

PRESS RELEASE

With the support of the Crisis and Support Centre (CDCS) of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Acted is reconstructing, repairing and equipping schools damaged by the conflict in Chernihiv oblast and Kharkiv City, Ukraine.

Military action and occupation in parts of Chernihiv and Kharkiv oblast during early 2022 resulted in widespread displacement and substantial damage to infrastructure across the region. While the security situation has improved, conflict-related damage continues to prevent the socio-economic recovery of the oblast. One key barrier preventing access to education is the lack of suitable bomb shelters in schools. Under Ukrainian legislation, it is a requirement for schools to maintain bomb shelters in order for students to study safely during air raid alerts. While many schools have existing basements that can be converted into functional bomb shelters, other schools lack a suitable space.

ACTED'S RESPONSE

Recognising the critical need to restore access to in-person education for schools without a suitable shelter space, Acted is constructing a bomb shelter at Nizhyn Gymnasium #9. The construction of this new bomb shelter commenced in November 2024, and upon its official completion, it will have the capacity to host up to 135 persons for up to 48 hours at a time. Upon the new academic year in 2025, this bomb shelter will protect students and teachers from the direct and indirect impacts of missile and drone attacks, while remaining a safe and functional space to continue education. This will be a critical means of recovering the education sector in Ukraine and strengthening the educational prospects of children who have suffered from years of disrupted education.



Figure 1: This photo shows the early stages of the bomb shelter's construction in July 2024.



Figure 2: Progress of the shelter's construction as of July 2025.

More than three years into the conflict, Acted's RestoreEdu project is supporting the sustainable and inclusive recovery of stabilizing communities, such as Nizhyn in Chernihiv oblast. The impact of this activity is captured by community members:

"We cannot influence air raid alerts, but we can do everything to ensure our students feel safe during those moments. The new shelter has become just such a place — reliable, cozy, and thoughtfully arranged.

This is more than just a shelter — it's a space of support and calm, where children know they are being cared for. And that is the most valuable thing of all.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to creating this important place — together, we are building a strong and resilient educational front."

Volodymyr Petrovych Rybak, the principal of Nizhyn gymnasium No9

"The Construction of the bomb shelter is a key component of the National Recovery Plan and the Build Back Better approach. It plays a critical role in strengthening sustainable and resilient social infrastructure, while also ensuring the safe return to in-person education for children—an essential contribution to the broader national economic recovery."

Maksym Viakhiriev , ACTED Restore Edu Project Manager

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