

Help Children in Ukraine Overcome War Trauma Psychological Support and Emotional Care Program

Project Description

Implementer:	“HOPE <i>worldwide</i> Ukraine” Charity Foundation
Project Location:	Ukraine
Project Beneficiaries:	children with war trauma from all over Ukraine
Project Timeframe:	50 therapy courses in 2026
Total Project Cost:	63600 USD

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Since the Russian Federation's 24 February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the number of people in need of humanitarian aid and protection increased from approximately 3 million people to nearly 18 million, and hostilities and fighting spread across the country. Throughout 2022-2025, millions of Ukrainians endured intense hostilities, which killed and injured thousands of civilians, forced millions from their homes, destroyed jobs and livelihoods, and left many struggling to access food, water, health care, education, a safe place to live and other essential services. Massive destruction of civilian infrastructure across the country decimated essential services, including energy, water supply, and heating. The continued attacks on energy infrastructure caused an energy crisis, testing the whole country's resilience and creating a new dimension of the humanitarian crisis, as the country entered the cold winter season. Millions have been left without power, heating and water for days on end across Ukraine.

The war has also caused immense mental trauma, particularly on children. Authorities reported an estimated 15 million Ukrainians to need psycho-social support because of the war. WHO also concluded that at least 9.6 million people may have mental health conditions after being exposed to the horrors of fighting and hostilities. From overcoming war trauma, to social isolation, to daily struggles without power and heating, to displacement-related challenges and more, the consequences of the war are expected to cause mental health problems for at least five years after the war ends.

PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the project is to supervise therapists trained in “Children and War. Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT)” trauma therapy program and provide IDPs children and parents affected by the ongoing war with the immediate psycho-social aid through psychological therapy and self-help tools.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- to provide psycho-social aid through psychological therapy and self-help tools to the IDPs, children and parents with war trauma, and also the elderly who are staying in war-affected areas/communities due to the war hostilities of the Russian invasion to Ukraine,
- to supervise therapists trained in the “Children and War: TRT” method and provide methodological support and supervision during their therapy courses with IDPs children and parents,
- to equip children with tool kits/backpacks for self-help and emotional self-care.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- 50 “Children and War: TRT” therapy courses for 600 children with war trauma.
- 600 backpacks with therapeutic kits will be handed out to children who completed the therapy course.
- 50 hours of supervision in “Children and War: TRT” for trainers who will work with children and adults with war trauma.

OUR EXPERTISE:

- Working with war trauma and PTSD since 2015.
- Therapy for IDPs children and adults/families (2015-2018), those living in “grey” war zone (2019-2022).

- Therapy for children and adults/families, IDPs during wartime (2022-2025)
- Training, supervising psychologists, volunteers, and educators in the “Children and War. TRT” program.
- Organization of training and therapy sessions.
- Networking and communications with volunteer and charity organizations, social service state agencies, and educational establishments.

“CHILDREN AND WAR: TEACHING RECOVERY TECHNIQUES” METHOD

The “Children and War: Teaching Recovery Techniques” program was developed by the Centre for Crisis Psychology (Bergen, Norway) and the Institute of Psychiatry (London, Great Britain). The experts from the Ukrainian Institute of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Lviv, Ukraine) have translated and adapted the manual to Ukrainian. The program is available in English, Ukrainian, French, Arabic and several more languages (<http://www.childrenandwar.org/resources/teaching-recovery-techniques-trt/>).

Therapy sessions help children and parents acquire the necessary skills and techniques to deal with their traumatic experiences. The program showed great results both in Ukraine and other countries where it was used. It helps to prevent PTSD and depression in children who survived war. **It is unique** because it is one step ahead: **it prevents the need for specialized psychological help in the future.** It's a kind of immunization that **helps children learn how to cope with stressful and complicated life situations in the future.** In addition, it also helps families of internally displaced persons to activate and mobilize their own internal resources and adapt better in society.

THERAPY EFFECTIVENESS

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

According to the results of the survey, as well as observations of children and parents themselves, improvement of psycho-emotional condition and ability to cope with post-traumatic stress was improved in over 90% of participants. In the course of therapy, children make friends within the group, stop avoiding eye contact, hug each other and probably for the first time after a traumatic experience – start feeling safe. They can relax and tell what happened to them.

“How can I help my child?” is the most frequently asked question amongst parents. During therapy, parents are taught how to deal with child trauma; they also learn about other aspects of raising a child. It is utterly important that parents, too, can work with their own traumatic experiences, receive professional psychological assistance and support from other parents within the group. They can also make friends and unite to solve routine issues of living conditions.

EXPECTED RESULTS, SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

Quantitative indicators – Short-term (output/“result”)

- **50 trainer-couples** will receive supervision while conducting “Children and War. TRT” therapy courses for traumatized children and adults, and upgrade their expertise.
- **50 therapy courses (350 therapy sessions)** will be held for **600 children with war trauma**;
- **600 children** will go through emotional recovery and psychological rehabilitation during therapy courses and receive backpacks with therapy toolkits after the program.

Qualitative indicators – Long-term (outcome/“influence”):

- *Rehabilitation effect:* children who have learned and practiced the techniques will be less likely to need specialist treatment services in the future.
- *Self-assistance effect:* children will acquire skills of psychological self-assistance that will help them to cope with psychological problems that arise due to war and violence, cope with stressful situations and complicated life circumstances in future;
- *Inner resources mobilization effect:* the project will positively influence the level of optimism among parents, will help them activate and mobilize their own inner resources, and will foster better social adaptation of the families.