The prolonged military conflict in Ukraine, and now the quarantine restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, has dealt a heavy blow to small and medium-sized businesses. The economic crisis has had a particularly negative impact on the living conditions of those Ukrainians who live and work along the contact line. Businesses located in remote settlements with severely damaged transport infrastructure and a high level of unemployment, are in need of support more than ever.

The French International Humanitarian Organization, Triangle Génération Humanitaire (TGH) has been implementing projects in Ukraine for five years that aim at supporting the most vulnerable groups affected by the armed conflict in the East of the country. Supporting the local economy through partnering with local shops remains one of the key components of TGH's projects.

TGH currently cooperates with more than 100 partner shops involved in the distribution of e-vouchers for food and hygiene products.

TGH's cooperation with partner shops ensures wider coverage and improved access of the beneficiaries living in the most remote locations to humanitarian aid through home delivery of goods.

TGH's partner shops use a modern electronic web terminal that works through the mobile money system. It allows transactions to be carried out online through a telephone. As part of the project, the shops undergo training on using the web terminal, which not only guarantees the efficiency of online transactions but also represents a professional training for the teams.

Participation in project activities allows the staff to improve their communication skills and learn or reinforce their knowledge in the e-voucher system management.

For 90% of the partner shops, participation in TGH's emergency response projects contributes to strengthen the links between shop owners, staff and beneficiaries. It also enables the shops to attract new customers and substantially increase their turnover. Their income indeed increases on average from 10 to 60% during the period of e-voucher redeeming.

For 90% of the partner shops, participation in TGH's emergency response projects contributes to strengthen the links between shop owners, staff and beneficiaries. It also enables the shops to attract new customers and substantially increase their turnover. Their income indeed increases on average from 10 to 60% during the period of e-voucher redeeming.

In addition, participation in TGH activities provides an opportunity to gain new experience and improve communication skills within the community, which is especially meaningful for isolated settlements along the contact line.

At present TGH, with the support of local shops, implements projects in more than 200 settlements along the contact line, covering more than 480,000 people. It is important that the engagement of partner shops in the TGH's project contributes to the opening of new opportunities for the development and support of entrepreneurial activity.

As a result, the shops become a critical link in the chain of providing humanitarian aid, making a significant contribution to local assistance.

In June 2018, we were able to rent a premise and start our own business. This time we redeemed the e-vouchers for hygiene items, not for household, but for public institutions: schools, kindergartens, healthcare institutions. It was a new stage in our development. We truly thank TGH for this opportunity and experience.

We want to emphasize that cooperation with TGH is not just about financial support. It is first of all about humanity and help.

Thanks to our acquaintance and cooperation with TGH, we now know for sure that there are people who care about vulnerable people in these difficult times, especially given the global indifference for the victims of the conflict in the East of the country and the global COVID-19 pandemic. It inspires us to take action.