

### **The Orphaned and Stolen Children of Ukraine**

**By July 2024, over 11,700 children had lost their parents directly due to the conflict, joining more than 70,000 others classified as orphans or deprived of parental care in Ukraine.** For these children, war is not just a distant fear—it is their reality.

Russia has not only left thousands of children orphaned, but has stolen the last thing many had left - their home country. Imagine Sofia, a seven-year-old girl torn from her home, her family lost to violence. She was orphaned and abducted by Russia and has now lost her home, her family, and her country. **Over 19,000 Ukrainian children have been abducted and taken to Russia or Russian-controlled territories, their identities systematically erased.** (Another 1.5 million children live under Russian occupation, and therefore are at risk of being separated from their families.) Adoption laws allow Russian families to adopt abducted Ukrainian children despite many having family in Ukraine, erasing any trace of their Ukrainian heritage. Once absorbed into this system, they become untraceable, cut off from their family and homeland forever. This is why Save Ukraine acts with urgency to rescue and return children abducted by Russia, to ensure they are reunited with their family and home country. Tragically, like Sofia, up to 20% of children we rescue are orphaned and in need of a loving family, not an institution.

Institutional care itself offers little refuge. In overcrowded shelters, children face isolation, inadequate healthcare, developmental delays, prolonged stays far beyond legal limits, and lack the nurturing love and care they desperately need. These facilities strip children of dignity, robbing them of hope and deepening their trauma.

For children with disabilities, the situation is even more dire. Nearly **1,500 orphans with disabilities remain trapped in institutions in Ukraine, neglected and many abused.** Without access to specialized care or loving families, they endure unimaginable hardship, their cries unheard in the fractured system.

Psychological wounds run deep. Half of these children suffer from sleep disturbances, and one in five exhibits signs of PTSD—nightmares, chronic anxiety, and fear that never subsides. Without the stability of a family, these scars deepen, leaving a lifetime of emotional and cognitive struggles.

### **How is Save Ukraine supporting the healing from trauma and integration of orphans, including orphans with disabilities, into family-based care?"**

In the face of this devastation, Save Ukraine brings light to the darkness. **Guided by the principles of *Rescue, Restore, and Reintegrate***, Save Ukraine has crafted a holistic, trauma-informed model of social services to address the needs of the most vulnerable children and families. At its heart lies an unwavering belief: **every child deserves a family.**

Through our work, **548 children have been rescued from deportation to Russia and Russian-occupied territories, including 122 orphans.** None of these children were placed in institutional care. Instead, Save Ukraine prioritizes family-based care, ensuring these children are supported and reintegrated into communities where they can rebuild their lives.

Recognizing the unique vulnerabilities of orphans, Save Ukraine is setting a new standard in care. Specialized services integrate children into inclusive family environments, offering them stability, love, and access to essential inclusive services and resources so all can thrive.

**Save Ukraine has a proven track record of success, having rescued and returned 124 orphaned children to date.** These children, who have endured significant trauma and displacement, are now on their journey toward healing and reintegration. Save Ukraine is committed to finding permanent, nurturing families for each child. However, a critical challenge remains: the families willing to foster or adopt these children often lack stable housing, essential for providing a secure and supportive environment.

To address this need, Save Ukraine plans to implement the following solutions:

On the plot of land in Hatne, near the Creative Hub building, develop the following programs for orphans:

- 1. Two units (100 sq.m.) for specialized short-term foster families for four children each.**
- 2. Two units (200 sq. m.) for specialized long-term foster families for six children each.**

**Only with the support of our generous donors, we hope to. integrate housing development for orphans into a comprehensive network of services for temporary accommodation and rehabilitation.**

Save Ukraine's services are comprehensive, with social workers offering continuous and extensive assistance to these families. This level of support ensures that families have all the resources they need to provide a nurturing and stable environment for their children.

- 3. The site will include an expanded specialized foster care family based on the Small Group Home model, accommodating up to 8 children with severe disabilities.**

*A Small Group Home (SGH) is a residential care setting designed to provide a family-like environment for children who cannot live with their biological families due to various reasons, such as abuse, neglect, disability, or other vulnerabilities. Unlike more extensive institutional settings, SGHs are smaller, more personal, and aim to create a nurturing, supportive, and stable home environment.*

**The community will play a crucial role** in this initiative, as it will also host a **house for 12 young orphans (18-38 y.o.) with severe disabilities from the territorial community for a supported living program.** This holistic approach ensures housing and a nurturing and supportive environment to help these children thrive, with the community's support being a key factor in their success.

*A Supported Living Program (SLP) is a service model designed to help individuals with disabilities or other challenges live independently within their communities. This program offers tailored support and resources to enable individuals to maintain a high level of autonomy while ensuring they can access assistance when needed.*

Beyond immediate care, Save Ukraine strengthens families to prevent future crises. Psychologists and case managers provide continuous support, organize recreational activities such as sports days and art workshops, and conduct workshops on parenting skills and stress management. They also step in during periods of burnout. This comprehensive approach ensures that children and families can heal, grow, and thrive.

### **Restoring the Future**

As the scriptures remind us, *"Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed."* Save Ukraine embodies this call, tirelessly working to restore dignity and hope to children who have suffered unimaginable loss.

These children are not just victims of war; they are Ukraine's future. **Let us ensure they are not left behind.**

Through **Save Ukraine's** efforts and a collective commitment to their care, these young lives can rise above their pain, reclaim their identity, and embrace a brighter tomorrow.

**With you, we can support 268 Orphans Over the Next Three Years.**

**Save a Child. Save a Family. Save Ukraine. Share our Mission - Spread the Word.**

**Together, we can Restore Ukraine's Future!**

Follow up for more information to Heather Dyer [hdyer@saveukraineus.org](mailto:hdyer@saveukraineus.org), CEO, Save Ukraine US  
Visit [saveukraineua.org](http://saveukraineua.org)

