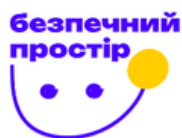


JANUARY-JUNE 2026

REPORT ON THE "SAFE SPACE PROGRAMME" AT STATE KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL NO. 532 'KRAINA DYTYNSTVA' ('LAND OF CHILDHOOD')

This project is implemented with the support of Restart Foundation in cooperation with the Ukrainian NGO, Words Help, and the Centre for Mental Health at NaUKMA



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DISCLAIMER

This report was prepared as part of the 'Safe Space' psychosocial support programme for pre-school children, implemented at Kindergarten No. 532 'Kraina Dytynstva' ('Land of Childhood').

The initiative was carried out with the support of Restart Foundation, in partnership with the non-governmental organisation 'Words Help' and the Mental Health Centre at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

The report presents the key findings from the programme's implementation at the kindergarten, which took place in Kyiv from 30 January to 29 June 2026. It reflects the experiences of all parties involved: children, parents, kindergarten staff, the kindergarten management and the specialists who delivered the sessions. The report describes how participation in the programme supported children in understanding and expressing emotions, reducing anxiety and developing self-regulation skills, including safer ways of managing aggression. It also highlights the challenges faced by the adults providing support – parents and teachers – in the context of chronic wartime stress. The Safe Space team encountered several recurring limitations, including limited awareness among some parents and carers of age-specific child development and children's responses to stress; exhaustion among parents and other adults; and the persistence of authoritarian approaches to child-rearing both in families and within institutional practice.

The report also addresses the professional development of the trainees who took part in the programme. They had the opportunity to undertake practical training and acquire new tools for working with children experiencing stress and trauma.

The report was prepared by the project team: **Oksana Zaleska (supervisor)**, **Alla Yansons** (Chief Executive of Restart Foundation), **Yevheniia Zavorotynska** (project mentor), and **Olena Tkachenko** (project mentor).



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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the programme's implementation at the 'Kraina Dytynstva' state pre-school educational institution in Kyiv, the city experienced repeated combined missile and drone attacks. On several occasions, air-raid alerts sounded during sessions, requiring the activities to be interrupted immediately and the children and staff to move to the shelter. Because the shelter was not spacious enough to hold group sessions safely and properly, these sessions had to be rescheduled.

The situation became particularly difficult during the programme's final session, to which the children's parents had been invited. Many parents had taken time off work in advance to attend the joint event with their children. However, due to an air-raid alert, participants were forced to remain in the shelter, and the session had to be postponed. As a result, parents, children, teachers and psychologists worked in extremely difficult conditions marked by chronic sleep deprivation, the constant threat of shelling and regular air-raid alerts. Despite this, all participants made considerable efforts to create the safe and supportive environment needed to protect the children's childhood and psychological well-being.

On one of the programme days, an enemy unmanned aerial vehicle was shot down by air defence forces near the kindergarten. During the attack, the children were taken to the shelter. When the drone crashed into the lake and exploded, the kindergarten building shook significantly, causing severe emotional distress among both children and adults.

Further evidence of the war's impact on the programme participants was the damage to the home of one of the trainees, Anzhela Karas. During a massive combined attack by Russian forces on the night of 13-14 May, her flat was damaged¹. A month later, during another wave of shelling, her psychotherapy practice was also damaged. These events show that even adults who provide support to others are themselves constantly exposed to war-related trauma and require resources to restore their own psychological resilience. On the same night, the Assumption Cathedral, a World Heritage Site, was damaged².



¹ A massive attack by the Russian Federation on Kyiv on the night of 14 May: more than 12,000 people took shelter in the underground. <https://suspihne.media/kyiv/1310889-masovana-ataka-rf-na-kiiv-u-nic-na-14-travna-u-metro-hovalisa-ponad-12-tisac-ludej/>

² A massive attack on Kyiv: there are fatalities and injuries, power cuts, and the Assumption Cathedral is on fire. <https://armyinform.com.ua/2026/06/15/masovana-ataka-na-kyiv-ye-zagybli-ta-poraneni-pereboyi-zi-svitlom-goryt-uspenskyj-sobor/>

INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The 'Safe Space' programme, developed by the Mental Health Centre at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, is a comprehensive psychosocial initiative aimed at strengthening children's resilience to stress, supporting their emotional well-being, and developing self-regulation skills in wartime conditions. Between January and June 2026, the programme was implemented at Kindergarten No. 532 'Kraina Dytynstva' in Kyiv, in partnership with Restart Foundation and the NGO 'Words Help'. This was the first state-run kindergarten to take part in the project. The kindergarten's headteacher and teaching staff were motivated and expressed their willingness to cooperate. At the first meeting, they identified the need to work with the kindergarten teachers, and raised issues of professional burnout and difficulties in managing children's emotional reactions.

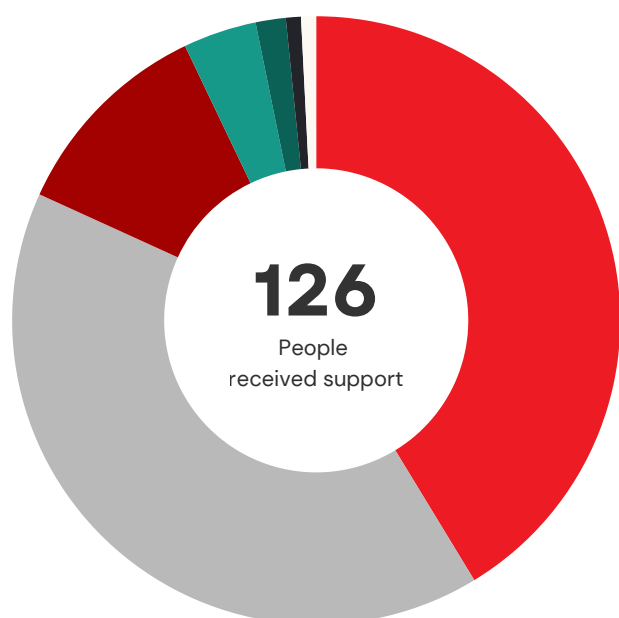
A team of eight specialists was involved in implementing the programme:

- supervisor – Oksana Zaleska;
- mentor – Yevheniia Zavorotynska;
- mentor – Olena Tkachenko;
- five trainees – Anzhela Karas, Olga Fal, Oleksandra Melnyk, Anna Kaidash and Olga Kravchenko.

The programme reached the following participant groups:

Safe Space Programme - Kindergarten No. 532: Reach

Number of people who received support through the programme



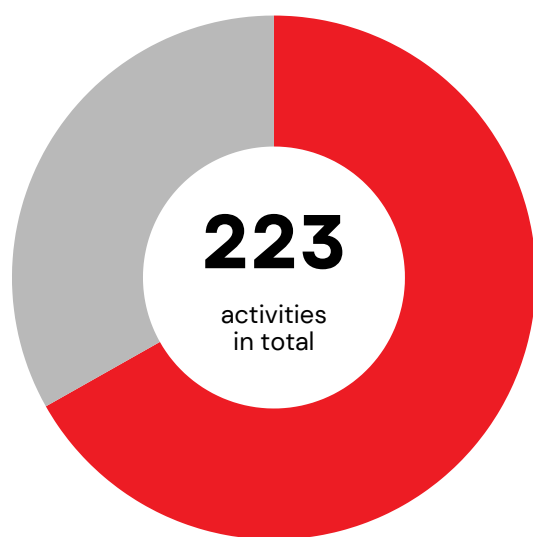
PARTICIPANTS

Parents	52	41.3%
Children	51	40.5%
Educators	14	11.1%
Trainees	5	3.9%
Kindergarten methodologists	2	1.6%
Kindergarten head	1	0.8%
Deputy director	1	0.8%

Children: 17 girls | 34 boys

Safe Space Programme - Kindergarten No. 532: Activity Structure

All 223 activities grouped into two main areas



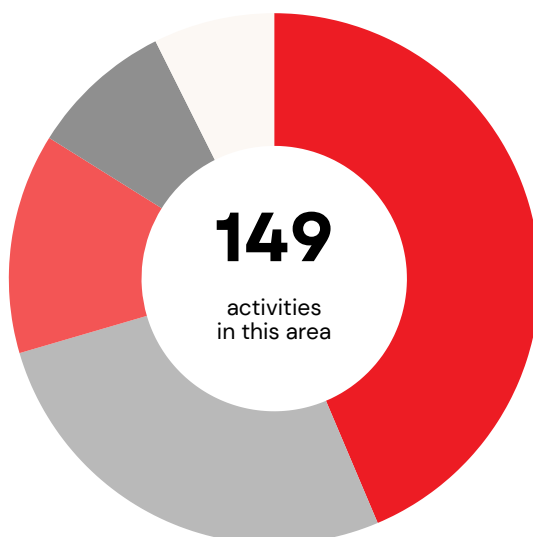
MAIN AREAS

■	Direct support for children, parents and educators	149	66.8%
■	Professional, supervisory and organisational support	74	33.2%

149 activities: direct support. 74 activities: professional, supervisory and organisational support.

Safe Space Programme - Kindergarten No. 532: Direct Support

Activities for children, parents, educators, observations and referrals



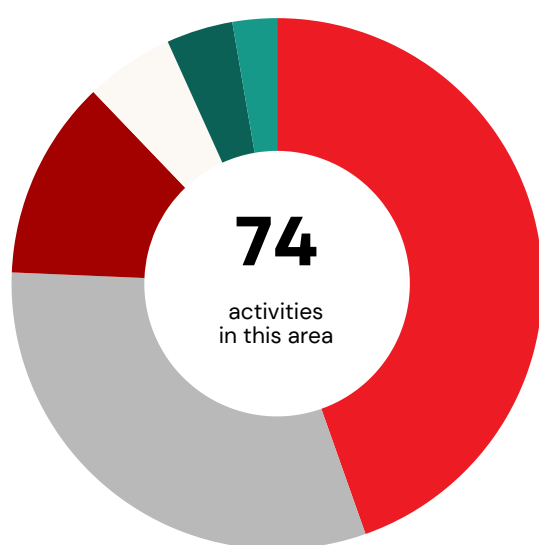
ACTIVITY STRUCTURE

■	Group sessions with children	65	43.6%
■	Meetings with parents	40	26.9%
■	Resource and methodological meetings with educators	20	13.4%
■	Referrals to specialised support	13	8.7%
■	Observations	11	7.4%

Parent meetings include group meetings, joint child-parent meetings and individual meetings. Referrals include children, parents and educators.

Safe Space Programme – Kindergarten No. 532: Professional Support

Work with trainees, supervision, mentoring discussions, administration and certification



ACTIVITY STRUCTURE

■	Supervisions for trainees	33	44.6%
■	Mentoring discussions with trainees	23	31.1%
■	Supervisions for mentors	9	12.2%
■	Supervisions for educators	4	5.4%
■	Organisational meetings with administration	3	4.0%
■	Certification of trainees	2	2.7%

This area reflects quality assurance, supervision and organisational support for programme implementation.

PREPARATORY STAGE

As 'Kraina Dytynstva' was the first state-run pre-school education institution to implement the 'Safe Space' programme, more time than usual was devoted to preparation. Before starting work with the children, the team worked through all stages of implementation in detail and agreed expectations for cooperation with the Kindergarten management. This included the management's readiness to communicate actively with parents and teachers, and to provide a safe and stable environment for the sessions.

The Kindergarten management was open to cooperation with the 'Safe Space' team and actively supported the programme's implementation. Thanks to thorough preparatory work, the programme was launched successfully. During implementation, a challenge arose in securing a permanent venue for sessions with children from certain groups. The venue therefore had to be changed, which required additional work with the children to help them manage the transition.

A further challenge was that sessions could not be held in the shelter during air-raid alerts, as there was insufficient space for such activities. The sessions therefore had to be rescheduled for other days. This extended the programme and created an additional workload for the project team.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: GROUP WORK WITH CHILDREN

As part of the 'Safe Space' programme at the 'Land of Childhood' Kindergarten, **seven** children's groups were formed, involving **51** pre-school children. Sessions were held weekly over a 12-week period in a therapeutic group format, combining psychological guidance, play, creative exercises, physical activities, sensory materials, metaphorical imagery and work on emotions. At the start of the programme, the groups had varying levels of readiness to participate: some children approached the process cautiously and shyly, needing time to adapt, while others displayed high levels of physical activity, impulsiveness, and difficulties with following rules, waiting their turn, concentrating and accepting boundaries. In the most challenging groups, there were signs of disorganisation, oppositional behaviour, physical horseplay, breaches of personal boundaries, rapid group agitation and a need for constant adult support.

Throughout the programme, the children gradually began to better grasp the structure of the sessions, respond to repetitive rituals and use the suggested tools for self-regulation. The most stabilising elements proved to be the mediating toy, turn-taking rules, the candle exercise, soap bubbles, slime, drawing, modelling clay, swinging in a blanket, building a den, joint creative tasks and closing rituals. Through play, drawing, movement and behaviour, the children brought up themes of fear, anger, joy, sadness, love, hurt feelings, and the need for protection, closeness, control and support. Whilst at the start some children were unable to speak directly about their own experiences or denied feeling fear and anger, as the sessions progressed these themes began to be expressed in a more symbolic form: through drawings of fears, protective talismans, stories about monsters and dragons, dens, love bracelets, invitations for parents, shared fairy tales and discussions of conflict situations. Despite the harsh reality of war, the tension, the fear following shelling and the exhaustion of the adults, the children had the opportunity to play, create, move about, use their imagination and draw strength from their relationships with caring adults.

By the end of the programme, positive developments were observed across all groups. The children became more open to interacting with the facilitators and with one another; they participated more actively in group exercises, were more likely to name their own emotions, shared personal stories, supported one another and demonstrated a greater ability to return to a state of calm following excitement or frustration. In the more organised groups, cohesion, trust, communication skills and the ability to express emotions improved. In the more challenging groups, despite persistent difficulties with self-control, impulsivity and following rules, there was a noticeable shift from chaotic reactions towards greater participation in group activities, acceptance of rituals and the ability to express feelings through play and creativity. Overall, the programme provided the children with the experience of a safe space in which complex feelings could be recognised, named, symbolically processed and shared with adults and the group, which contributed to the development of emotional regulation, social skills and psychological resilience.

An important indicator of the programme's impact was that the children looked forward to the sessions and would say to their parents: 'Is it Friday today? Let's go quickly, the psychologists are coming today', 'I love going to kindergarten every Friday'. Games, relationships, beneficial exercises and creative imagination awaited the children every Friday during group sessions. These small but regular activities lay the foundations for a child's resilience, strengthen their inner resources and nurture hope for a better future.

WORKING WITH THE TEACHING STAFF

Following the organisational meeting, it became clear that the team was large (14 teachers) and required more attention and space to discuss important issues. To ensure high-quality work within the available time, the participants were divided into two subgroups.

The team consisted mainly of middle-aged staff. During the meetings, participants spoke openly about accumulated exhaustion and signs of professional burnout. Considerable attention was paid to the specific nature of educators' work in wartime: organising activities in shelters, interacting with children after night-time shelling, and coping with the emotional challenges faced by kindergarten staff on a daily basis.

Together, the participants examined signs of emotional overload, ways of recognising them, and procedures for referring children and parents to a psychologist when necessary. They were also provided with contact details for services and specialists that the kindergarten can turn to for psychological support. After the meetings, three teachers expressed a wish to receive individual psychological help and support.

An important part of the work involved helping the teachers replenish their inner resources and find ways to support their own emotional well-being. Once attention had been given to the needs of the teachers themselves, a separate focus was placed on how children and parents cope with stressful events. The sessions with the teachers were emotionally charged; some topics were sensitive and brought tears to their eyes, while others were inspiring and provided new tools. The teachers, just like the children, played, created and supported one another.

We invite you to watch this one-minute video of sessions with the kindergarten staff:

WATCH NOW

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tlnTZX-YBPTI2QRzileMIV95XjY2md-7/view?usp=sharing>



TEACHERS' FEEDBACK ON THE PROGRAMME



FEEDBACK FROM TEACHER NATALIA HONCHARUK:

'Today, it is particularly important for children to have adults around them who can not only teach, but also support them, help them overcome difficulties and maintain their inner balance. That is precisely why taking part in the 'Safe Space' programme has been a valuable professional experience for me.

During the sessions, I discovered many new approaches to working with children and received practical advice on interacting with pupils during periods of stress, change and adaptation. It was particularly useful that all the recommendations can be easily applied in my day-to-day work with children.'

It is impressive just how well thought-out and meaningfully organised the project has been. Every meeting took place in an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and support. Thanks to this, participants were able not only to gain new knowledge, but also to share their own experiences and find answers to pressing professional questions.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ms Olena Tkachenko for her dedication, professionalism and ability to connect with everyone. Her energy, openness and genuine care created a special atmosphere that made us want to learn and grow.

I wish the 'Safe Space' project every success in its future endeavours, new opportunities for growth and even more grateful participants. Your work is of great importance and helps to make our children's childhoods more peaceful, safe and happy.'





FEEDBACK FROM OLGA TUNDRA, A KINDERGARTEN TEACHER:

'I would like to express my deep gratitude to the organisers and specialists of the 'Safe Space' project for their high level of professionalism and significant contribution to the mental health of the younger generation.

The programme is extremely well structured, with methods tailored to children's needs, helping them cope effectively with the stress, anxiety and emotional strain of modern life.

Special thanks go to the psychologist, Ms Olena Tkachenko, for creating a trusting atmosphere, and for her sensitivity and expertise in her work. The self-regulation and support skills acquired are invaluable.

I wish the project every success in its future development, and I wish the specialists strength and inspiration in this vital mission.'

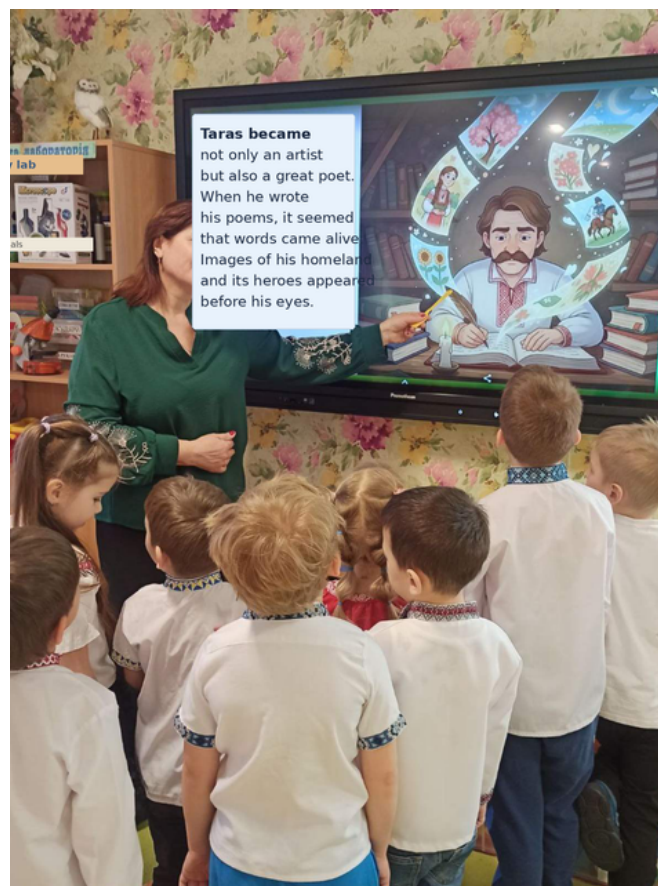
FEEDBACK FROM TEACHER TETIANA KRYVENKO:

'The sessions of the 'Safe Space' programme became a genuine place of trust, support and sincere communication for our children. During the sessions, the children learnt to better understand their feelings and emotions, talked about love, joy, sadness, fear and anger, played interesting games, drew pictures, and shared their thoughts and experiences.

The sessions focusing on the emotion of anger were particularly valuable. The children learnt why we might get angry, why we need this emotion, and how to express their feelings safely without harming themselves or those around them.

Thanks to the professionalism, kindness and sincerity of the psychologists Yevheniia, Olga and Anzhela, the children felt at ease, safe and confident. They looked forward to every session, eagerly ran to the sessions and happily took part in all the activities.

For us adults, these sessions were also extremely beneficial, as they helped us to better understand the children's emotional world, their needs and their experiences. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the psychologists for their care, support, warmth and the important work they do, which helps children to grow up emotionally resilient, open-minded and happy!'



WORKING WITH PARENTS

As part of our work with parents, a series of meetings was held (7 joint meetings and 26 feedback sessions with families) in a hybrid format (offline meetings at the kindergarten and online): an introductory presentation of the programme, a training session on children's reactions to stress, a final meeting with the children, and a separate feedback session for families. The overall aim of the meetings was to familiarise participants with the programme, raise awareness about the effects of stress, support parents' understanding of the processes taking place in their children, and provide final feedback upon completion of the programme. Throughout the programme, a positive trend in parental engagement was observed: from initial wariness, anxiety and a large number of questions to openness, active participation and gratitude for the support received. With each session, parents increasingly shared their own experiences, discussed the challenges of raising children and exchanged useful ideas with one another. Trust in the psychologists grew noticeably, as evidenced by their willingness to talk about personal experiences, seek individual counselling and ask complex questions regarding their children's development and emotional well-being. Tension levels gradually decreased during the group sessions, although certain topics touched upon the parents' traumatic experiences related to the war and personal losses, and required additional psychological support. In the parent-child sessions, a strengthening of the emotional bond between children and adults was observed: parents became more actively involved in group games, supported their children and enjoyed spending time with them. The children showed a high level of motivation to take part in the sessions; they looked forward to their parents' arrival, recalled material from previous sessions and applied the knowledge they had gained in their interactions. Despite external difficulties linked to air-raid alerts, changes to the timetable and participants' fatigue, interest in the programme remained high, and families were keen for the sessions to continue. There was a significant increase in parents' demand for psychological support, both for their children and for themselves, which indicates that trust in the specialists is developing and that they recognise the importance of psychological support. Individual consultations made it possible to address the families' specific needs and, in some cases, to refer a child or mother in good time for further individual psychological support. Overall, the implementation of the programme helped to raise parents' psychological awareness, improve the quality of parent-child interaction, and strengthen the sense of support and security within families.



PARENTS' FEEDBACK ON THE PROGRAMME



FEEDBACK FROM MARIA GAKH AND HER SON DANI:

'I would like to sincerely thank the 'Safe Space' programme team for the opportunity to be part of it. For our family, this was not just a series of sessions, but genuine support and a resource during such a difficult period in our lives.

We are an internally displaced family, so, like many other families, we have experienced many changes, the loss of our familiar surroundings and the need to start all over again. That is precisely why it was so important for us that our child had a place where they would feel safe, be able to openly express their emotions and find support.

For me personally, this programme has become even more valuable, as I am currently expecting my second child. As a mum, it was important for me to better understand my child's inner world, to learn how to support him through his experiences, and to create an atmosphere of trust and calm at home. During the programme, I noticed that my child has become more open and self-confident, has learnt to express their feelings better and interacts more easily with their peers. The sessions with the psychologists and the advice for parents have also helped me to take a fresh look at parenting and my daily interactions with my child.

It was particularly valuable that, at the end of the programme, we received personalised feedback, our child's creative work and useful advice. This isn't just a memento of our participation in the programme, but something that will continue to help us in the future.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the entire 'Safe Space' team for their professionalism, warmth and genuine love for children. In this day and age, projects like this are incredibly important, as they help children feel safe and secure, and help parents find support and reassurance that they are not alone.'

FEEDBACK FROM TYMOFII'S MOTHER, OLENA BORODINA:

'I would like to express my gratitude and support for the 'Safe Space' programme at our kindergarten. There were lots of interesting and useful sessions; in particular, my son told me about how he learnt to give compliments to other children, about the 'candle' game, about the need to respect others and speak up when you're holding a ball, and also about playing with soap bubbles.

There were also discussions on the topic of fear, which we hadn't previously addressed in our family, and thanks to the sessions with the psychologists, we discussed this concept, learnt about each other's fears, offered support and talked through the issue. This is important in this day and age.

Thank you for your work and for not being indifferent; thank you for the feedback and for communicating with parents. I was told about my son and how he behaves when I'm not around – this is very interesting and valuable. I wish you every success and prosperity!

We look forward to more! ❤️'



INTERACTION WITH TRAINEES

There were five trainees at the 'Kraina Dytynstva' kindergarten : Oleksandra Melnyk, Anna Kaidash and Olga Kravchenko – Master's students in psychology; Anzhela Karas, an analytically oriented psychologist; and Olga Fal, an art therapist.

Each of the trainees gained experience observing sessions and assisting the mentor while they were taking place, as well as leading parts of the sessions independently with the children. An important part of their training was the mentoring discussions, during which the trainees learnt to analyse group dynamics and children's behaviour, and reflected on their own actions while leading the sessions. The trainees then continued their training through supervision sessions, during which they prepared questions that concerned them and brought up complex emotions: exhaustion, anxiety, fear, confusion, anger and despair, as well as feelings of helplessness. During these supervision sessions, these feelings were explored and contained, while the supervision group sought solutions and theoretical explanations for the processes taking place both within the children's groups and within the adult team.

We also spent a great deal of time adapting the programme for one of the groups, which required more attention, additional play materials and greater resources for containment. The group was very restless, and we selected specific exercises for them to find a way to manage the anxiety that was causing this restlessness. It did not happen straight away, but we succeeded. During the reporting period, **33 supervision sessions** were held to support the programme's implementation at the centre and to assist the specialists in their work with the children's groups. At this centre, we managed to involve five trainee staff members in the programme, each of whom is showing positive progress in their professional development.

One of the most significant achievements was Olga's employment; she had already joined the kindergarten team while undertaking her work placement as part of the 'Safe Space' programme. To support her professional integration, Restart Foundation organises weekly supervision sessions, which help her to better understand the needs of children and parents, as well as the specificities of working in a pre-school setting.

Another trainee is already successfully using the programme's tools at the school where she works, while another is implementing the 'Safe Space' programme at her kindergarten.

Special mention should be made of Oleksandra, who is undertaking the programme for the second time and is finalising her training to become a certified trainer for the 'Safe Space' programme. This will enable her to independently implement the programme in other educational institutions and share its practices with other professionals.

Thus, the programme not only trains individual professionals but also contributes to a systematic increase in the number of qualified specialists who can provide psychological support to children and parents in Ukraine. It is important that participants receive not only high-quality training but also the opportunity to undertake practical placements and continue to benefit from professional supervisory support, which ensures the sustainability of their development and the high quality of their work.

FEEDBACK FROM TRAINEES



FEEDBACK FROM ANNA K Aidash:

'My name is Anna. I work as a practical psychologist in a state-run kindergarten. To improve my professional skills and gain new experience of working with children, I joined the 'Safe Space' programme.

Over the course of three months, I underwent training and practical placement under the guidance of my mentor, Olena. During this time, I gained a great deal of useful knowledge and practical skills, which I am already applying in my work with children.

I found the training on methods for working with children's emotions, developing emotional dialogue skills, creating a safe environment and supporting children's psychological well-being particularly valuable. I have learnt to better understand children's needs, help them express their feelings and establish healthy personal boundaries.

I was very impressed that the programme is free of charge and offers psychologists the opportunity to receive high-quality training and support from experienced specialists.

This is extremely important for the professional development of specialists working with children in the challenging conditions of war.

I am sincerely grateful to the 'Safe Space' project team for the experience, knowledge, support and opportunity for professional growth I have gained. Taking part in the programme has been a valuable step in my development as a psychologist and has helped me become more confident in my work with children.'

FEEDBACK FROM OLEKSANDRA MELNYK:

'Completing my placement as part of the 'Safe Space' project was one of the most valuable stages of my professional training.' This is my second time taking part in the project, and I deliberately chose to do so again because it combines a modern scientific approach with practical tools for working with children, teachers and parents.

During the placement, I had the opportunity to act as an observer, an assistant and a session leader, which allowed me not only to gain practical skills but also to appreciate the true value of the profession of a psychologist. It was particularly important for me to realise just how crucial a safe environment, emotional support and a partnership-based approach with the child are. The best proof of the project's effectiveness was the genuine enthusiasm of the children, who eagerly looked forward to every new session.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ms Olena, Ms Oksana and the entire project team for their professionalism, support and the opportunity to learn through practice. 'Safe Space' is an extremely important and high-quality project that helps to create a psychologically safe environment for children, supports parents and educators, and nurtures a new generation of specialists.



And the most important thing I can congratulate myself on is that, having successfully completed this course, I have received the 'Safe Space Trainer' certificate! For this, I am sincerely grateful to Olena Tkachenko and Oksana Zaleska, who helped me along this journey.

I am truly proud of this achievement, as it is the result of my hard work, study and desire to develop as a future psychologist. For me, this certificate is not only confirmation of the knowledge and skills I have acquired, but also another important step on the path to the profession I have chosen with all my heart.'

A COMMENT FROM THE SCHOOL'S HEADTEACHER, LESIA BRATANOVA:

'For our school, taking part in the 'Safe Space' programme was not merely the implementation of an important project, but a genuine partnership centred on the children, their families and the teaching staff.

I am sincerely grateful to the child psychologist, NAUKMA trainer and programme coordinator Olena Tkachenko, and to the psychologist and project mentor Yevheniia Zavorotynska for their high level of professionalism, sensitivity, tolerance and incredible dedication to their work.

Throughout the programme, the team worked with the children, helping them to better understand their emotions and restore a sense of safety and trust. Working with parents was also crucial; they were given the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of their children, to pay attention to their experiences and, where necessary, to receive further professional support.



Working with teaching staff was of particular value to our organisation. In today's challenging circumstances, our team gained not only practical knowledge and tools for working with children, but also the necessary emotional support and resources for their future work.

We sincerely appreciate that, despite power cuts and adverse weather conditions, Olena Tkachenko and Yevheniia Zavorotynska always found a way to be there for us, to hold meetings, to offer support and advice, and to seek solutions. Their compassion, humanity and ability to understand everyone's needs have set an example for us of what it truly means to serve one's profession.

For me, as the headteacher, their openness to dialogue, wise advice and willingness to support us on key issues concerning the school's development were of immense value. It is thanks to people like this that trust is built, teams are strengthened and an environment is created in which children, parents and teachers feel heard and protected.

On behalf of the entire team, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your hard work, care and the warmth you so generously give to others.'

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Overall reach. As part of the implementation of the 'Safe Space' programme at State kindergarten School No. 532 'Land of Childhood', support was provided to **126 project participants**: pre-school children, parents, kindergarten teachers, the school's administration, trainees and a team of specialists. A total of **223 activities** were carried out, including group sessions with children, meetings with parents, individual feedback sessions for families, work with teachers, supervision sessions, mentoring discussions and organisational collaboration with the management. In this way, the programme worked not only with the children, but with the entire network of adults who influence a child's daily sense of security.

Results for the children. A key outcome was a positive trend in the development of emotional regulation, social interaction and the children's ability to safely express complex emotions. Through play, creativity, movement, metaphorical imagery and repetitive rituals, the children gradually learnt to recognise and name emotions, wait their turn, accept rules, ask for help and return to a state of calm after excitement or frustration. Even in the more challenging groups, where there was initially greater impulsivity, chaos and difficulties with boundaries, by the end of the cycle the children demonstrated greater engagement, cohesion and readiness for collaborative activities.

Support from adults. The programme became an important source of support for parents and kindergarten staff, who are also affected by the chronic stress of the war. Parents gradually moved from wariness to greater trust, active participation and a willingness to seek psychological support. Educators were given the space to

reflect on their own exhaustion, gain a better understanding of children's reactions to stress, and acquire practical tools to support children in the day-to-day life of the kindergarten. This strengthened the adults' ability to be a stable, attentive and supportive presence for the children.

Fostering a culture of seeking support from the psychologist. One of the key outcomes was the gradual development of an understanding of the psychologist's role and professional expertise among children, parents and staff. The psychologist began to be seen not merely as a specialist for crisis or 'problematic' situations, but as a partner in the child's development, family support and the strengthening of the teaching team. The children gained experience of regular, warm contact with psychologists through play and creative activities; parents received professional feedback and advice; and kindergarten staff gained experience of collaborating with the psychologist in providing day-to-day support for the children.

Lasting changes within the kindergarten. The programme helped foster a culture of psychological awareness within the kindergarten: staff began to discuss more openly the children's emotional well-being, the impact of stress and war on behaviour, the need for adult support, and the importance of partnership with parents. A key systemic outcome was the appointment of a psychologist to the kindergarten's staff: one of the programme's trainees joined the kindergarten team and continued working there as a specialist. This lays the foundations for organising systematic, stable and long-term psychological support at the kindergarten following the project's completion.

Professional development of specialists. The project has also strengthened the professional capacity of the trainee teachers, who have gained experience in observing, assisting, leading parts of lessons, analysing group dynamics, and taking part in mentoring discussions and supervision sessions. Some of the trainees are already using the programme's tools in their own educational settings, which extends the project's impact beyond a single institution and lays the groundwork for the programme's further roll-out.

Thus, the programme's implementation has shown that even amidst war, air-raid alerts, exhaustion and instability, it is possible to create a regular, safe space for children where they can play, be creative, talk about their feelings and rely on caring adults. The programme has strengthened the children's resilience, supported parents and carers, promoted the professional development of staff, and initiated lasting changes in the institution's psychological culture. It is precisely such systematic and regular interventions that lay the foundation for children's resilience and help the kindergarten become an environment of care, stability and hope.