

Gen.Camp 10.0-11.0: The summer that brings childhood back

June 7 – July 12, 2025 | Lviv Region
100 children | 2 sessions | Program “Sheltered by Love”

In June-July 2025, the Gen.Ukrainian team held two sessions of Gen.Camp, an intensive psychological support and recovery program for children affected by war. In just six weeks, 100 boys and girls from different regions of Ukraine went from anxiety to a sense of security, from withdrawal to trust, from silent pain to new meaning and hope.

Gen.Ukrainian works with some of the most complex and least talked-about consequences of war – the losses that children experience in the current circumstances.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has not only destroyed cities and families – it has created a profound humanitarian crisis for children.



According to UNICEF estimates (2025): **75% of children have symptoms of PTSD, 38% have clinical signs of disorders, and one in five children has lost one or two family members**¹. We live in circumstances where a normal childhood has become unattainable. Over the past few years, Ukrainian children have been living in a state of constant stress, experiencing death, disappearance of relatives, deportation, occupation, forced displacement, uncertainty, loss of support, and a sense of security. At Gen.Ukrainian, we work with these children, whose experiences are not always visible but are deeply rooted in their psyche and daily lives. We create spaces for recovery that combine humanitarian presence, a scientific approach, and therapeutic sensitivity. We heal the invisible wounds of Ukrainian children.

The Gen.Ukrainian team is a community of psychologists, educators, researchers, tutors, and coordinators who have undergone special training and work closely with families, supervisors, and international partners. We do not just help – we are building a model that can change the paradigm of child rehabilitation and transform the approach to helping children during and after war, both in Ukraine and around the world.



¹ <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/press-release/3-year-mark-of-war>





“ From my experience, there are no children in Ukraine who have not been affected by trauma. Everyone processes trauma in their own way. That’s why psychological programs for children and adolescents are an investment in the future of a healthy society.”

**– Olena Dovgan,
psychologist at
Gen.Ukrainian**

We don't promise what we can't deliver. What we do is create a space where a child can feel alive again. We named the Gen.Camp program **“Sheltered by Love,”** and this is not a metaphor. It reflects our daily, systematic work we do with love, attention, and professionalism, combining science and a safe emotional connection.

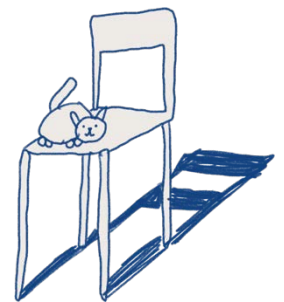
Our author’s rehabilitation program, “Sheltered by Love,” was developed by Gen.Ukrainian in response to the challenges of war. Based on trauma-focused care principles, it uses an integrative approach combining low-intensity cognitive-behavioral therapy techniques, art therapy, mindfulness, and body-oriented practices. In addition to working with children, the program includes a psychoeducation module for parents and guardians, dedicated to topics such as the impact of trauma on the child's psyche, the unique nature of childhood grief, and ways to support children in their daily routines. Each camp lasts 14 or 21 days, depending on its specifics and focus, and provides comprehensive support. Children are selected based on the urgency of their needs and the severity of symptoms. Every child undergoes full assessment at the start and end of the intervention, participates in both group and individual sessions with psychologists, takes part in creative and stabilizing activities, and learns to better understand themselves and their emotional responses. This program offers a space where war-shattered childhoods are given a chance to heal. Built on a structured five-stage therapeutic model, from stabilization to the development of resilience, it is grounded in science and supported by systematic care.



Gen.Camp 10.0 – a unique support program for children affected by ambiguous loss

Gen.Camp 10.0 became the first specialized psychological support program in Ukraine for children experiencing ambiguous loss, when a loved one has gone missing or their fate remains unknown. This type of trauma is particularly complex and understudied, as the child has neither the opportunity to say goodbye nor the ability to understand what is happening in their life. The internal state of “freezing” between hope and grief creates chronic stress, which deeply affects a child’s personality development. The Gen.Camp 10.0 program was designed with the specifics of this experience in mind: multi-stage diagnosis, gentle approaches, work with emotional responses related to this “frozen” state, as well as feelings of guilt, shame, fear, and imagination.

Through a combination of cognitive regulation techniques, body-based therapy, self-regulation techniques, art therapy, group interaction, and one-on-one psychological support, children were given the chance to feel grounded, to gradually allow themselves to grieve the loss of connection with their loved ones, and to take the first steps toward integrating this loss into their life story. The program also included deep, intensive work with parents and guardians, ensuring continued emotional support after the camp’s completion. Support groups for adults included two individual sessions and ten group sessions.



Ambiguous loss is one of the least studied but most painful forms of loss. Despite its prevalence during times of war, the scientific foundation for understanding and addressing this type of trauma remains extremely limited. There is a serious lack of practical tools to support families whose loved ones have gone missing under extraordinary circumstances. When it comes to children’s experiences in such situations, the gap in research is even more stark. That’s precisely why Gen.Camp 10.0 was dedicated to working with children and adolescents whose parents are missing. Today, 70,000 Ukrainian families – and thousands of Ukrainian children – live in this chronic state of uncertainty.”

– Oksana Lebedieva, founder of Gen.Ukrainian.

Gen.Camp 11.0 – a support and recovery program for children who have lost one or both parents due to war

Gen.Camp 11.0 was dedicated to working with children whose loss had already taken a definite form: the confirmed death of one or both parents as a result of war. This kind of loss is a profound trauma that often has no place in a child's everyday life. Participants arrived at Gen.Camp 11.0 in a state of emotional numbness, either shut down emotionally or exhibiting overwhelming responses such as anxiety, aggression, or withdrawal. The program was designed as a holistic process: the **first stage** focused on stabilization and creating a safe, supportive environment; the second addressed trauma through therapeutic tools (art, play, work with the body, words, and images); and the third focused on nurturing resilience, rebuilding a sense of future, and helping children reconnect with the sense of worth in their own lives. A distinctive feature of Gen.Camp 11.0 was the high level of involvement of parents/guardians. Families took part in a specially developed by Gen.Ukrainian online psychoeducation course, which became an integral part of the program's long-term impact. Not only did participants experience healing, but also gained the language to express their grief, acquired new self-regulation skills, and – most importantly – received the lasting gift of caring presence, something they can now carry with them into the future.



“I have been working with children for a long time. And now they need even more support, care, and comprehensive psychological rehabilitation. Children in Ukraine experience abnormal events almost every day. And, unfortunately, these events are becoming increasingly normalized and commonplace. Our psych and bodies are becoming to adapt to war, but it should never be the norm. We are increasingly failing to notice the internal wounds that need healing and extra care.”

– Inga Loginova, psychologist at Gen.Camp



What have we accomplished thanks to your support

Thanks to your generous support, we were able to hold **two full sessions of Gen.Camp**, where we provided **a psychological program** with group and individual support, body-based practices, psychoeducation, and SEL (social-emotional learning); **art therapy and creative activities** to help children process traumatic experiences; **a rich leisure program** designed to stabilize the emotional states; **special guests visits and educational events** (including lectures on children's rights, a visit from heroic dog Patron, and motivational meetings with celebrity guests); full logistical support, including accommodation, meals, and safe transportation for all children. We also conducted internal training sessions for our team and ensured ongoing supervision. Together with researchers from the **Kyiv School of Economics and the National Psychological Association**, we collected data as part of a long-term study on the impact of war on childhood in Ukraine.

Additionally, in collaboration with experts from the **NGO Institute for Health Psychology**, we launched the first program of its kind in Ukraine focused on working with **ambiguous loss** for children, parents, and guardians.



Here are just a few stories from participants in the intensive courses (names and ages have been changed for safety reasons):

→ **Maksym, 13 years old:** Maksym’s family lived under occupation in the Kherson region. One day, a Russian soldier broke into their home. He shot the boy’s mother right in the room while attempting to rape her. Maksym was hiding under the table and miraculously survived. For a long time after, he was stranded outside Ukraine – in the aggressor state and its allies – and was eventually brought back through a complex, step-by-step process.

→ **Alina, 12 years old:** In Sumy, in the middle of winter, at midnight, a Shahed drone hit Alina’s house. Alina managed to get out from under the rubble on her own, pulled a shrapnel fragment out of her body, and rescued her wounded father. She held her older brother’s face for a long time, trying to calm him down, but he was trapped under a slab and died.



Here is what Alina shared about the program: *“Here, they taught me to be calmer about this [the drone strike, her brother’s death]. And I feel normal now. It doesn’t overwhelm me as much now. To everyone who is currently experiencing pain, loss, and anxiety, I want to tell you - you are not alone. It’s going to be okay.”*

→ **Sofia, 11 years old:** her father died defending the border. The day before her birthday, her mother went to the store to buy ingredients for a birthday cake and never returned – she was killed during shelling.



“Childhood is a critical time for development – a time when every child needs care, support, and stability. Even in peaceful times, psychological support is essential. But in the context of war, that need multiplies a thousandfold. Ukrainian children are living under constant stress. This isn’t short-term stress. It’s permanent. It has no clear beginning or end – it’s there 24/7, with no certainty of when it might stop. In healthy conditions, we go through cycles: periods of stress followed by recovery. Ukrainian children are being denied this basic rhythm. Instead, they are forced to adapt to constant mobilization and be ready at any moment to respond to the next crisis. This ability is not innate, so children need our psychological help.”

– **Vanui Martyrosian,**
chief psychologist at Gen.Ukrainian



The results of two summer sessions of Gen.Camp confirm the program's high effectiveness as a tool for emotional stabilization, recovery, and the the development of inner resilience in children who have experienced severe traumatic loss.

- According to pre- and post-camp diagnostics (CATS-2, CRIES-8), about 80% of participants showed improvement in their psycho-emotional state, including reduced anxiety, avoidance symptoms, improved sleep, appetite, social interaction, and self-regulation skills.
- In 12 cases, the Gen team identified the need for ongoing psychological support, and 10 children were referred for a psychiatrist's consultation, with the organization covering the costs.
- All families of Gen.Camp participants took part in the training module for parents and guardians. This not only reinforced the impact of the program but also helped build a foundation for ongoing support at home.
- Many children, for the first time, were able to talk about their experiences, their losses, express grief, begin to dream, and build an image of the future. These are not only signs of the program's effectiveness, but also the beginning of the formation of a long-term model for restoring childhood in wartime conditions.



Feedback from Gen.Camp 10 and Gen.Camp 11 participants

- *"I really like that psychologists here [at Gen.Camp] are very cool. I really like them because you can talk to them and share everything. They always listen to you and always help."*
- *"This is my second time at Gen.Camp. And I am very happy to be here because I will see my favorite psychologist and tutors. Here I learned something new, for example, the "butterfly" [a psychological technique for self-regulation]. It is used to calm down. I also remembered the "flower-candle" [a breathing exercise for regulation]. I know a lot of these things now."*



What children gained from the program – at Gen.Camp, children receive not only support, but also new experiences of themselves.

An experience in which:

- their emotions are important;
- their story is not a source of stigma, but a reason to be cared for;
- it is possible to dream, even when it was scary;
- it is possible to laugh, even after loss;
- it is possible to build relationships again – without fear and loneliness;
- they are not alone.



Media Coverage

The summer sessions of Gen.Camp 10.0 and 11.0 generated wide media coverage both in Ukraine and internationally. Media outlets from eight countries reported on the camps through various formats – including in-depth articles, photo essays, TV and radio reports, podcasts, and social media publications – bringing the stories of our work to millions worldwide.

In total, coverage appeared in prominent media outlets from different countries, including Great Britain, Italy, Germany, Ukraine, and others. These publications not only amplified the visibility of our mission but also brought global attention to the urgent need for psychological rehabilitation for children affected by war.



Publications about Gen.Camp

The Washington Post (USA) – In-depth feature article highlighting the unique approach of Gen.Camp and telling the stories of Ukrainian children who found healing, stability, and renewed trust during the summer sessions.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/08/24/ukraine-children-war-summer-healing/>

BBC (Great Britain) – Radio interview, online articles, and a TV video feature covering the rehabilitation stories of Gen.Camp participants

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0lt6dqf>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdx0ex5v437o>

United24 (Ukraine) – Photo and video reports, and articles telling the stories of children and their healing journeys in Gen.Camp.

<https://united24media.com/reportajes-fotograficos/inside-the-camp-where-ukrainian-kids-heal-from-the-russian-war-in-photos-9653>

<https://united24media.com/life-in-ukraine/these-kids-lost-everything-to-russias-war-now-a-ukrainian-camp-is-helping-them-heal-9774>

1+1 (Ukraine) – National TV reportage on the Gen.Camp program.

<https://youtu.be/NtosmnMVp2s>

MainPost / Augsburg Allgemeine / Frankfurter Rundschau (Germany) – Photo essays and feature stories on children who lost parents due to war.

<https://www.augsburger-allgemeine.de/politik/wie-ein-feriencamp-kindern-helfen-will-die-im-ukraine-krieg-ihre-eltern-verloren-haben-110439963>

<https://www.fr.de/politik/feriencamp-fuer-ukrainische-kinder-fuer-ein-lachen-in-der-stille-93850645.html>

La Pulla (Colombia) – YouTube video-reportage.

<https://youtu.be/NtosmnMVp2s>

RAI (Italy) – National TV news feature.

<https://www.rainews.it/video/2025/07/un-centro-per-curare-le-ferite-degli-orfani-di-guerra-ucraina-guerra-9d236a52-3ce4-4f81-9472-28df6de7a1bb.html?nxtep>

Impact of Media Coverage

The widespread media attention has significantly strengthened Gen.Ukrainian's visibility among international partners, donors, and the general public. It has also raised awareness of the challenges faced by Ukrainian children living with the trauma of war, and highlighted the urgent need for specialised psychological rehabilitation programs like Gen.Camp.

Gratitude and Hope for the Future



“With each intervention, we see that the situation is becoming more complicated: more and more children are becoming double orphans. The lack of professional support, remote schooling, and survival mode – all of this makes childhood impossible. The creation of healing spaces is a matter of necessity.”

– Oksana Lebedieva, founder of Gen.Ukrainian



We are deeply grateful to everyone who stood with us this summer.
These children will remember more than just their losses.
They will remember the care, the support,
and a safe space where they could finally breathe again.



Because we are certain:

*There is nothing more touching than the moment
when a wounded child's heart decides
to trust the world again.*

