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A little boy hiding behind some barrels at a refugee camp. What can you tell from his eyes?

A Year of Gratitude

This year's report is woven with a single, powerful thread: gratitude. Every story within these pages is a reflection of your generosity—whether you gave goods, funds, time, or are part of the many grassroots organisations serving communities around the world. These stories could not exist without you. So, from all of us at Crossroads,

THANK YOU
in every language you speak!

Once again, many of our stories are centered around Ukraine. We wish it weren't so. But the need remains, and so, therefore, does our commitment. These stories are a testament to resilience, compassion, of those that remain in the country, serving their fellow countrymen in need.

2024 brought change, as we farewelled Etienne and welcomed Thomas into our team. You'll meet both of them in these pages, and we are certainly grateful for both of them!

Within these pages, you'll also discover the transformative power of simple items. From orthopaedic footwear in Nigeria to safety boots for frontline workers in Ukraine, baby food containers in China, and linens for the elderly in Singapore—each item tells a story of dignity restored and hope renewed.

As you read, we hope you'll not only reflect on the year that was, but also look ahead. Perhaps you'll find new ways to get involved—new paths to walk with us in 2025.

Thank you (perhaps in a few languages?)

What do we do?

CGV UK has global reach, but our strongest links are with businesses and NGOs based in the UK. We seek to be a "crossroads" between people in need and those who can help in the UK.

Global Hand: UK donors and UK NGOs are often in need of partners. We help 'match' them so that donors with valuable goods can find NGOs who place them strategically in their work, either at home or in their wider programmes.

Global X-perience: These educational programmes simulate challenges facing our world. Participants come from educational institutions, the business sector and community groups. Our goal is to help people 'step into the shoes' of those who are suffering by 'experiencing' something of their struggle and then looking for ways to make a difference.

Global Handicrafts: In the UK, we sell fair trade items made by people working their way out of poverty.

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2 Displacement

No matter how little, our kindness can illuminate even the darkest hour. From soft clothes to pens and solar lamps, these donations remind the displaced that they are seen. That nobody has forgotten them.

Soft Baby Clothes on the Frontline

As it stands, approximately 3.7 million people in Ukraine are internally displaced. Many are striving to integrate into new communities, but they often face significant obstacles in accessing education, employment, and social services. When winter arrives, the bitter cold adds yet another layer of hardship.

Recently, a shipment of baby and family clothes arrived from a UK organic baby clothing company. Part of the donation was delivered by driving eight hours across difficult and broken roads. It's amazing, that people are willing to go the distance to ensure help finds those who need it.

Among those who received the clothes are children who have lost their fathers in the conflict. Every day, the mothers carry the burden of this loss and find ways to stay strong for their families. We hope that donations like these offer a sense of hope and help them feel seen.

It's been 3 years since this conflict began, and there might still be a lengthy road ahead. These donations help to offer comfort and dignity where it's needed. We do this in the ways we can, because everyone matters, no matter which border they belong to.

Bringing Light to Kłodzko

In Poland, the city of Kłodzko was devastated by floods this year. The water rose higher than door frames, and it affected the lives of more than 17,000 people.

For many families, everything they once held dear was washed away in minutes. It's paralyzing, to lose a home like this. And no words can fully capture the grief. But for the many urgently rebuilding, they must put aside the sadness for later.

A donation of solar-powered lights arrived to help those who lost power. These would aid the reconstruction and rescue efforts. They provided safety, comfort, and a much-needed boost of morale when the nights felt endless. Through this simple gift, affected families held onto a bit of light and security, even when everything else feels uncertain.



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Displacement

The following stories are different donations that went to aid those in Ukraine. From work boots to soaps, they're like puzzle pieces sent to help the rebuilding efforts.

Matches for the Dark

Donations can come in big and small packages. A recent donation of safety matches from a UK company may seem modest in size, but their impact cannot be underestimated.

Packed into cartons, these matches were sent as part of family gift bags to Ukraine. While small, safety matches are powerful tools in survival. In the evening, they can help light a stove for a warm meal; During rescue efforts, to ignite a torch. The flicker of warmth can carry grieving community through a long night.

If you have any "small" donations, please do not write them off. Through our network, our team will find the most suitable partners.

You never know who might be asking for exactly what you have.

Work Boots for Rebuilding

Kyiv was once a vibrant city centre in Ukraine. Now, it has been demolished by the onslaught of missiles. In the aftermath, emergency workers move through ruined buildings, checking for survivors. Walking through the twisted rebar, oftentimes, they are wearing only whatever shoes they have.

Recently, 3,300 pairs of professional safety boots arrived in the city through our partner. With steel caps and tough outer fabric, the boots gave rescue workers the protection to power through the debris.

Worn by those who refuse to turn away, the boots support the brave people rebuilding their broken homes.

Jackets for Winter

The internally displaced in Ukraine live in collective shelters, often lacking adequate winter protection. For some near the frontlines, they camp out in damaged houses, often without heating. Temperatures can plunge to -20°C in some regions.

Recently, a donation was sent as part of a continued partnership. A well-known, UK based clothing manufacturer had reached out to our partners, a humanitarian organisation, working directly in Ukraine. The package included insulated jackets, and all kinds of warm clothes. Some of these jackets retail around £500.00.

The quality of these items is very high and this is especially important. Because they fled with nothing, many recipients may wear the same clothing day after day. Their lives rely on the durability of the product to provide warmth.

The ongoing nature of this support reflects a deep understanding: that aid must be sustained. As media attention fades, the needs on the ground remain. Long-term partnerships like this are crucial for ensuring that vulnerable communities continue to receive the help they need.

Small Soaps & Dignity

"A piece of soap was worth its weight in gold, and a chance to wash meant everything. It was the only thing that made you feel human again."
— Unnamed British soldier, WWI memoirs

Reading this on a nice sofa, we probably could not even begin to fathom the terrors of war.

Since the war began, many families and citizens have been sent to shelters in Poland and Moldova.

Everyday life is filled with uncertainty and hardship. In that chaos, even something as simple as a warm shower and a bar of soap can be a blessing.

Earlier this year, a shipment of soap was donated from Glaswegian soap company and sent to shelters and even the frontline. We hope it brought comfort where it was needed.





Happy faces in Uganda, where education is a privilege and a joy.

4 Health

Thanks to modern medicine, this baby can be treated with the correct resources



Equipment for Healing Eyes

For many years, this clinic in Tanzania relied on travelling surgeons, who always brought their own surgical tools. As these surgeons approach retirement, the clinic faced a big challenge: do they shut down this programme or buy their own tools? After all, funding was limited.

In excellent timing, a donation of surgical equipment came through a donor from Bristol on our network. The clinic received the tools they urgently needed.

For the first time, they performed these eye surgeries independently. Within 6 months, 60 patients had already been pre-screened and booked for life-changing procedures like cataract removal.

Mayasa is an 89-year-old lady, who had cataract in both eyes, rendering her effectively blind. After surgery, she regained her vision, allowing her to walk and live independently again.

In a country where access to healthcare is often limited, this donation gave hope to many clinics around the country, that things can get better!



Walking Free Again

On an average salary of £150 a year in Nigeria, any optional medical comforts are simply a luxury. When the paycheck comes in, the priority is food on the table and paying the bills. Other problems are put on hold, sometimes never addressed.

We know, knee pain, hip pain, foot pain can seriously affect our lives. Yet for some, they will still walk to water for miles and do long shifts at work.

Through our donation network, orthopaedic footwear was donated to a local community in Ibadan, Nigeria. For many, this was the first time they have even seen footwear designed like this.

Living on this side of the poverty line means urgent needs are often sidelined. This kind of support restores an important piece of wellbeing and dignity.

There's still a long road ahead, but these small steps show how thoughtful acts can cause a cascading effect.

Here's what one of their staff told us:

"[The support] has made a tangible difference in the lives of 125 individuals, offering them not just shoes, but a step towards better health and improved quality of life.

The beneficiaries expressed profound gratitude for the donation. Many highlighted the significant improvement in their mobility and comfort that these orthopaedic shoes would bring to their daily lives."



5 Economic Need

Read on for examples of how we serve those living in poverty.

Fresh Linen and Kindness

For the elderly, everyday life can become a blur. Rooms stay the same, the days blend into one another. With no one to visit, life can feel extra lonely.

It is all the more valuable, when special gestures like the following are made. A donation of over 210 bundles of fresh bedsheets, bath towels, and bathmats were recently gifted to an elderly community.

You might have felt this yourself: fresh linen after a long day, clean towels, a new pillowcase. These things make a house feel like a home. A feeling, perhaps, quite foreign to elderly living alone.

One volunteer shared how several elderly recipients expressed their joy at receiving the linens.

They also shared their hope, that this linen not only improve their quality of life, but also "restored dignity amidst tough times."

After years of living the same routine, these simple gifts brought a moment of care and dignity in the lives of these elderly.

Food Safety for Babies

Many parents will tell you: they want to give their child safety and protection. Yet in many communities, especially those facing poverty, it may not be possible. These parents might think they don't do enough. They sacrifice themselves so their children can have the best future, away from harm.

In the environments of poverty, unclean food and illness are parts of daily life. Simple tasks, like preparing food safely, finding clean water, may be out of reach for many people.

Recently, thousands of small glass containers designed for baby food were donated to families in need in China. These containers keep food clean and help extend their shelf life. For parents, having these containers gives them more confidence that their baby's meals are healthy and safe to eat.

In a world full of uncertainties, these simple gifts help ease the burden of parental worry and give babies a better chance to thrive.



ESG Solutions for Impact

Every year, furniture and appliances still in good condition are discarded when companies upgrade their spaces. However, this company in Singapore chose a different solution.

Through our Global Hand network, they donated over a hundred pieces of furniture, including fridges, toasters, beds, kitchenware, and more.

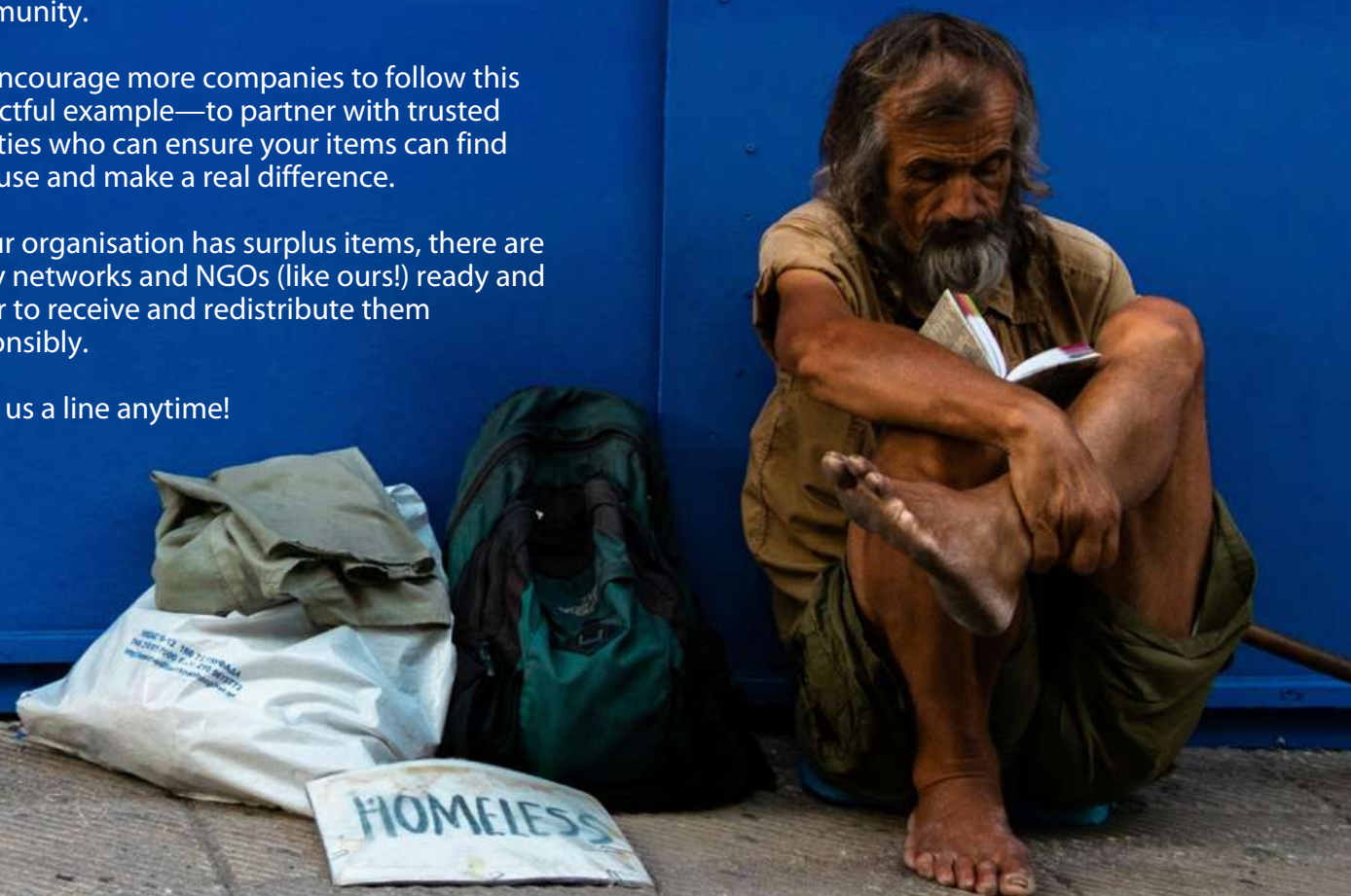
These goods made their way into the lives of a wide range of beneficiaries: community centres, elderly homes, medical facilities, and charities. For example, our partner organisations have used this donation to help seniors maintain independence and create a comfortable home. (See picture)

This approach encourages a circular economy and also turns surplus into a gift for those in need. It's a win-win for the environment and the community.

We encourage more companies to follow this impactful example—to partner with trusted charities who can ensure your items can find new use and make a real difference.

If your organisation has surplus items, there are many networks and NGOs (like ours!) ready and eager to receive and redistribute them responsibly.

Drop us a line anytime!



6 Economic Need



Lights for Homework in Nepal

For many families who've fought to give their children a chance, the challenges don't end at enrolment. Small things stall your progress. Not having enough light, no school uniform, no stationery. These things add up.

Recently, solar lamps were received by a school in Japan, whose students decided to donate to an NGO serving rural communities in Nepal. These lamps allow children to study after dark. Because of solar power, they don't have to worry about high electricity costs. The simple gift of light is helping to bridge the gap.

Supporting education isn't always about books. Small gifts like little lights can brighten a child's future. And for the students in Japan, they learnt a valuable lesson in helping others.

Shoes in Malaysia

Malaysia is home to a large refugee population, many of whom have fled ongoing conflict and political instability in Myanmar. Hundreds of thousands have left their homes in search of safety.

The newly arrived face numerous challenges in Malaysia. Without official recognition, they have limited access to work, education, and healthcare. Necessities like clothing and footwear become hard to afford, making daily life difficult.

A donation of over 800 pairs of shoes and 1,600 pieces of apparel from a well-known sports brand was provided to support these communities. The items were distributed through our partners in the field. So far, their work has helped over 300,000 refugees.

These wonderful people work across protection services, healthcare, education, employment, and youth development. Right now, the donated shoes and clothing have already reached more than 150 families.

Photos from the community show recipients receiving the items with big smiles on their faces. What joy!



Shoes in Vietnam

School is a place where young people begin to find their voice and sense of self. But for some, small worries—like wearing shoes that are too tight or too worn—can quietly add to the daily challenges of growing up.

For many young women, new shoes are a luxury their families might not be able to afford. Each day, worn soles or pinched toes are subtle reminders of their struggle. This makes it harder to feel comfortable and confident at school.

Thanks to a generous donation of high-quality leather shoes, these girls now wear footwear that protects, supports, and uplifts them. Their smiles beaming as they try on the new shoes.

No matter their circumstances, every person deserves to feel valued and confident. As our partners there told us: "Their smiles said it all."



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Kids are imaginative and resourceful, playing with whatever they might find.

7 Education

Education has been shown to be one of the most powerful tools in breaking the cycles of poverty - and it's simpler than most think.



A girl in Ivory Coast, carrying for her family at a young age. A common sight in these regions.



Writing Hope into Every Child's Future

Education empowers us to change the course of our lives and communities. Yet, in many countries, children can only dream of going to school one day. Even if the children don't have to engage in child labour, they would still be missing the school fees, uniform, and other supplies. Without the right resources, they face hurdle after hurdle to breaking the cycle of poverty.

A family-run charity from Berkhamsted, near Luton, is working to change that. Their dream is simple but profound: every child, everywhere, should have access to pens and pencils. They collect donations of working stationery — both new and gently used — and send them free of charge to children across the globe, removing barriers to education and creativity.

This year, they sent more than 100,000 pens to kids in Ukraine. These pens arrived in pallets and were distributed to schools, shelters, and orphanages. Places, where children are fighting for their education despite the hardships around them.

Charles, a coordinator, shared how deeply grateful the communities are for this support.

Since then, the donor has also connected with another NGO on our network working in Moldova, helping the kids there too.

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8 Fair Trade



A fisherman works under the sun in Ecuador. This is how he feeds his family every day.



Producer Highlight – Chile

In Chile, income inequality ranks the highest among all Latin American nations. That means the rich and the poor stand very far apart. For young people, they look before an almost hopeless situation. Do they sacrifice their hopes and youth to work as early as possible? Or do they try to break the cycle by going to school? For the less fortunate, they wind up in gang violence and drugs, leading to despair.

This is why we love supporting NGOs like Pueblos del Sur. They give an alternative to young people with dreams, by providing economic and creative opportunities. Their crafts are all handmade and range from jewellery to holiday decorations. By supporting them, it helps support the producers.

For a beautiful nation so rich in culture and history, we would love nothing more than to help support the next generation there.

Their products are available on our UK Handicrafts site.



SCAN HERE TO SEE MORE!

Love fair trade? So do we!

Jewellery that supports women at risk, fair trade stationery that loves the earth, handcrafted ornaments from around the world. The handicrafts sold in the CGV UK online store are all from fair trade and social enterprise producers who care about the wellbeing of the people behind the products.

- Buy fair trade. You can shop our range of fair trade goods through the catalogue on our website in the QR code.
- Sell fair trade. You can sell goods from our fair trade producers online or in person on consignment, supporting artisans in communities of need. Alternatively, we can bring a manned booth to your event.

What goods do we sell? Our products are from nations like Zimbabwe, Cambodia, Rwanda, India, Uganda, and many more.

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9 Developments

Our commitment to ongoing learning and growth prepares our team to meet evolving challenges head-on. From leadership transitions to sector training, these stories highlight how knowledge sharing fuels our mission.

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Farewell Etienne; Hello Thomas!

When seasons come and go, change can feel bittersweet. Our colleague Etienne has been with us since 2020, contributing tirelessly and helping our work grow into something truly impactful. Beyond being a dedicated team member, he has become a friend to many of us.

As Etienne moves on to a new direction, we're excited to welcome Thomas, who will bring his own talents and energy to the role. There has been a thorough handover process to ensure a smooth transition. In October, Thomas visited our headquarters in Hong Kong, where he met his direct colleagues and connected with teams across our various departments.

We look forward to this new chapter and know Thomas will carry the torch with dedication and care.

Global Conferences: AIDX Geneva

As part of Thomas' training, he travelled to Geneva with our director David, to gain firsthand experience in the humanitarian sector.

They attended AIDX, an industry-leading conference that brings together experts and organisations to explore how humanitarian aid can be improved. Last year's theme, "Revitalising Humanitarian Assistance – How do we deliver better aid in conflict-affected hot spots?" was especially relevant given the challenging environments where we support our partners.

At the conference, Thomas spoke with thought leaders and stay updated on best practices and emerging standards. One particularly exciting discussion was around using simulations as a tool for engagement for other organisations. There is potential to introduce such simulations at future conferences, possibly even at AIDX itself.

We are optimistic about the road ahead and look forward to supporting Thomas as he fuels the momentum for our UK office.



A close-up photograph of a young child with dark skin and curly hair, looking intently over a weathered, rusty metal ledge or wall. The child's hands are visible, gripping the edge. The background is blurred, showing other people in a crowd. A large red graphic element, resembling a map of Africa, is overlaid on the right side of the page, containing white text. At the bottom, there is a collage of 'Thank you' messages in various languages and scripts.

10 Get Connected

Whoever you are: students, companies, families, NGOs, individuals who care about a world that is not okay, we'd love to connect with you. How?

Donate goods located in the UK

Dealing with excess stock? Re-branding school clothing? Downsizing the office? Upgrading computers, furniture or medical equipment ?If you have goods to give away, and they are in working order, please let us know. We can offer your goods directly to a network of registered NGOs who may need them.

Donate goods located anywhere in the world

Does your company, school or organisation have goods located in another country? We'll be glad to look for a 'match' with people in need through our Global Hand service. The NGOs handle the logistics (unless you want to), so you need only link up with them and they'll take it from there.

Step 'into the shoes' of others in need through simulation

Take a few steps 'in the shoes' of people facing global challenges. Book as a group or an individual. Afterwards, there's a chance to debrief and discuss ways to make a difference.

Organise a goods drive

Your group can run a collection drive of goods which Crossroads can help place with non-profit projects in places of need. It is ideal if you ask us before you undertake your drive so we can let you know which goods are most needed.

Bring fair trade to you

You can sell goods from our fair trade producers on consignment, supporting artisans in communities of need around the world. Alternatively, we can bring a manned booth to your fair or event.

Run a fundraiser for Crossroads

We're rich in goods, but not in funds! We benefit annually from the generosity of groups who care enough to host fundraisers or make Crossroads the beneficiary of their event.

**Got other ideas?
Let's talk!**

Email enquiries@cgvuk.org
or call +44 20 3389 7177

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