



Sahlgrenska International Care

International Aid Assistance Report 2023

Content

 Introduction	4
 Sustainability	5
 Year in review	6
 Ukraine	8
 Turkey	10
 Guinea	12
 Statistics	14

Sahlgrenska International Care

Sahlgrenska International Care is Sahlgrenska University Hospital's center for international collaborations contributing to the development of healthcare – both locally and globally.



Highly specialized care for international patients



Exchange programs for healthcare professionals



Specialist training programs for international doctors and dentists



Development cooperation for global health



Medical equipment aid



Vision

Sahlgrenska International Care's vision is for more people around the world to have access to care, the opportunity for good health and a good life.



International partnerships to improve healthcare for patients and staff in Västra Götaland, Sweden and the countries we work with.

For a sustainable care

Sahlgrenska International Care (SIC) wants to contribute to a more sustainable health care – both locally and globally. Through international collaborations, responsible resource management and investments in projects that promote global health, SIC strives to make healthcare better for patients and employees in Västra Götaland, Sweden and in the countries we work with.

We have chosen two of the seventeen global goals where SIC's aid work will have

the most impact. The goals are integrated into our business plan and are intended to be a steering tool for SIC's activities – where sustainability is a natural part.

Read more about our sustainability work in [Sahlgrenska International Care Annual and Sustainability Report 2023 \(vgregion.se\)](#).



2023 – willingness to donate remains high, but negative developments in the world have affected aid



Deeper partnerships with more organizations and a continued high level of commitment from VGR's administrations have resulted in an overall increase in aid in 2023. One area that has been neglected is the practical follow-up in the field.

The basis of the work with international aid is to utilize surplus material from healthcare as effectively as possible within the Västra Götaland region and to work towards reusing materials as effectively as possible

in places that lack our resources. By doing so, we help extend the life of high-quality medical equipment and use resources responsibly and sustainably.

More co-operation partners – wider efforts

Sahlgrenska International Care has deepened its cooperation with existing partners and two additional organizations,

which has widened our contact areas, both within civil society and with actors in the private sector.

“ Over the past two years, Sahlgrenska International Care has gained new partners in civil society. This has meant that we have been able to be more efficient in taking care of the materials that the organizations within VGR have offered, and also to follow our donated materials to a greater extent. It has also increased our understanding of new types of co-operation, which I think is important in the changing political environment in which international aid operates today.

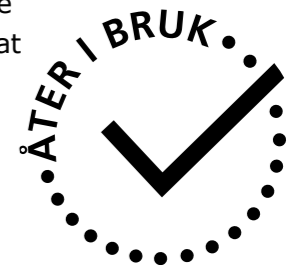


Anders Lygdman, Senior Advisor International Aid Assistance at Sahlgrenska International Care.

Co-operation with Åter i bruk – for more reuse

The commitment within VGR's administrations remains high. Our donation volumes have remained at a steady level in the past year and we are seeing an increase in the collection of certain key products. A collaboration has been initiated with Åter i Bruk, VGR's internal furniture reuse

organization, and together we have gained a better overview of the streams of products that should be reused and not thrown away or scrapped.



Increased costs for partner organizations – has left their mark on the aid chain

The past year has also been marked by negative developments in the world economy. For our partner organizations, the effects of high inflation and a weak Swedish krona have meant significant cost increases for their operations. In particular, rising transport costs have been an uncertainty factor which has hampered the planning of operations.

Robert Bergman, Director of the partner organization Human Bridge, is responsible for an organization that makes over 100 transports worldwide. He sees a clear increase in the average cost of transport in 2023, compared to the previous year.

“ If we take an average over all transports, we end up with a cost increase of about 10 per cent for 2023 compared to 2022. At the same time, the cost of transport to Ukraine alone has increased by about 35 per cent. Container freight to Djibouti, for example, has at times been up to almost 200 per cent in the past two years, but is now down to around 100 per cent.



Robert Bergman, Director Human Bridge

Follow-ups in the field have taken a back seat

The economic uncertainty in the past year has led to caution. One area that has been neglected is the practical follow-up in the field. Although our partners have carried out follow-up trips, several of them have

made fewer trips, and some on their own. Partners, such as Sahlgrenska International Care, have not been offered to accompany them.

Ukraine



Trauma surgery course for Ukrainian doctors

The war in Ukraine has put enormous pressure on Ukrainian society at all levels. Russia is ignoring international humanitarian law, the "laws of war", resulting in attacks on hospitals, ambulances and medical staff. Combat injuries to arms and legs have increased significantly and with it the need to develop expertise in trauma surgery among Ukrainian health professionals.

In cooperation with the aid organization Christian Doctors and Medical Students (CDM), SIC made it possible for a group of Ukrainian doctors to participate in the course Upper Extremity Trauma: Acute and Reconstructive Surgery in Gothenburg.

After CDM and its sister organization in Ukraine, together with several Ukrainian hospitals, had selected its participants,

SIC went ahead and financed the course fee and other related costs for three Ukrainian surgeons. The course was given at the Surgical Anatomical Training Center at Mölndal Hospital and was organized by Sahlgrenska University Hospital and Sahlgrenska Academy. In addition to participating in the course, participants were able to make study visits and interact with colleagues from Sahlgrenska University Hospital.

– "At home, we don't have the opportunity to practice on real bodies", says Ivan Savka, a doctor at the hospital in Turiisk. "Today I have learnt techniques that I have never used before. It's very useful knowledge in my work", says Ivan, who works as a surgeon in Ukraine.

Read more:

[Ukrainian doctors learn how to operate at Sahlgrenska University Hospital - VGRfokus](#)

Special organization Ukraine

The special organization for Ukraine closed down in the autumn of 2023. After having been established for more than a year, the need for a special coordinating mechanism at regional level was no longer deemed necessary. SIC will continue to support Ukraine but now within the framework of our regular mission.

Under the Special Organization Ukraine, SIC has actively collaborated with our partner organizations Human Bridge and Agape. Cooperation with the organizations Help Ukraine Gothenburg (HUG) and Christian Doctors and Medical Students

(CDM) began in 2022 after the full-scale invasion started from Russia. Regular pick-ups of our donations of hospital equipment and consumables have been taking place at a regular pace and transferred to Ukraine through our partners and their local partners and networks. Specific donations have also been made to the organizations "Friends of Ukraine in Uddevalla" and "Tjörn's Help for Ukraine" for one-off interventions in various hospitals in Ukraine. Within the framework of our regular work, cooperation will also continue with HUG and CDM.

Conference for the reconstruction of healthcare in Ukraine

In December, Swecare and the Ministry of Social Affairs organized **Conference on Support to the Recovery and Development of Health Care in Ukraine**. The aim of the conference was to discuss the reconstruction of the health care system in Ukraine. Anders Lygdman, Senior Advisor International Aid Assistance at SIC, represented Region Västra Götaland and Sahlgrenska University Hospital and opened a session on Training and Education.



Read more

[Conference on support to Ukraine brought together key health care actors - Regeringen.se](#)

CDM – Christian Doctors and Medical Students

Founded in 1938, the organization currently has around 500 members. They are involved in ethical issues such as euthanasia and gender dysphoria. Aid is another important part of the organization's activities. It has hundreds of sister organizations around the world.

Turkey

Response in Turkey following a major earthquake

In early February 2023, the south-eastern part of Turkey was hit by the worst earthquake since the 1930s, resulting in the deaths of around 50,000 people and a massive destruction of homes and infrastructure. Through the co-operation with the Agape Foundation and the Swedish-Turkish Women's Federation (STKF), Region Västra Götaland was able to reach out with aid.

In Turkey, the entire coastal area of Iskenderun (on the Mediterranean side) was severely affected, but the damage caused by the quakes reached as far as Elbistan. A major humanitarian response was launched by Turkey, the UN, EU humanitarian actors and a range of international NGOs.

Sahlgrenska International Care's partner, the Agape Foundation, has long collaborated with the Swedish-Turkish Women's Federation (STKF), enabling the parties to quickly help the dispatching of two shipments of aid and supplies. The aid shipment and operations in the area were concentrated from just south of Iskenderun to Arsuz, Hatay.

A total of 111 people were reached by the effort

The assistive devices provided by Region Västra Götaland are wheelchairs, beds, walkers and crutches. According to reports from STKF around 90% of the equipment

was distributed in the Arsuz Hatay area and the rest to affected people who had fled to other neighboring municipalities or villages. A total of 111 people of varying ages, from children to adults, were reached by the effort.

Needs still remain high

According to a local partner of STKF who is a member of the National Association of People with Disabilities in Turkey, the need is still great in the earthquake-affected areas. The equipment in demand is wheelchairs, walkers and hospital beds for hospitals.

First a follow-up – then a new aid shipment

The Agape Foundation is exploring the possibility of another aid mission in 2024. But first, SIC and the Agape Foundation plan to travel to Turkey in the spring of 2024, to follow up on efforts already underway on the ground.



A woman who received aid from Region Västra Götaland through the efforts of the Agape Foundation and the Swedish-Turkish Women's Association.

The AGAPE Foundation is an aid organization founded in 1984. It is based in Falkenberg and is one of Region Västra Götaland's long-standing aid partners, with a focus on providing assistive technology to countries where the population has limited access to it.

The Swedish-Turkish Women's Federation (STKF) was founded in 2007 as an association of Turkish women's organizations in Sweden. It is a non-profit organization that is democratic, non-partisan and non-religious.



Guinea

Hospital equipment from Region Västra Götaland reached a clinic in the city of Faranah during the Covid pandemic. Since then, they have been able to increase their staff and thus their care capacity.

During the Covid pandemic, a clinic in the city of Faranah was being rebuilt. To support this effort, hospital equipment and supplies were sent from Sweden through Human Bridge and with support from Region Västra Götaland.

This effort has been followed up in 2023 by Human Bridge to assess the results.

Staff numbers have increased

The clinic initially only had one doctor and one midwife/nurse and eight other staff. Their equipment was lacking, which limited the possibilities to receive patients. The new donated equipment has since enabled them to hire an additional surgeon and an anesthesiologist.

The clinic performs operations such as caesarean sections, hernias and appendectomies, and its laboratory has been designated as a reference lab in the region. The clinic has been able to provide more care to patients in the area thanks to increased staffing.

Human Bridge also delivered and installed a solar panel equipment that enables the clinic to be self-sufficient in electricity for its operations.



Clinic in Faranah that received equipment from, among others Region Västra Götaland via Human Bridge.



Hospital beds from VGR at the clinic in Faranah.



The Faranah region is located in central Guinea and borders both Sierra Leone and Mali. The Niger River that crosses the region is vital for the nearly one million people who live there.

Statistics

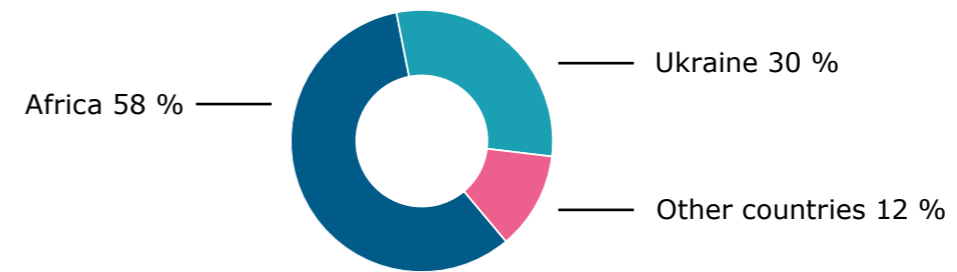
Focus on sustainability monitoring particularly important when follow-up trips have not been carried out

One area that has been left behind in 2023 is the practical follow-up in the field. Every year, SIC makes at least two follow-up trips with our partners to selected recipient countries to ensure that the activities we support are working as promised. In 2023 this was not possible.

The main reason for this is that the aid organizations SIC works with have also faced financial challenges as a result of the international situation. In years like this, there is a greater need for detailed reporting from our partners, which we have agreed in dialogue with them can be improved. For this reason, SIC has initiated a review of the agreements with the largest aid organizations in the past year, and the new agreements will have an increased focus on sustainability.



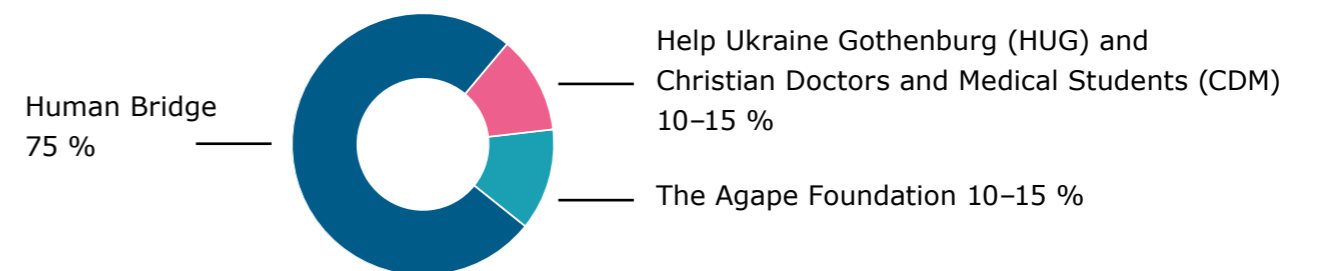
Distribution of aid by country



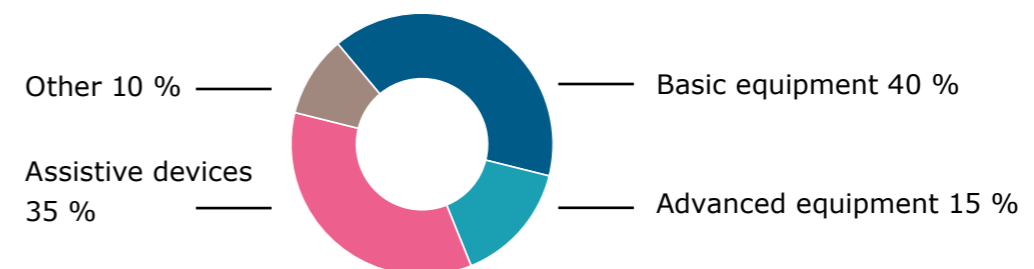
COMMENTS

- Aid to Ukraine is still the single largest countrywise. This is largely due to the fact that two of our four partners work exclusively with Ukraine and that around 40 per cent of our largest partner, Human Bridge, provides aid to Ukraine.
- The majority of VGR's aid still goes to sub-Saharan Africa, where most of our largest partner Human Bridge's deliveries of aid go to Ukraine.
- Other countries include Romania and other Eastern European countries, Turkey and El Salvador.

Distribution of aid by organizations



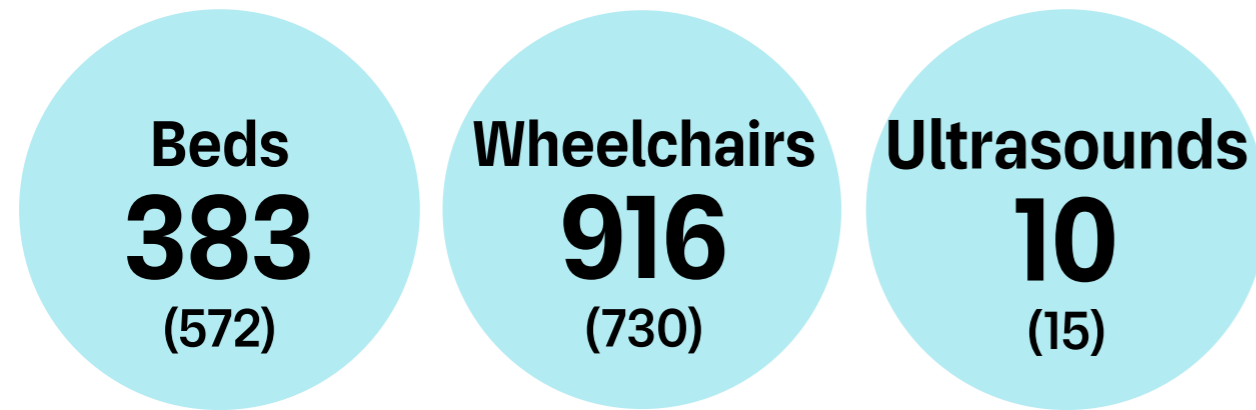
Distribution by category



COMMENTS

- Advanced equipment is any medical device used by healthcare staff. Examples include ultrasound, ECG, C-arm and dialysis machines.
- Basic equipment includes hospital beds, bedside tables, beds, operating tables and sampling chairs.
- Assistive devices include wheelchairs, walkers, patient lifts and all types of appliances.
- Other is consumable materials.

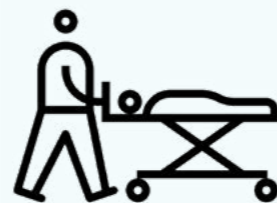
Distribution of key products



Distinctive donations or efforts



1 fully equipped ambulance from Södra Älvsborg Hospital



30 operating tables from the NU Hospital Group (Uddevalla)

COMMENTS

- A fully equipped ambulance was donated from Södra Älvsborg Hospital through Human Bridge to the hospital in Vinnytsia, a city and region in south-west Ukraine.
- The operating tables from the NU Hospital Group have gone to a new public university hospital in Arba Minch, a city in the south-west of Ethiopia. They will be installed with the help of Swedish technicians, from Södra Älvsborg Hospital and Örebro University Hospital, in May 2024.

Number of follow-up trips with partner organizations

In 2023, no follow-up trip was made, compared to 2 in the previous year.

COMMENTS

- Follow-up trips have not been possible, making us more dependent on reporting from our partners. However, important parts of the process have become more difficult to quality assure, the most important of which is to ensure that equipment reaches its destination and has the intended effect in relation to the identified need.

Impact on healthcare staff/ residents/global healthcare

Cannot be assessed due to insufficient data.

COMMENTS

- During the year, it has been difficult to document facts about the impact of our efforts together with our partners, largely because follow-up trips could not be carried out. Increased transparency in this area is necessary to ensure the quality of long-term sustainability work.

Climate compensation

Since no international air travel was involved in the aid efforts, there has been no need to report any climate compensation.



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