

# “Helping Hand for Ukraine” International Relief Project

*Psychological support initiative*

## 3-YEAR REPORT

24 Feb 2022 - 24 Feb 2025

Prepared for Project  
partners and donors



# Humanitarian situation in Ukraine (2025)



Since the escalation of the war in February 2022, until mid-October 2024, nearly 6.8 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded – 92 per cent of them in Europe. Inside Ukraine, an estimated 3.6 million people remain internally displaced as of October 2024.



**16.3M**

or

**1 out of 2**

people are chronically  
affected by the war



**12.6M**

or

**1 out of 3**

non-displaced people are  
chronically affected by the war



**3.6M**

or

**1 out of 10**

people are currently  
displaced by the war



**12.7M**

or

**1 out of 3**

people are in need of  
humanitarian assistance

# **“HOPE *worldwide* Ukraine”**

## **charity foundation**

### **Main activities:**

- humanitarian assistance to people who live in difficult socio-economic conditions, particularly, to the victims of russian war against Ukraine;
- psychological assistance to children and adults with war trauma;
- social adaptation of orphans and children with special needs who live in orphanages and boarding schools;
- assisting state elderly care institutions in sustaining physical and emotional needs of the elderly;
- promoting healthy lifestyles among adolescents and youth;
- educational workshops and training for volunteers;
- promoting voluntary blood donation and recruiting blood donors.



- non-governmental charitable organization
- registered in 1998 (Certificate #0108-98 issued by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine)
- performs its activities in Ukraine



# “Helping Hand for Ukraine” International Relief Project

- **Provides psychological assistance** – improves socio-emotional well-being of children and parents traumatized by russian aggression and war against Ukraine, who are displaced internally and outside Ukraine.
- **Empowers trainers** – trains psychologists, social workers and teachers to work with traumatized children using “Children and War. Teaching Recovery Techniques” methodology.



# “Helping Hand for Ukraine” International Relief Project

## The Project aims to:

- Improve the socio-emotional well-being and psychological state of Ukrainian children and adults with war trauma (IDPs and refugees);
- Prevent PTSD and depression in children traumatized by war;
- Prevent the need in specialized treatment in future;
- Lessen children's anxiety and empower them with the skills to cope with stress;
- Foster better social adaptation of IDPs.





# “Children and War. Teaching Recovery Techniques” Methodology

The methodology is an effective tool of psychological self-help for people with traumatic consequences of war, natural disasters, and other cataclysms. It works well with both children and adults, and is a result of the combined years of direct experience working with survivors of war and disaster. The methodology is developed in 1998 by the Center for Crisis Psychology (Bergen, Norway) and the Institute of Psychiatry (London, Great Britain). The translation and methodological adaptation was funded by the Canada-Ukraine Foundation and conducted by professionals at Ukrainian Institute of Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (Lviv, Ukraine).





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### **ДОСВІД ВПРОВАДЖЕННЯ ПРОГРАМИ «ДІТИ ТА ВІЙНА. НАВЧАННЯ ТЕХНІК ЗЦІЛЕННЯ» НА ТЕРЕНАХ УКРАЇНИ В УМОВАХ ВІЙСЬКОВИХ ДІЙ**

**Анотація.** У статті висвітлено проблематику впливу війни на відчуття психологічного добробуту дітей, на їхнє соціальне функціонування, індивідуально-психологічні особливості та особистісний розвиток. Описано типові реакції, які зустрічаються у дітей, що стали свідками та/або постраждали внаслідок війни. Висвітлено наслідки, до яких може призвести пережитий психологічно травмувальний досвід, у разі, якщо його не опрацювати. Акцентовано увагу на крайній необхідності вжиття заходів щодо збереження та відновлення психічного здоров'я молодого покоління. Звернено увагу на те, що в умовах масштабних воєнних дій особливої актуальності набуває надання психологічної допомоги значній кількості населення за відносно невеликий проміжок часу. Авторами описано особливості програми «Діти та війна. Навчання технік зцілення». Крім того, окреслено вимоги до проведення занять за вказаною програмою. Звернено увагу на необхідність проходження відповідного навчання тренерами, яке передуватиме їхній роботі. Висвітлено етапи та спрямованість занять, а також можливі реакції, які виникають у дітей-учасників/учасниць, що потребує нормалізації стану дитини поза групою. Описано можливість проведення відповідної роботи за програмою з батьками дітей та зазначено про доцільність вказаного. Подано для розгляду відомості про досвід впровадження програми «Діти та війна. Навчання технік зцілення» у роботу з дітьми, які так чи інакше зазнали впливу воєнних подій. Звернено увагу на характерні особливості функціонування програми на території України в умовах широкомасштабного військового вторгнення, напрацьований досвід в умовах завершеної та незавершеної травматичної події. Детально описано позитивний вплив програми на дітей,

## **Scientific Research**

Training of trainers and therapy courses for children and adults with war trauma have been conducted in Ukraine within the “Helping Hand for Ukraine” project since 2015.

During 2024-2025, a study is underway to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the “Children and War. Teaching Recovery Techniques” program in Ukraine during the ATO (since 2015) and during the large-scale military invasion (since 2022).

A number of publications of the research results are planned by the end of 2025.



# Project Advantages and Experience/Expertise

## Therapy effectiveness:

- **0% re-traumatization** during therapy sessions;
- **90% participants note improvement of psycho-emotional state** and ability to cope with post-traumatic stress;
- **100% participants start feeling safe** and relaxed within the group.

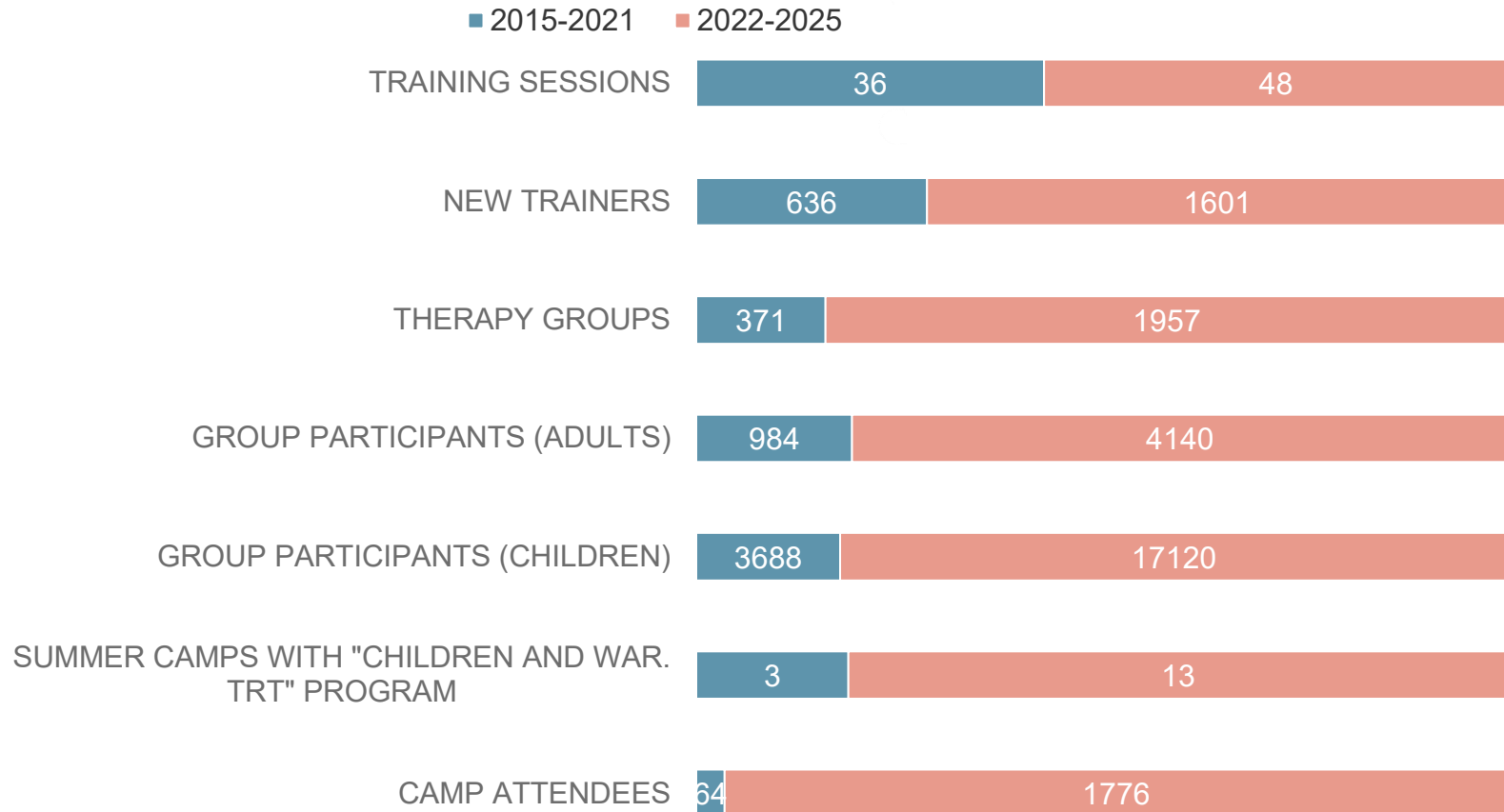
## Our expertise includes:

- **Working with war trauma** and PTSD since 2015.
- **Therapy for IDPs children and adults** (2015-2018), those living in “gray” war zone (2019-2022).
- **Therapy** for children and adults/families, IDPs **during wartime** (2022-2024)
- **Training and supervising** psychologists, volunteers, educators in “Children and War. TRT” program.
- Networking with volunteer and charity organizations, social services, educational establishments.





# “Helping Hand for Ukraine” International Relief Project



# “Helping Hand for Ukraine” Project Activities Locations (2022-2025)





# “Children and War. TRT” Trainings

3-day (offline) and 5-day (online) trainings for new trainers





# “Children and War. TRT” Therapy Groups/Courses





# Rehabilitation and Recreation: summer camps (with “Children and War. TRT” component)





# Project Participant's Story

Maksym, 9 years old

Maksym's participation in the "Children and War. Teaching Recovery Techniques" course was requested by his parents and teacher. Maksym witnessed the fall of a shot-down missile. After this event, he developed strong anxiety: he constantly talked about his experience, and nervous-psychological physical reactions began to appear, such as facial distortions, freezing, and emotional "numbing."

Maksym came to the first session in this state: closed off, tense, with darting eyes. The story of Mykhailyk, shared during the session, became a strong trigger for him. Maksym trembled, avoided eye contact, and hid.

However, after the collective reflection on Mykhailo's reactions and grounding, during which the naturalness and normality of various reactions to traumatic events were discussed, the boy noticeably relaxed. The "peer-to-peer" effect worked very therapeutically. The children in the group themselves expressed a desire to share their stories. Among them were participants from Rubizhne, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, and Odesa.

They suggested dedicating an entire session to sharing their experiences. Interestingly, after hearing the frightening stories of the other children, Maksym, who had previously always told his own story in class, decided not to share this time.

Instead, the trainers noticed that the boy responded well to creative methods, such as drawing and modeling. Exercises that involved figurative processing of his lived experience proved to be very effective for him. These included the "Safe Place" exercise and working with dreams.

By the third session, Maksym felt much freer: he began interacting with the other children, playing, and even smiling. He particularly enjoyed activities that involved play and interaction. During the last session, at the time of parting, the boy froze for a moment again, but this time he was able to express his emotions through tears. He explained, "I don't want the sessions to end."



## Project Participant's Story

Oleh, 11 years old

The boy moved to Vinnytsia from Kharkiv with his family. A few months after their arrival, his older brother was drafted into military service. During one of the shelling, the brother was wounded, and the whole family was very worried about his life. Oleh found that period very difficult; he had trouble falling asleep, often had nightmares, and was very quiet. When his brother came to Vinnytsia for rehabilitation, Oleh was very happy and visited him often.

Currently, the brother has returned to military service, and the boy has once again become withdrawn and silent. During the sessions, his anxiety was noticeable whenever traumatic memories or dreams were discussed, but gradually his condition improved. In one of the sessions, the boy shared his fears, and the entire group was deeply moved by the care with which he spoke about his brother. It was clear that everyone supported him—they listened attentively and nodded.

In the following sessions, the participants actively interacted with Oleh, and he began to engage more in discussions, with his emotional state improving.

## **Project Participant's Story**

Anya, 8 years old

Anya and her mother lived under occupation for a long time. She rarely left the house, as explosions could be heard constantly. Therefore, they spent most of their time in the basement under the building. When the neighbours were leaving the village, Anya and her mother went with them because they didn't have a car. Passing through checkpoints was very frightening for her. Quite often, she dreams about going through those checkpoints.

The girl shared this story during the fourth session; until then, she had been quiet, but completed all the exercises and followed the recommendations. With each subsequent session, we observed a positive change in her mood and an improvement in her psycho-emotional state. During the sessions, she also made a friend.



## Project Participants' Story

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One girl had a very strong feeling of guilt for being born, for letting her father go to war, and she believed that he died because of her. By the fourth session, she shared that she had realized that children cannot be held responsible for their parents' decisions and had accepted her father's death.

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One girl requested an individual consultation. There, she talked about her father's death and how she felt guilty for not attending the funeral and not visiting the cemetery afterward. However, she said that this was her own choice and that it was very difficult for her to do. She also shared that it was very hard for her when she came across her father's belongings in the apartment. We suggested the techniques "memory box" and "time for grieving." At the next session, she was able to share her story with the other participants.

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A boy was quiet and withdrawn for two years after his father's death. He refused to talk about it and avoided any reminders of his father. During the sessions, the boy began to actively talk about his father, took the initiative to speak, and shared many stories and memories. His emotional state changed significantly — he began to smile, participate actively in everything, and use the techniques outside of the sessions.



LITHUANIAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION



TELUS Friendly  
Future Foundation

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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

## PROJECT DONORS

- Canada-Ukraine Foundation
- HOPE *worldwide* Canada
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- HOPE *worldwide* Norge (Norway)
- HOPE *worldwide* Global Disaster Response
- Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Program of the MFA of the Republic of Lithuania
- TELUS Friendly Future Foundation
- Canada Fund for Local Initiatives & Embassy of Canada to Ukraine
- OutcomeX Social Outcomes Marketplace
- Salvation Army
- Integrity Action & Crown Agents



УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ ІНСТИТУТ  
КОГНІТИВНО-ПОВЕДІНКОВОЇ  
ТЕРАПІЇ



БО "БЛАГОДІЙНИЙ ФОНД  
"ЗА МАЙБУТНЄ УКРАЇНИ"



HOPE  
worldwide  
UKRAINE



## PROJECT PARTNERS

- Children and War Foundation
- Ukrainian Institute of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
- Headquarters of SOS Civil Defense, Kamianets-Podilskyi
- Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University
- Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University
- Lesia Ukrainka Volyn National University
- CF "Voices of Children" (Kyiv)
- CF "For the Future of Ukraine" (Dnipro)
- Kyiv City Teacher's House
- "SPILNO" UNICEF project
- Ostrohradskyi Poltava Continuous Education Academy
- Korolenko Poltava Pedagogical University





## PROJECT PARTNERS

- Hryhoriy Skovoroda University in Pereyaslav
- Red Cross in Kyiv
- CO "SOS Children's Villages"
- "Psychologists at War" project of "Ukrainian Association of Psychotherapists and Business Trainers"
- "Kozatskyi Nabat" NGO Centre of Adult Education, Nikopol
- Kamianets-Podilskyi city social services centre for family, children and youth
- "Zorianytsia", space for children's mental health recovery
- CF "Rokada"
- Pedagogical Professional Development Centre, Kyiv
- CO "Rescue Now"
- Ohiyenko Kamianets-Podilskyi National University
- EMDR Association in Ukraine – professional union on special trauma therapy

**THANK YOU for helping  
children with war trauma!**



**Bringing hope,  
Changing lives**