

# PROFESSIONALS TOGETHER FOR THE BENEFIT OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

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by Irina Wakstein

Since 1994, Fundación Juntos por la Vida has sought to promote international fostering as a tool for social transformation. In this way, it carries out different programmes to accompany children by providing assistance and access to health, education and food.

The mission of this non-governmental organisation is to change the lives of children in extreme poverty and vulnerability, offering them a dignified future with greater possibilities.

On this occasion, Fundación Juntos por la Vida has called on professionals from the legal sector to join forces for the benefit of Ukrainian families. "We started our journey with Ukraine as Abogados sin fronteras, so we are linked to the law world", says Fundación Juntos por la Vida's President, **Clara Arnal**.

In 1994, eight years after the Chernobyl nuclear accident, and due to the fact that the levels of radiation in the area were not decreasing, the Ukrainian authorities appealed to different European countries for help to remove children from the contaminated areas for at least two months of the

year.

Due to this situation, a group of Valencian lawyers and jurists (Abogados sin Fronteras) echoed the request and began to take steps to carry the children to Spain.

"At that time, there were a large number of orphans in institutions in Ukraine, so many of the children who came during those early years lived in orphanages," remembers Arnal.

The programme was called 'Ukraine 2000' because, from that year onwards, foster families took over the foster care programmes and took in as many as 200 children during the first summer. Ukraine 2000 lasted seven years, until 2007, when it was finally constituted as "Fundación Juntos por la Vida".

This latest appeal, promoted by the Foundation, has had a great impact within the sector as more than 200 top-level professionals came together to raise funds that will be used for the transfer, accompaniment and assistance of refugees both in Spain and at the frontier.

"This is one of those rare occasions when the judiciary, the legal profession and the legal world in general are in complete agreement on an initiative that has taken very little time to develop thanks to the enormous spirit of solidarity of everyone," says **Álvaro Zanon**, Director of Foro Jurídico.

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