



OlamAid



About OlamAid

Our Story

OlamAid was founded on the belief that people in crisis need rapid, effective, and culturally sensitive support. In 2016, we developed our first program for intercultural mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). As an organization with a Jewish background and a multicultural focus, we have tailored our assistance to the diverse needs of vulnerable communities from the very beginning. This means people who experience higher risk during a crisis due to characteristics such as age, health status, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location, and who therefore need additional protection and support.

Since then, our approach has evolved: today, OlamAid implements a wide range of aid and support programs tailored to the diverse needs of vulnerable communities. As an independent and non-political humanitarian organization, we have continuously expanded our impact, successfully implementing more than 20 national and international projects for particularly vulnerable communities and minorities in crisis situations – especially in contexts of war, displacement, and natural disasters.

Through the active involvement of participants, OlamAid has grown into a pluralistic organization that embraces diversity and focuses on local knowledge and the needs of communities at the center of its work. Our approach of combining

short-term emergency aid with rehabilitation, enables us to strengthen communities in the medium and long term.

For this work, OlamAid was awarded the National Integration Prize by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2018 – a recognition that is both an obligation and a motivation for us to continue our mission.

Our Mission

OlamAid is a European, Jewish-based, pluralistic humanitarian organization. We provide emergency aid and rehabilitation worldwide by addressing both the psychosocial and physical needs in all phases of a humanitarian crisis. Guided by international humanitarian principles, our goal is to foster resilient and self-sustaining communities.

We make crises visible that often receive too little attention, with a special focus on vulnerable groups and minorities within the affected population. Due to our deeply rooted connection to the Jewish community, we are committed to addressing needs that are often overlooked. Our projects are always context-based and developed from local perspectives: in our decision-making processes, minorities become majorities, shaping decisions and driving change. In this way, we try to achieve maximum impact.

Gal, CEO of OlamAid



Our Focus: Intervention Phases & Sectors

Disaster Preparedness

We work before crises occur to strengthen the resilience and readiness of communities.

Emergency Response

During acute crises, we act immediately to protect lives and stabilize affected communities.

Rehabilitation

Once immediate needs have been met, we support affected communities in regaining stability and building sustainable structures.

humanitarian sectors



OlamAid focuses its work on four key humanitarian sectors:



Health

We promote both mental health and physical well-being.



Protection

We support communities in crisis to become inclusive, safe, and equitable places of refuge. In doing so, we pay particular attention to vulnerable groups.



Food Security

We ensure that communities have access to sufficient and safe food to sustain themselves in the long term.



Logistics

We ensure the effective delivery and coordination of aid supplies to enable fast and targeted support.

Our work in these areas is closely interlinked and follows a comprehensive approach: We specifically select measures that address multiple needs simultaneously and create a sustainable impact.

Our approaches



Emergency Response

Crises destroy our surroundings and can threaten our survival.

During a crisis, affected people often cannot meet their own basic needs for food, clean water, hygiene, and a safe place of refuge – yet these rights are fundamental to every human being.

OlamAid provides direct aid deliveries to cover these essential survival needs and provides critical infrastructure and protective shelters – such as emergency accommodation or safe retreat areas – to immediately protect people in acute crisis situations. Local knowledge and community needs are integrated into our planning, allowing us to respond specifically to what is truly needed on the ground.



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Crises are traumatic and can challenge one's sense of previous life and own identity.

OlamAid is particularly committed to not leaving affected people alone, but rather offering them reliable support in times of crisis – with the aim of accompanying them through the coping process and helping them to lead an autonomous and active life again.

To achieve this, we rely on intercultural Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), including immediate psychological first aid during acute crises and the training of professionals in trauma-sensitive care and creative therapeutic methods.

We place a special emphasis on creative therapeutic offerings – such as art and music therapy – providing a low-threshold and effective access in a variety of contexts. These offerings are accessible regardless of language, origin, or cultural background and are therefore open to to a wide range of people.

Community Resilience and Self-Efficacy

Crises often force people to start over and can trigger feelings of loss of control and lead to isolation.

Often, familiar environments and social structures are destroyed due to a crisis, leaving those affected feeling powerless. For these affected people, regaining control, self-efficacy, and a sense of belonging is a crucial anchor in coping with crises. OlamAid empowers people during and after crises to actively engage with their new environment, take responsibility, and build support networks.

Our work fosters resilience through creative and community-focused approaches. Projects such as Resilience through Art or the development of so-called Community Hubs, we create spaces for expression and interaction. Interactive art exhibitions and MHPSS children's books, co-created together with those affected, also help to make experiences visible and initiate collective resilience processes. Through participation programs, we empower people who have already experienced humanitarian crises to volunteer, take responsibility, and initiate their own local projects and aid activities. With these diverse offerings, OlamAid contributes to communities not only securing their basic needs, but also regaining stability and shaping their future independently.

our team & values



At OlamAid, our strength lies in the people who work for us. Our team of 78 dedicated professionals is supported by a larger network of more than 100 volunteers, who form the backbone of our work in the field.

The OlamAid team is interdisciplinary and multicultural. Our Jewish background is complemented by a locally rooted approach: OlamAid recognizes the unique skills and experiences of affected communities and places special emphasis on actively involving people from these communities in the team. This has enabled us to assemble a team representing 13 countries that combines professional competence, outstanding motivation, and personal resilience – qualities that we deliberately foster at OlamAid through individual supervision and group intervention.

As a humanitarian aid organization, OlamAid places particular emphasis on a values-based approach. Through an inclusive process, we have defined a set of shared values that guide our daily work and which we consistently apply across all our projects. These values are:

Respect, Sustainability, Reliability, Adaptability, Empowerment, and Inclusion.

To give you an insight into how we bring these words to life in our everyday work, we asked our team themselves:

“In my view, Respect is the fundamental acknowledgment of the inherent value and dignity of partners and members of the community. It’s about consciously creating an environment in which every child, every young person, and every older person feels valued and truly heard.”

Adi, Project Coordinator

“For me, Sustainability means that in project development, we focus not only on meeting urgent needs, but also on building structures and skills that allow communities to thrive independently over the long term.”

Vivian, Senior Development & Communications Officer

“Reliability plays a very important role in our relational work with communities, relying on trust and commitment. This reliable support system strengthens our professionals’ capacity to externally empower others. Because we can lean on each other internally, we are courageous and experiential in our work and can adapt to the needs of the communities we co-create with.”

Edda, Community & Resilienz Coordinator

“For me, Adaptability is about listening closely to the communities we serve and being ready to adjust our projects whenever needed, while ensuring that we create a strong and lasting impact. Regular assessments and open communication with our local partners and the people we serve are the basis for enabling agile and impactful help.”

Carlo, Head of Programs

“In my work with people, Empowerment unfolds through a mindful practice of creating a safe space to see and honor each person’s strength, offering a room for expression and resilience, nurturing growth and belonging within a supportive network in a new environment for those who had to flee their homes because of the war.”

Alisa, Group Facilitator

“Inclusion in our work means involving people from all backgrounds and embracing diversity. I see this in practice when we make announcements and materials in multiple languages, so everyone can understand and participate. It also comes to life when we occasionally organise cultural exchange days, where volunteers share their national food and stories from their cultures.”

Iryna, Volunteer



Since OlamAid was founded in 2016, more than 20 projects have been successfully implemented in 11 countries. In addition, numerous other crisis-affected regions have been supported through targeted relief efforts – always with the aim of providing sustainable assistance to people in acute emergency situations and throughout the process of rebuilding their lives.

In 2024, we were active in a total of eight countries and were able to directly support more than 201,000 people affected by war, displacement, or natural disasters. A particular focus was placed on minorities and especially vulnerable groups. Our programs included measures in the areas of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), community resilience and self-efficacy, emergency aid, and food security.

Through our mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) measures, we were able to directly reach a total of 16,663 people. Many of them received support in acute periods of stress – whether through creative group activities or workshops on stress management and self-care. A particularly important element was our psychosocial hotline, which proved to be a lifeline: with an average of 235 calls per month, it offered those who are affected a low-threshold and an uncomplicated access to support – exactly in the moments when they needed it most.



As part of our training programs to strengthen mental health and psychosocial competencies, a total of 800 professionals and volunteers were trained through practical, hands-on capacity building. These training not only promoted knowledge transfer, but also contributed to the development of local child protection systems and community-based approaches to well-being and resilience.

Our approach to fostering community resilience and self-efficacy is also showing a significant impact: more than 1,000 hours were invested in strengthening new forms of belonging, engagement, and trust among participants. In Greece, for example, 148 volunteer firefighters were trained in forest firefighting and psychological first aid – this is how OlamAid builds local capacities and empowers communities to respond to future crises independently.

The impact of our work is also reflected in participant feedback: across all projects, 96% of respondents rated OlamAid's programs positively in anonymous evaluations and stated that they would recommend them to others. This trust encourages us to continue our work with the same determination, empathy, and professionalism.

While these figures serve as an important benchmark for our work, the impact of our projects becomes most evident in direct exchange with participants and partner organizations. The following shares some of their experiences, showing how our work affects everyday life and what it means for the people involved.

A participant from Ukraine in our Leadership and Participation Group in Berlin:

“For the first time since I left Ukraine, I feel like I have found a community – real friends, a place where I can be myself.”

A Druze participant about OlamAid's Resilience Center in Israel:

“The place is beautiful and welcoming. After the workshop, I felt a sense of security that I had never experienced before. My anxiety subsided a bit, and I felt happy – a feeling I hadn't felt in a long time. Being able to be with people who suffer from the same symptoms was part of the healing process for me.”

A mother from a family displaced within Ukraine about her experiences with psychosocial support:

“We began to realize that our souls need not only physical peace, but also emotional healing. Thanks to the support of the therapeutic team, we were able to feel alive again and – despite everything we had been through – believe in the future again.”

The head of Social Services in Sedaví (Valencia) after a training on promoting mental health and psychosocial support:

“Thanks to OlamAid, we were able to offer a workshop for children who were affected by the floods to promote mental health and psychosocial support. This help is invaluable because it enables children to process what they have experienced and, at the same time, strengthens the resilience of our community.”

Varvara – works as a psychologist with Ukrainian and Roma refugees in Moldova and participates in regular supervision sessions provided by OlamAid:

“I really appreciate our monthly supervision meetings and find them to be a great support in my work. It’s good to know that I can get in touch at any time if I have additional needs or require more frequent exchange.”



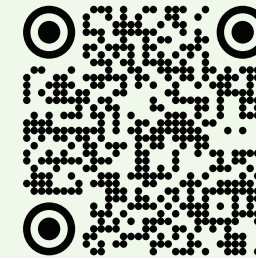
Stable and long-term partnerships are a central guarantee of success for OlamAid's work. When selecting our partners, we place great importance on a shared value compass and cooperation on equal terms. We would like to express our special thanks to our long-standing companions:



We would also like to thank our local partner organizations, who complement and enrich the work of our teams on the ground. They are important partners in all phases of our projects and we highly value and honor their expertise and commitment.

Donations & Support

Our work is made possible exclusively through project funding and donations. In addition to the support we receive from public and private funding institutions, we welcome every individual who wishes to strengthen our humanitarian work – especially our commitment to vulnerable groups and minorities. If you are interested, you can access our donation form via this QR code:





Contact

For questions or feedback regarding our work, please feel free to contact us directly at: info@olamaid.org.

For further information about our organization, our projects, and current news, please visit our website: www.olamaid.org

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