canada.
00:01:20 --> 00:01:24: As background, this is a really important thing.
00:01:24 --> 00:01:27: You know. My grandparents left villages outside leave in
00:01:27 --> 00:01:29: Saskatchewan.
00:01:29 --> 00:01:31: We still have relatives there,
00:01:31 --> 00:01:35: my mother, my aunt, my brothers.
00:01:35 --> 00:01:39: Ten of us went to Ukraine about 10 years ago
to visit our villages and we're in constant contact with
them now continually and it's hard,
you know, listening to what they're going through so.
Here's an opportunity frankly for us in Canada.
You know, a lot of people are feeling helpless to
try and assist in the efforts.
You can't do it over there obviously,
but here in Canada. And I really applaud Richard and
Alex.
You know, for their initiative on this on this really
important subject and hopefully the real estate development
industry can
pull together and do things here at home that can
assist the refugees coming over.
We have a lot to cover today with many speakers
that will provide you with an update.
Picture on the clean relief effort,
and most importantly, how we can support the effort.
It is my pleasure now to introduce Michael Brooks,
President and CEO, CEO of Real PAC,
who has graciously agreed to chair today's program,
Michael.
Thanks mark. Welcome everybody. I'd like to begin our
meeting
by recognizing the First Nations,
matey and Inuit peoples, of Canada,
as traditional stewards and caretakers of the land.
We acknowledge that the offices of most of the organizations
who have come together to organize today's meeting are
covered by Treaty 13,
signed with the Mississaugas of the credit,
it is located on traditional territory of the initial Albeg
Chippewa.
I don't know Shawnee and Wendat peoples and is now
home to many diverse First Nations,
Inuit and meeting people as part of an intricate nationhood
that reaches across Turtle Island.
At this time of truth and reconciliation,
we welcome the opportunity to work together to build new
understandings and new relationships.
Ask for guidance and all we do,
and commit to creating a just and inclusive society.
And of course, as Richard reminded me,
it's a very special day today. Given the Pope's apology. All right,
I'm pleased to introduce the participating organizations. Obviously you can read them on the screen.
I'm going to read them out anyway.
Boma Toronto. NAIOP Greater Toronto chapter.
Toronto crew Canadian urban institute.
Ontario Professional Planners institute. Toronto region.
Board of trade. Real PAC.
Firpo fair rental policy organization and you align Toronto,
of course, and I wanted to again,
thank Richard Joy and Alex and the UI team.
For pulling this group altogether,
and as to what Mark said,
why these organizations? We're all bridges to real estate.
We're all bridges to homes.
We're all bridges to jobs.
We already have real estate moving.
In service of this cause office space warehouse space and
more recently apartments,
we'll hear more about that today,
and I think the jobs piece is yet to come.
There's certainly much that we can do.
Just think about how much Poland is doing.
So an overview of today's program.
We're going to have an update on the Canadian relief
effort from the Ukrainian Canadian Council.
We're going to hear from the City of Toronto.
Read their response. The Mayor Tory's office and the city's
newcomers office.
We're going to hear from a couple of industry representatives
specifically Capri,
Airbnb. And then we're going to have a Q&A session
at the end.
I would say to folks that as we go through
this,
you could post your questions.
In the chat and I'll try to screen those on
the fly.
Or you can raise your hand at the end using
the raise hand button and we'll have a good discussion,
hopefully then. All right, so I'm pleased.
Now to introduce Elena Belat from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and Nadia.

Gary Luke, managing director of the League of Ukrainian Canadians and I.

Before I turn it over to them, I also wanted to acknowledge the attendance sub McMillan, a coalition machinko who is the executive director of the Canadian Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society.

I'm not even pronounce the acronym CULIAS and Debbie Douglas of the Interior Council of Agencies serving.

Immigrants welcome to both of you.

So Elena, I think you are starting over to you.

Thank you, yes. I'm the culture of UC's.

That's the Ukrainian Canadian Congress displaced Persons settlement committee.

I'm here on either Michael Chuck's behalf. He'll be joining us later.

He's the CEO of the UC, and as I said, he'll be joining us later.

So we're working on this displaced persons refugee issue on a number of fronts.

It's quite a comprehensive. Effort that we've undertaken, which is UC's. Which is something that you C is familiar with doing.

And we're working with our provincial UCC branches with the federal government bodies,

local government partners, and of course corporate partners.

On this issue. There are many aspects to it.

One could talk about this for a very long time, but in a nutshell, there are the lobbying aspects of it.

The the fundraising aspects of the development of policy and action plans to deal with with the resettlement issue. There are many committees that were part of with many acronyms to memorize,

so just really quickly for people that may not be familiar as familiar with the UC.

So the UC, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress is the voice of Canada's Ukrainian community.

The Congress brings together under one umbrella all the
national,

provincial and local Ukrainian Canadian organizations,
together with its member organizations.
The UC has been leading coordinating.
And representing the interests of one of Canada's largest ethnic

communities 1.4 and soon to be attitude since 1940 and
has been instrumental in shaping Canada.
Social, economic and political landscape.
So I mentioned that we're part of a number of
committees and outreach programs.
The UC has established a working group on displaced persons
and refugees.

It's an internal group. We had an extensive meeting yesterday
and it's incredible how the UC branches are working in
their own particular environments,
and the UC is also the Ukrainian cross sectoral collaboration
governance table convened by the federal government as the voice
of the community.

So. Again, moving along quickly.

Who is coming to Canada?

We wanted to give a little bit of background and
others unsure.

We'll fill in here. And again,
people may know this. People may not so very quickly
about 400 million Ukrainians have been displaced by the war.

Offers of visas have been.

Offers of visas have been coming from around the world
from different governments,
so Canada has put in place a temporary expedited 3
year visitor visa program under the program title of Canada.
Ukraine. Authorization for emergency travel.
Now in addition to this,
Ukrainians can come in under other programs including ones related
to family reunification and the nuances of the immigration process
as a whole topic onto itself.
So it's suffice to say that the visitor visa category.
If if we spend a bit more time looking at
that particular category,
which I believe is the important one now in terms of who will be coming in.

Is not one that treats Ukrainians part of this visa program as refugees.

And more comments about that later.

So not being a refugee, one is not afforded the same services and support extended to refugee claimants by the Government of Canada.

Umm? In terms of who's actually coming,

we have a very good sense that it will be primarily women and children.

Maybe accompanied by their elderly parents will have students.

Young men under the the age of 18 because men 18 to 60 have been asked to stay in the country and aid in the efforts.

We anticipate the people will be coming over.

It varying degrees of trauma.

There'll be a lot of vulnerable people coming.

There are no organized airlifts in place at this point, so it'll be coming in and dribs and drabs,

so to speak. We know that there are about 80,000 applicants right now.

About 9000 approvals. People are already coming in under the various visa streams,

and we think that this will really come start coming into play in terms of numbers of arrivals in the next.

Three months. So for the purposes of this webinar,

we've identified 5 areas of need. Housing, commercial and industrial spaces.

Development of community infrastructure. Employment,

training and jobs. Other donations and industry Canada.

So we've tried to relate this to to our audience.

Let me just move along to housing and I'm sorry from speaking quickly.

So housing we're still lobbying the various levels of government on a number of fronts,

really. The ideal scenario, I think for us would would be to see incoming Ukrainians receiving temporary income support.
And or shelter allowance? I mean, we've been lobbying incessantly on that front. Whether we'll be heard or not, we don't know, but we can't stay still. So we're moving forward to identify both existing and upcoming gaps to the delivery of what really the focus I believe of this webinar is, and that is around the housing issue both in the short term and the long term. So the landscape is changing daily, and we're hopeful that there will be additional Government supports. And we also hope to continue working with the private housing sector and encouraging you to step up to the plate. And many of you already have. And for that we thank you. So it's a bit of a chaotic kind of. Situation right now, but we're wading through it and I think more more certainty will come our way. There is a lot to share on on individual housing topics, but we don't have time to do that right now. I would just like to comment that. All the Ukrainians that are coming in, whether they have any funds or not, are going to require some support in terms of shelter housing, so anticipating that we're doing our best as a community based organization as are others that are part of the overall process. Looking at options in terms of partnering with with institutions with Universities, just as an example, with looking at placing people into private homes, calling this shared housing, a process that. Hopefully we'll be mediated across the country by settlement houses. In the case of the GTA, a settlement house has come forward to to undertake this process. We've provided a list and there are many lists out
there of people willing to donate space. And they will engage in the vetting process and the matching process and follow up process to get people into these homes. This is just one example, because in terms of short term and long term, the short term I, I think from our perspective, involves transitional housing. And rather than emergency housing, which we're hoping that our local partners will be leading.

OK, so. We we hope for the continued support of the the housing industry. In the form of rent, forgiveness or rent assistance we we understand that the housing rental market in the GTA has its particular challenges and that it may not be reflective of availability of housing of whatever sort across the rest of the country. There are many secondary issues that play into successfully housing people that are coming in, one of them being where. Are there greater opportunities nationally? And because a lot of you are nationally based, I believe that we'll be able to to work together with you to find really a national solution while still being aware of of local context opportunities. And I believe that we have a number of next steps that we like to to comment on, but I think that I'll leave that for error.

When he joins us, which hopefully will be shortly. I turned this over to Nadia. Yes, olano. Thank you so much for providing an overview based on the numbers that the government is providing. As of March 27, we have 91 /.

91,000 of applications received 14,500 applications approved and so far we have 3400 Ukrainians that have arrived in Canada by land and 8300 that have arrived in Canada by. Here, so these are already arrivals that you know are either seeking accommodation or have family and friends that they
that they have found.

Space to to live with.

Olana has covered the housing portion.

However, I would like to actually approach the other aspect of it, which is industrial spaces. Commercial spaces as well as development of infrastructure because with the incoming Ukrainians there will be several other challenges.

One of the asks for industrial and commercial is warehousing space.

I know that in Toronto there is a lot of efforts in setting up storefronts for the refugees to come in and take their packages. Assistance packages that are being provided and donated. That is something that is not only happening in the GTA but also across Canada. So that is one of the requirements for commercial space.

That is, set up to actually have refugees come into the space to pick their packages up, not just a sorting facility.

The other ASK is community infrastructure or the development of the Community infrastructure.

A lot of these mothers and children that are coming in. Are asking for programming for summer programming.

There are Ukrainian organizations, youth organizations that have various camps across Canada and would like to assist with summer programming.

However, need some assistance when it comes to infrastructure and making sure that they could.

House more I could speak to.

The efforts in the GTA but.

There there are many other camps across Canada. In regards to those portions that there is more work and more challenges coming our way, but those are also opportunities in helping out by the real estate industry.

Michael, that that is all that I have to say.
I'm keeping it very brief because I know we only have an hour.

Terrific, thanks Nadia, that's great and we do have a question already in this in the chat from Simon Simon. I'll hold off until we get to the Q&A session to deal with your question.

So at this time, maybe we can.

Move on to and I'm pleased to introduce and think it's Lubomir Cyberspy of Maria aid and the Lubomir.

Are you able to speak briefly to there?

You are welcome. Thank you.

Welcome to speak. On behalf of that.

And I must say, I Googled Maria aid and I was.

I saw it was the.

Biggest plane in the world.

The one that was bombed early in the campaign, and that's what it's named for.

It is indeed we were inspired by Maria because Maria has.

The plane was brought humanitarian and military assistance all over the world to those that need it.

And the volunteers in this organization are inspired by that because they participated in project UNIFIER, which is what the project under which Canadian armed forces provided training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

So I'll just try to keep it very short on the 1st slide you can see what our mission is.

Essentially, we want to deliver tactical and reconnaissance gear.

Those are drones. Those are night vision goggles.

Things of that nature to the Ukrainian special forces so that they can target and destroy Russian artillery behind enemy lines.

The second line of our mission is to deliver battlefield gear so that Ukrainian armed forces can survive more in the battlefield environment and therefore have more confidence when they fight. The reason we're presenting to you today is that some of you may have contact with people who want
to make their money really work at the front lines, and we're offering the ability to do that without any overhead. Let's go to the next slide.

The reason for our mission is that we want to destroy that Russian artillery behind enemy lines because we think that's going to save lives by diminishing their ability to bomb cities. We think that will stop any further humanitarian crisis that is a potential. If the Russian artillery continues to make advances and continue to do its awful work, and we think that that way we can repel the Russian invasion and in effect leads to winning the war. Now who needs this? Well, of course the people of Ukrainian, the people that are living in those cities that are being bombed. They need the solution. But also we think that by winning the war as we all know on this call that will restore or at least restore partially the international relations which will create the conditions to you know re-start economic and business activity the way we all want it to be. Uh, your question may be why media a next slide. Next slide there we go. So wine media we are all volunteers. In fact, only two of us are Ukrainian. Everyone else is non Ukrainian. They are either veterans or active in the Canadian Armed Forces. So we have absolutely no overhead. Every dollar that's donated to us will buy gear and pay for shipping. We have the experience in amongst the volunteers in military matters, medical emergency response as well as experts who know procurement and logistics. And our procurement experts have established relationship because as you may or may not know,
people that sell this kind of tactical equipment and reconnaissance
don't just sell to everyone they sell to people they know.
So luckily the folks that are that are volunteers have established relationships with you.
Know those kinds of suppliers,
they trust them, the suppliers trust our guys so we can get this here and we can get it delivered to the front lines.
And we also have established relationships with special forces in Ukraine.
So when we send something, it is gonna get into their heads.
The reason these volunteers are so committed even though they have no Ukrainian family or or family in Ukraine is that all of them were involved in project unifier, which is what the Canadian Armed Forces did to train Ukrainian soldiers.
So they know the people over there. They know the officers and they feel for them, and so they really want to do their thing to help.
So if you're looking to do to to, you know, donate your money, make a difference on the frontline.
There's no overhead or, you know someone that does.
We are more than happy to to provide you that service.
Terrific, well well done. Lubomir and kudos to you and your volunteer team for taking this on.
I'm sure it's very, It is very, very important and useful. All right?
I'm going to be jumping onto a team meeting on zoom so I won't be able to be here for the Q&A.
But please, if there are questions if someone can forward them to me, we are more than happy to answer them.
Perfect, yes, we will do that.
Thanks so much. Thank you.
All right, pivoting now we're going to now go to Bureau Dodich, the city's newcomer office, who's going to speak to us about the city's efforts in this respect and admire. I'm not sure whether you have any official message from the mayor's office or whether just OK, the newcomer, the newcomer, into this, what? What are you seeing and what can you do? Much I first would like to mention that. The newcomer office is parking the city of Toronto and I'm working very closely with the mayor's office in. In general, on matters related to refugees, refugee issues, and immigration issues. But in the last while. Since last summer, in fact, even more closely, as far as it's the resettlement of Afghan refugees is concerned. And now the these this latest national effort to welcome Ukrainian arrivals. The reason is published program that the City Council approved a few years ago when Syrian refugees were arriving. The program is called Refugee Resettlement program, and there is a response structure. That's part of that program. That response structure has been activated last summer and now we added a couple of tables to facilitate coordination of the efforts in Toronto. And I know that some of the the people that are part of the conversation today are part of the one of these tables, so they may be familiar with what I'm sharing. That one table is called the Interagency Task force. For Ukrainian resettlement, there is an internal table interdivisional table and my colleagues at the city, and I are intensively working to establish. Where the city can can assist. What are the gaps? We are also very intensively working intergovernmentally to influence decisions of the other two orders of government,
and as you have seen there are changes,
frequent changes and we are.
Continuing to to talk to the provincial and federal government
to provide.
Our opinion about about the the situation the the,
the supports that are in place.
I can tell you, for example,
that my colleagues in Toronto employment and social services who.
Deliver in employment supports and Ontario work works
which is
social assistance regularly to people that have refugee status or
The Who are refugee claimants,
are on standby in case the policy changes.
In case this temporary status changes.
We I'm also very happy to share that Toronto Police
Service has offered a simplified approach to the volunteer sector
screening check and through the newcomer office they will be
fast tracking, literally within days.
Hundreds of these applications that relate to.
Offers of donations of housing.
There will be no forms that will need to be
filled.
There's the minimum information that will be required and there
will be no fees and that's something that is phenomenal
and is unprecedented,
and I hope other police services across Canada follow the
the lead of Toronto police service.
There. There is a lot on the go,
a lot happening we have.
In fact, been meeting very frequently with the federal and
provincial governments since a year ago in anticipation of the
an increase in arrivals of refugee claimants.
Once the border is reopened,
and because we know what resources are available locally and
they are not sufficient.
So we have been concerned about many of the issues
that are raised today for a number of months now
and.
Are continuing to have internal and external conversations to try and address.

I also just wanted to mention the number of Ukrainians that arrive to Canada that Nadia shared is from the January 1st and that number includes all of the different statuses, permanent resident status, etcetera. I think it's an important point because most of those that arrive so far do have some resources and.

May have been able to get support, but those that will start arriving even today will require a significant amount of support and they are coming on this temporary status so your efforts are very much needed and I will look forward to hearing more details.

Thanks Vera, while I've got you let me ask you a question and that is maybe there's two questions. I think that Nadia mentioned 11,700 have arrived in Canada. You said it. Perhaps that's from January.

The first. Do you have a feel for how many of those are settling in the GTA?

Or we just don't know that number?

We don't have official numbers, but I did hear that the number the the percentage is 80 percent,

8080. I think Alina said that flights were landing in Toronto almost exclusively,

so that would explain that second question is you mentioned jobs and and obviously one of the opportunities here is to skills match people who are coming in with demand for labor in our industry,

including construction. And property management and security and all that

kind of thing.

How do our industry access that data?

And that portal? Where should they go?

Well, I should. I should have mentioned that in Toronto there are hundreds of Community agencies that are proved that are funded by the federal government to provide settlement

services and. One aspect of these services related to employment
and there's there are a couple of very large agencies
that are specialized in jobs related to newcomers in principle,
and perhaps Debbie can also comment about that,
but for Afghan resettlement. Ohh I now.

Cannot remember which agency but what.

What happens in situations like these generally is the federal
government.
The funds a lead agency related to employment to to
work with both employment and employers and newcomers
to match

I don't know that if you have heard anything
absolutely and thank you Vera as as I believe Nadia
talked about in Viera as well that the federal government

has decided to make federally funded settlements.

Services accessible and available to arrive in Ukraine.

Although they coming in under temporary process,
we have a number of organizations here in Ontario that
are employment agencies that are well connected to
employers.

They are paying attention and they are already there.
A number of employers who have indicated that they will
want to hire the one piece that haven't been mentioned
yet by my colleagues.

This at the federal government has set up.

A portal for those wanting to offer jobs to offer
donations,
and they will go through that one place they for
employers having jobs and they will be directed to the
Canada Job Bank so their jobs can be posted there.
Agencies then can work with clients to direct them there,
but our agencies here in Ontario have a long track
record and a very successful in working with employers in
finding folks with the right skill sets that that we
require. Michael, I have to leave so I'm going to
add one more piece that my colleagues have mentioned the
wrong issues of health and health access.
If there is one thing that all of you and
your colleagues can do is to really.
Advocate with our provincial government to ensure
immediate access to

OHIP services.
As people arrive temporarily, those who will come in later on.
The family unification will come in as permanent residence.
They will have access to OHIP.
We know they won't have to wait the three months as the program has indicated,
but certainly we need access to a web services for those who are coming in.
As for under the three year temporary visa as well.
Thank you for hosting this.
There are a number of folks working on this file.
As you can imagine, very many moving parts and so every industry I think has a role to play in this.
Unfortunately I do have to drop off for another meeting.
OK, well thank you, Debbie and Vera.
Thank you and I think that we'll maybe circle back with the both of you after and try to get those links.
And maybe I can task Caroline if you're on the line to see if you could follow up and see if we can get those links on the.
On the real PAC Ukraine web page, at least it's a start and there may be others who have web pages going as well.
All right. So with that we thought it'd be interesting to profile some industry leadership so far, and I'm I'll start off on.
I'm pleased to introduce Mark Kenny, who's the President and CEO of Capri, who will talk about their starting initiative both on their own and with a collective of some of the other apartment REITs and non Reed providers mark over to you and welcome.
Good afternoon, Michael. Yeah, I'm going to highlight a couple of initiatives that the industry is trying to bring forward to be helpful.
Not just Kapri, but our peers in the past have always responded to refugee claims and the Ukraine situation.
We don't have refugees, but we have people settling really on very short notice but with different status as I think was mentioned. The first initiative, the Capri motor took was there were some sick children. That were being treated critical care in the Ukraine when the conflict broke out. And Sick Kids Hospital had agreed to take on those kids and treat them. Capri responded by fully furnishing linens. Tableware, furnishings, groceries and clothing for ten families and 10 apartments. The only thing I would like to highlight here is that we have incredible low inventory as an industry of apartment rental in the City of Toronto. So even finding the 10 units was not easy. This isn't just something for Calgary, this is all of our peers in the industry right now. There's clearly a major supply issue, which is very much being discussed now, but we're happy to get those ten families settled and what we're doing is essentially allowing really with no paperwork. With the the help of Megan's Hug and sick kids who are directing the families to us, providing these accommodations for six months rent free, including cable including. Any Wi-Fi needs in the apartments, and we're taking the credit risk. Not that we're that's even really on our minds, but it gives highlight to the fact that it's hard to settle people when there is a documentation. Capri can make that decision, but these families will have difficulty finding accommodations period, especially in the numbers we're talking about. 2nd initiative. Was really done with a group of industry peers. Only in them off here. CAPREIT Hazyview Investments Boardwalk REIT homestead Interrent REIT Minto REIT and Starlight.
Collectively, we pledged 400 apartments across the country with a variety of landing incentives in the case of Capri. We're doing rent forgiveness and damage deposit waiving with no paperwork requirements for 100 apartments and. We're doing that in coordination with the UC Canadian creating Canadian Congress, and it's it's. We're proud of the initiative. It is still very quite difficult to have people channeled and funneled through the system. But we are anxiously holding units on the ready to help people get settled. We talked about jobs there for a second and I think that with the employment situation in the country, a lot of employers are stepping forward wanting to offer opportunities. Capri and our peers are doing exactly that. Also, it's our hope that we can find housing solutions as well as potential employment solution for people that are settling. Just the other thing I wanted to know, and it's more on the topic of Canadian charity. It didn't take long for us to partner up with the likes of Sleep Country, Sheraton Hotels, Marriott Hotels, Canada. Rogers Wise, and Carmen Metering services and legal firms. Cohen Highley was the partner to step up and offer whatever they could in terms of donations. And I know amongst our staff, it's it's incredibly been well received and our residents are very appreciative that we're stepping up. So it's a call to action, not so much. A cap free speech, but it's just a call to action to other landlords of what a positive experience this has been in a very, very set of sad circumstances and. You know the the challenge is going to be a big one is my final bit because the the extreme housing shortage that we have in this country really from coast to coast. And I guess I'll leave it at
that,

Michael. These are just some of the things of private
sector has been doing.

Terrific on yeah, Mark, thanks for your leadership in this
space.

So you've set a high bar and we have to
get that message out.

As you said to all of the other apartment landlords
cost to coast Nathan,

maybe I can turn to you and and let's hear
about Airbnb's initiatives.

The only thing I've heard about that is people renting
Airbnbs and not intending to show up in Ukraine.

But tell us what you're seeing.

Yeah,

that was an interesting grassroots initiative.

That we didn't. We didn't really plan on,

but was an interesting way of connecting.

You know, people who just wanted to do something good
with individuals on the ground and and in Ukraine Airbnb
works closely with the charity that we set up about
a year ago called Air bnb.org,

which is housed over 50,000 refugees and asylum seekers from
around the world.

Over the last couple of years when the Afghan crisis
happened last year as well,

we committed to housing. 20,000 Afghans who were who
were
seeking homes around the world.

We've actually provided housing to just over 20,000 of them
now,

and when, obviously when this Ukraine crisis happened and our
hearts go out to everyone,

especially those more personally connected to it.

We committed to 100,000 houses since we're currently working with
the International Organization for Migration,

primarily in Europe. To make our listings that are available
on the platform available to individuals who are seeking housing
at the moment,
primarily in Europe, Canadians have been stepping up quite a lot to offer housing, and so you know, we have traditional partners. We've worked with. Who are, you know, refugee settlement agencies from across the country, Calgary Catholic Immigration Services being the primary. One that we worked with on the Afghan issue but spoke to the UCC. Actually this morning a couple folks from the Toronto office who reached out and we will look to see what we can do to to unlock those. Those free available listings. The difference, I think for us is these, are, you know, just individuals, either with space in their home or extra space, or an accessory dwelling unit of some kind that they can make available for some period of time for these individuals and people are really stepping up to want to want to help in in whatever way possible. So we'll continue to work with. With the TV UCC and the federal government, does the need continues to grow and do what we can to support those folks? That's a great great story and I had no idea that that you've been so active in that space for so long. Nathan, that's kudos to you guys. Well done, we've got. Some questions, and maybe I'll just turn to a couple of those and. Maybe it's. No one question has already been answered. That that you've been so active in that space for solutions. And I think that you made the point that you were looking for places that were near. If I can call them a Ukrainian culture shock buffer, zone stairs, a Ukrainian English school, there's an established Ukrainian community there,
etcetera etcetera. Have you thought through it, but more about those specific areas and where they are?

I have been thinking about the the specific areas where the Ukrainian community is already settled and that could be a good social buffer as you've said for the incoming Ukrainians. However, the criteria is not yet developed for the long term housing.

We're still working on that, and obviously we will be looking towards the settlement agencies for further assistance as well.

Terrific yeah, that's great. I also see in the in the question the Q&A chat box that the jobs for Ukraine Job bank sites are posted twice, so those of you 97 of you to start if you could access that, that would be terrific Nadia.

One thing that I'm not sure is in the job bank, but what's your assessment of the English language school? Sorry, English language proficiency of those people. Coming from Ukraine.

Michael, that is a very difficult question to answer. I don't know what the English language proficiency is, however there will be a language classes that will be offered.

I'm not, I'm not sure. Maybe that's something to look into. Again, I see Mark is raising his hand.

Piece to this my brothers and I are working in Vancouver. He lives in Vancouver and I sent an article out to Michael and Alex the other day.

They brought their community group is good article CBC. They brought six families to their their neighborhood in Vancouver and my brothers having a 32 year old single mother and a 7 year old daughter and right behind them in the. Carriage house, there's another woman that's 25 years old that's in heightened tech in Kiev, and so the mother and they talked to him on the phone the other day from Portugal because they're
waiting

00:44:59 --> 00:45:02:  in Portugal to a flight for next week that she
00:45:02 --> 00:45:05:  can speak OK and she can probably get by and
00:45:05 --> 00:45:09:  they're just trying to check into English as a second
00:45:09 --> 00:45:11:  language ESL for her.
00:45:11 --> 00:45:15:  The daughter of the seven year old knows the alphabet
00:45:15 --> 00:45:17:  in English.
00:45:17 --> 00:45:21:  so they were working with the different schools in Vancouver
00:45:22 --> 00:45:26:  to get a separate English second language course for the
00:45:26 --> 00:45:28:  kids that will be there.
00:45:28 --> 00:45:30:  So one of the things that I think is going
00:45:30 --> 00:45:33:  to be very powerful if there is a ways that
00:45:33 --> 00:45:36:  we can extrapolate what's happening here in the GTA and
00:45:36 --> 00:45:39:  housing or whatever, or even the things that they're doing
00:45:39 --> 00:45:42:  and then use it across the country because they're looking
00:45:42 --> 00:45:44:  into already the schools.
00:45:44 --> 00:45:50:  The frankly, the women's teaching and job and digital
training.
00:45:50 --> 00:45:52:  So there's a lot of those initiatives happening and they'll
00:45:52 --> 00:45:53:  land next week actually,
00:45:53 --> 00:45:56:  so they're really moving quickly on this.
00:45:56 --> 00:45:58:  But even in the housing point that.
00:45:58 --> 00:46:00:  Uh, you know Michael and Mark brought up.
00:46:00 --> 00:46:02:  I saw a note from Tara,
00:46:02 --> 00:46:04:  who's from the region of Waterloo.
00:46:04 --> 00:46:07:  A lot of these housing rates and companies are across
00:46:07 --> 00:46:10:  the country and if we can figure out a way
00:46:10 --> 00:46:13:  to at least set up a template up or the
00:46:13 --> 00:46:16:  start of it and then extrapolate across the country can
00:46:16 --> 00:46:19:  help because the GTA is probably one of the more
00:46:19 --> 00:46:22:  complex real estate markets and we did this like I
00:46:22 --> 00:46:24:  said that Richard, about four or five years ago for
00:46:24 --> 00:46:25:  other nonprofits.
00:46:25 --> 00:46:27:  We figured out a way with architects,
00:46:27 --> 00:46:32:  developers, contractors. Owners to come together and then
extrapolate across
00:46:32 --> 00:46:35:  the country to try and forget the scale.
00:46:35 --> 00:46:37:  It's like a tech technology company.
00:46:37 --> 00:46:41:  You need to scale, especially with these kind of numbers.
00:46:41 --> 00:46:44:  So that's just a little background there was already doing
00:46:44 --> 00:46:45:  work and ESL for kids,
digital training and the scale of magnitude of their English is, frankly, alphabet for the kids and a working knowledge for a mother.

So I just kind of background and seems I guess, consistent with the six families that they're dealing with right now. Yeah, that's mark. That's great work by the way, from it's supporting that family.

We also in our neighborhood have found out that we're supporting a family and it literally going around door to door.

Who can buy a Walmart card gift card? Who can buy Bay gift card? They need clothes. They need food. They need everything for apartments. They need furniture. They're not shopping on, Wayfair to see. You know it's it's. It's got to be done so the needs are. Are great one of the questions that came up earlier Nadia and and while I've got you on the screen, maybe you can start, although maybe we have to introduce echart to to to answer this one as well as I think Elena mentioned, we've got 4,000,000 displaced people. 4,000,000 displaced people out of the Ukraine going to the abutting countries. We've got 91,000 applications sent into Canada. So far 14,500 approved, and by my calculations 11,700 arrived.

How many more do you think that we could expect like over the next three months? Are we gonna get 80% of that 91,000 so 70,000 people coming to the GTA? Looking for a place to sleep every night? Michael, the statistics that I provided were as of March 27th. I believe that you know several days have gone by and those numbers are a lot higher today because more applicants are coming through. But I would suspect that you know 70,000 is not a far off digit of incoming Ukrainians to Canada. And that's probably that's probably I'm going to guess 3
average of three people per household coming in.
That's, you know, 25,000 units of accommodation.
We need to find very quickly.
And maybe it's timely, because now you're on screen.
He hard to welcome you.
Thank you. Yeah, so I'm pleased to introduce you or
Michael Cheshin who is the CEO and Executive director of
the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and.
Maybe you've got some comments on those questions that I
was drilling Nadia on,
but welcome anyway. Well,
thank you for allowing me to pop in late.
I was just some Parliament hill here meeting with the
degregation of Ukrainian MP's women MP's.
I think you'll see them in the media today and
tomorrow.
Just a reminder that we are all helping Ukraine win
the war which will avert a massive humanitarian crisis and
I think that speaks to your question Michael about we
don't know what we don't know yet.
People are people are sitting and hoping that they will
be able to return home.
But we do know that many people don't have a
home to return to.
If you've seen the the the way that cities of
Car Cube,
which is a city of 1.5 million or Mariupol or
even key of the capital which is the city of
4,000,000,
there's a lot of destruction of residential properties.
Although the Russians are not targeting Russian,
you know civilian infrastructure you can just.
It's everything you see right?
Apartment buildings are being destroyed,
houses are being destroyed, so even for those who do
have a chance to go home,
if there is a peace settlement or or some kind
of end to the war,
there is going to be a long.
Regrouping process so we don't know but we know that
I think we are all safely assuming thousands of people
will be coming to Canada for a temporary temporary stay
and you know, as we've seen with some of the provincial governments initiatives, there is. There's a family reunification stream. There is some attempt to have people decide to look at coming to Canada as permanent residents to transition from the temporary to permanent residence for family reasons or for employment reasons as well. So I think it is definitely safe to say that even even under the best scenario where the war ends and people can go home, we will still have thousands of people needing refuge here temporarily. Yeah, and I'm thinking back to Mark's comment about capacity. We already have a tight market in the GTA. As you know, it's probably a tight market in Vancouver and many other cities and. And you're thinking about, OK, how do we accommodate that volume of people together with the whatever it was? $400,000 of planned immigrants to Canada that the government that was against training the system. So we're add. I don't know my my rough math, 70,000 people in the next 60 to 90 days we're almost at half a million total new people coming to this country looking for a place to. Live. I mean, I would say that we don't what I've heard, and you know this is sort of everything is speculative. We don't have hard data. I think that people who are currently, you know, the four million in Europe, the 10 million out of their homes in Ukraine. They are looking for options. They're looking to plan for their future. I don't. I don't believe 100% of those who have applied will come to Canada. We know 100% of them who applied, will not have a successful application. First of all, unfortunately, and we know that people are
making.

Uh, are are reaching out to sort of figure out what their options are going to be, because right now they've been living day to day and so Canada is one of those options and and we have a really strong community here, which is a beacon, you know, to pull them in because they do have friends and family. They do know of the community here, what what, what one thing we're trying to do is work with other. I would say smaller or we're going to regional centers so we know that St. Catherine's, Oshawa, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. Are super well organized. We just had a 2 hour meeting last night with all of our community branches and organizations. Part of our job is going to be to coordinate with the settlement agencies, redistributing people in Canada, so I don't. I think it will be very difficult and the pressure will be the most on the GTA, but I think part of that pressure will be alleviated if we can work together with the the government sectors, the provincial governments that want to redistribute people out to other smaller markets where there might be more availability. Where there might be a better quality of life, affordability, equation and what? That's what we're seeing. We're seeing our branches are getting direct messages from people in Europe asking what is the rent in Winnipeg? What is the rent in Vancouver? What do I get? What kind of jobs are available through the Jobs Bank? So we encourage we encourage proactive postings as jobs, bank people are making decisions on where to end up based on what they see in the Jobs Bank and where they can try to calculate their rate of survival. Because really, as we've heard if they can. Come to Canada on this visa program.
They will not likely have very many funds if anything left.
If they are able to get here, it will be expending all of their savings and funds to get here and then.
As you said Michael they will have they are arriving already with nothing, no savings, no cash, no resources.
So we are we're an advocacy organization for these folks for the community.
We are advocating to the government to have a better plan generally, which involves perhaps airlifting people to specific cities.
As you said, you know an airlift would.
We would know in a manageable way that you know 300 families are coming to Edmonton or Calgary or Saskatoon.
We would know who these families are, how many kids they have?
That looks more like a traditional refugee program which allows all of us to plan, which is the basic absence of knowledge right now.
Is that we can't plan in great detail, so we are pushing that with the Minister with the department.
We have not heard no, but we've not heard. Yes, that's what I would say.
I did want to say that we are. We are overwhelmed by the the support that you are, that you're association that your Members, individually collectively as companies have had by by the support of all Canadians.
We have never had this number of incoming messages and incoming offers and so really when I say we're we're not going to let anything pass without sort of a fully exploring every option, every offer, and we're trying to do our best to figure out how to make use of.
All the goodwill because there will be more people coming than we can handle in in residential apartments,
people will need to be staying with shared accommodation.

We're looking at, you know, institutional accommodations, et cetera. So we're going to do everything we can to work with you and with our settlement partners and our communities across Canada to figure it out. It's a very scary prospect, but we we believe that it's the right.

It's obviously the right thing to do in this conflict as well. To help those in need. Absolutely, and and all of the associations who have come together for this particular webinar. Obviously you're engaged in this and will be the bridge we want to be a bridge between these people and their real estate and jobs and needs and.

That's that'll be a big challenge. One of the things you mentioned, the five small cities very quickly, and I couldn't write them down fast enough. But you know that's helpful data for us as well, because we can reach out.

Maybe there is a landlord association and some of those smaller cities and communities that we can reach out to and say, hey, did you know you're pretty well organized locally and you know if you've got any vacancies you should connect with X or Y?

That would be also useful for us to know. As you say, people are smart enough to screen this in advance from wherever they are in the. In Europe, before jumping over here to Canada, yeah.

not everybody but but those those who are really kind of calculating what what, what their next three years will look like are making those kind of inquiries all over the place.

And I and we will. We will be happy to send a list out to Richard and the association. It's the the reason we had a 2 hour meeting is we actually have 23 branches across Canada.
They're all having these really active community groups working with their city councils, working with their settlement agencies trying to find solutions. And we're all in the same. Sort of saying when are people coming and who's coming we we don't know. We know when they call us, because they're stuck at the airport. So we are. We are also advocating to the government and we encourage you to to say that this system could be a lot better and it could be a lot we shouldn't be spending all of our time spinning wheels, you know, waiting for the mysterious people to show up at the airport. We we could be more proactive in this and we will continue to sort of make that point as well. I will say just the two things I was asked. I know Nadja and Elena did a presentation. So unemployment jobs, of course the Jobs bank is essential. Industry Canada is going to have this corporate portal. It's not up yet, but we've seen the back end and it should Michael to your point. It should capture both the jobs and the goods and the there is there is a section there about accommodation and housing and so it's not perfect or clean. It's sort of out of the box sales force. A piece that they put up. We're happy to keep. Talking to the companies and the association about the discussions we've had, we don't wanna send people over to another robotic form and we want to hear feedback. If that form is not helpful to you, because, again, industry Canada is going to scrambling with the volume of offers they've had to sort it out as well. My the last thing I was supposed to say after other than thank you, thank you I well I don't know if we did not.
Did you teach them Ukrainian word for thank you no.
OK so the Ukrainian word for thank you is jacquou.
I'll write it in the chat and that's what we're sort of doing.
Our Ukrainian lesson as of the week, because we're all becoming. We're all becoming a little bit more Ukrainian here this week.
So I'm gonna write it out.
Yaku and so that is.
That's what I wanted to convey on behalf of our our Members, our branches, our community, the the result has been very positive, every interaction with with housing companies with your sector.
Individually and as a group has been extremely positive and extremely proactive and leads us to have hopeful days in the midst of of what is a terrible.
A terrible news story, a terrible experience that we're hearing every day about the tragedy.
We are going to keep working with you to stay in touch as the program gets better.
We believe that it can get better.
We are going to stay in touch with you on assessing as you said,
Michael, where you know where and when and where and how the need can be met.
We have enormous strength at the local level.
Both with the the companies that are working the local level with the communities at the local level.
Our role here nationally is really gonna be to to direct people to the local powerful teams who will be solving problems.
You know on a on a basis,
day by day, hour by hour,
and are already. I think doing that and so both myself and Nadia and Olana.
Nadia primarily has been working with your association and your folks but Olana and I have a role as well.
We're trying to coordinate the whole the whole.
There's been so many metaphors about you know air building
an airplane while we're flying it, et cetera. So the the perfect process is being developed in the midst of the process happening. We're trying to keep up to the news and keep up to the demands of of those who come and demands in the positive sense of what they're telling us they need. And you know, we are dealing with a population that is war traumatized, which is what we're, of course, telling the government as well that this is not just. This is not. Just to step off the airplane and I'll find myself a job next week in a population. This is gonna be people who you know had their homes destroyed. Violence has happened in front of them in the front of their children and they're gonna need psychosocial supports. And so that's that's part of it as well. So I think if there's any other questions, I'm happy to. Say more about UC or the efforts of of our communities, but I am very hopeful that with the goodwill of the folks in this call and the goodwill of our Community and in fact I mean all Canadians, we will. We will do the best we can to welcome these people here and and offer them a safe a safe refuge. Terrific well done dakyu to you. Your if I pronounce that correctly you actually got my name perfectly. If you seen me in the media, my name is pronounced differently every interview. Every person has differently, but you got it perfectly down. OK, well, that's good. Anyhow I'm getting the high sign from the organizers here, where we're an overtime, but it's such a worthy cause I don't mind. We really appreciate you, you horn and all of your colleagues making yourselves available. We've got more work to do collectively,
but speaking on behalf of the private sector,
there's a lot of goodwill and we'll keep on working
it.
Thanks again. And goodbye. All of you who logged in
today.
Appreciate your time more to do as you've heard.
Let's all get engaged.
Thank you, that's that'll be next week's word.
No, that's next week's word.
If I.

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