

# PEACE OF MIND FOUNDATION PROPOSAL

## 1. NGO DoLadu Overview

DoLadu Mental Health Lab is a Ukrainian NGO dedicated to restoring emotional wellbeing and resilience among individuals and families affected by war. Since 2022, DoLadu has served **over 2,000 beneficiaries**, including children, adolescents, veterans, spouses, and displaced families, through structured community-based MHPSS programming.

Our interdisciplinary team includes psychologists, child-specialized facilitators, trauma-informed practitioners, family counselors, and peer-support coordinators. All programming is delivered with strict adherence to Do-No-Harm principles, ethical safeguarding, and professional supervision.

DoLadu implements evidence-aligned, low-intensity interventions, including group stabilization, psychoeducation, expressive therapies, family communication strengthening, and continuous peer-support networks. We partner with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, municipalities, and community organizations, ensuring access, referral pathways, and integration within local systems.

DoLadu maintains a robust MEAL system, using PHQ-9, GAD-7, PCL-5, child wellbeing screenings, caregiver stress scales, and functional indicators. Our CAF America **Equivalency Determination (501(c)(3) equivalency)** enables US donors to support our work securely and transparently.

Our mission is to help children and families heal from trauma, rebuild emotional safety, and strengthen long-term community resilience.

## 2. Project Title

**Healing Hearts & Minds: MHPSS for Children, Adolescents & Their Families in War-Affected Communities of Ukraine**

## 3. Project Duration

**12 months**

## 4. Total Grant Request

USD 150,000

## 5. Project Summary (approx. 300 words)

Ukraine's children and adolescents are living through one of the most psychologically damaging conflicts of the century. Exposure to explosions, displacement, loss, prolonged fear, and disrupted schooling has led to rising levels of anxiety, regression, behavioral difficulties, sleep disturbances, emotional numbness, and impaired social functioning. At the same time, caregivers—many of them veterans or partners of servicemembers—struggle with trauma symptoms that directly affect their children's wellbeing.

DoLadu proposes *Healing Hearts & Minds*, a 12-month community-based MHPSS program designed to strengthen emotional stability, coping skills, and family functioning for **450+ children and caregivers** through two proven intervention models:

### 1. DoLadu Camp — Children & Youth MHPSS

A structured program using trauma-informed group work, stabilization tools, expressive and play therapy techniques, psychoeducation, and emotional regulation skills. Camps create safe, immersive environments that allow children to process emotions, rebuild trust, improve social interaction, and restore a sense of safety.

### 2. Family Camp — Strengthening Caregivers & Child-Caregiver Relationships

This program addresses intergenerational stress by equipping parents with communication skills, stress management tools, and trauma-informed parenting strategies. Joint sessions rebuild attachment, reduce household tension, and increase emotional safety.

Across both components, DoLadu integrates supervision, safeguarding, MEAL, referral pathways, and community follow-up.

Expected impact after 12 months:

- **Improved emotional regulation and psychosocial functioning in 300+ children/adolescents**
- **Reduced caregiver stress and improved family communication for 150+ families**

- **Creation of stable peer-support structures ensuring continuity of care**

This project directly responds to Peace of Mind Foundation's mission to heal trauma, strengthen children's mental health, and build resilient support systems.

## **6. How the Project Aligns with the Peace of Mind Foundation's Mission (300 words)**

DoLadu's *Healing Hearts & Minds* program fully aligns with the Peace of Mind Foundation's mission to provide mental health support, healing, and long-term resilience for children affected by trauma. The Foundation prioritizes evidence-based, community-grounded, accessible MHPSS interventions—particularly for children and adolescents experiencing emotional distress, instability, and ongoing exposure to crisis. Our proposal delivers exactly this.

First, DoLadu directly serves **children and adolescents impacted by war**, the population at the center of Peace of Mind's mission. The DoLadu Camp model provides structured psychosocial interventions using expressive therapies, child-focused stabilization, trauma-informed group activities, and age-appropriate coping tools. These methods help children process fear, rebuild emotional regulation, improve social functioning, and regain a sense of safety—core outcomes sought by the Foundation.

Second, the Foundation emphasizes **strengthening the family ecosystem**, recognizing that caregiver wellbeing is essential for healthy child development. Our Family Camp component provides parents with skills in communication, stress reduction, trauma-informed parenting, and emotional support. This creates stable, nurturing environments for children, improving long-term wellbeing.

Third, Peace of Mind supports programs that build **resilience, hope, and community support structures**. DoLadu integrates follow-up groups, peer-support networks, and referrals to ensure families do not return to isolation. By embedding MHPSS into community settings, the program strengthens local capacity and contributes to sustained emotional healing.

Finally, the Foundation values **ethical, evidence-based practice**. DoLadu maintains professional supervision, safeguarding protocols, screening tools (PHQ-9, GAD-7, child wellbeing scales), and rigorous MEAL systems aligned with global MHPSS standards.

This project provides the exact type of high-impact trauma support that Peace of Mind Foundation was established to fund: **children healing, families stabilizing, and communities rebuilding emotional resilience**.

## 7. Target Population

- **300+ children and adolescents (ages 6–17)** affected by war, displacement, loss, fear, disrupted schooling
- **150+ caregivers**, including:
  - parents of veterans
  - mothers raising children under high stress
  - displaced and trauma-affected families
  - caregivers struggling with secondary trauma
- Communities with limited access to formal mental health services
- Families at risk of isolation, behavioral challenges, or emotional instability

## 8. Program Activities

### DoLadu Camp (Children & Adolescents)

- Trauma-informed group psychosocial sessions
- Expressive therapies: art, play, music, theatre
- Psychoeducation on emotions, fear, trauma response
- Emotional regulation skill-building
- Social reconnection and peer bonding
- Crisis screening & referral if needed

### Family Camp (Caregiver Strengthening)

- Joint caregiver–child bonding activities
- Training on trauma-informed parenting
- Family communication workshops
- Stress-management and self-regulation for caregivers

- Safety planning & psychosocial support
- Family wellbeing assessments

### **Cross-Cutting Activities**

- Safeguarding
- Clinical supervision
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Referral pathways
- Follow-up peer-support circles

## **9. Anticipated Outcomes**

### **For Children**

- Improved emotional stability
- Reduced anxiety and behavioral symptoms
- Better peer relationships and social functioning
- Increased sense of safety

### **For Caregivers**

- Reduced stress and emotional overload
- Improved parenting confidence
- Strengthened communication with children
- Better understanding of trauma responses

### **Family System**

- Improved attachment and trust
- Reduced conflict

- More stable, supportive home environment

## 10. Monitoring & Evaluation

DoLadu will apply a structured MEAL system using:

- Child Wellbeing Screening Tool
- Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
- Caregiver Stress Index
- Family Relationship Scale
- Pre/post measurements of emotional regulation and functioning

Data collected:

- attendance
- session feedback
- symptom changes
- family interaction improvements

Quarterly reports and a final evaluation will be shared with Peace of Mind Foundation.

## 11. Organizational Capacity

- 3+ years MHPSS programming in conflict settings
- Team of psychologists, child therapists, family facilitators
- Supervisors and safeguarding focal points
- Strong national partnerships
- CAF America ED (501(c)(3)-equivalent)
- Proven delivery of 2,000+ cases with high-impact outcomes

## 12. Sustainability

- Peer-support groups continue after camps
- Training caregivers ensures lasting impact
- Municipal partnerships strengthen referrals
- DoLadu will pursue co-funding from US DAFs, foundations, and INGOs
- Program results integrated into long-term DoLadu Camp model

## 13. Needs Assessment

Ukraine is experiencing one of the most acute child-focused mental health crises in the world. More than **4.5 million children** have been directly affected by the war, exposed to shelling, displacement, loss, and chronic stress, leading to elevated levels of anxiety, sleep disturbance, regression, aggression, and emotional withdrawal.<sup>1</sup> According to UNICEF, **every child in Ukraine has been exposed to trauma**, and continued insecurity has created long-term risks for toxic stress and developmental delays.<sup>2</sup>

A 2023 WHO assessment found that **one in four Ukrainians may experience a mental health condition**, with children and adolescents facing disproportionate risk due to continuous disruptions to education, social ties, and emotional safety.<sup>3</sup> Many children are living in families where caregivers—often veterans or partners of servicemembers—struggle with trauma, depression, and exhaustion, creating compounding intergenerational effects. Research by the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and WHO indicates that **caregiver stress directly predicts child emotional and behavioral problems** in conflict settings.<sup>4</sup>

More than **1 million veterans** are returning to families under enormous psychological strain. Their children face secondary trauma, heightened family tension, and reduced emotional availability from caregivers coping with PTSD or chronic stress. UNICEF has documented

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF (2023). Ukraine War: Impact on Children.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF (2022–2024). Every Child Is Affected: Psychosocial needs in Ukraine

<sup>3</sup> WHO (2023). Ukraine Mental Health Assessment

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Health of Ukraine & WHO (2023). Impact of Caregiver Stress on Child Mental Health in Conflict Settings.

rising child-parent conflict, emotional detachment, and deterioration of family functioning, particularly in households affected by military service.<sup>5</sup>

Access to professional MHPSS remains extremely limited: only a small fraction of children in need receive structured psychosocial support, and community-based services are unevenly available. In many communities, schools, municipalities, and caregivers lack the tools to respond to the emotional and behavioral impacts of war on children.

This program addresses these urgent gaps by delivering **evidence-aligned, child-centered MHPSS interventions** and **strengthening caregiver capacity** to create safe, supportive environments essential for children's recovery.

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<sup>5</sup> UNICEF (2023). Child Wellbeing and Family Functioning in War-Affected Households.