

## INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT 2024

### IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATION

International Charitable Foundation “Caritas Ukraine”

### PROJECT TITLE

Child Friendly Space for the War Affected Children in Berdychiv

### COUNTRY / DIOZESE / PROVINCE / PROJECT AREA

Ukraine, Zhytomyr region, Berdychiv

### IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

Start	01.04.2024	End	31.03.2025	Duration	12 months
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### REPORTING PERIOD

From	01.04.2024	To	30.06.2024	Submission deadline	20.07.2024	Date report submitted	22.07.2024
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### 1. OVERALL GOAL (IMPACT)

The main goal of the project - to provide protection services and to create inclusive safe spaces for children in Ukraine by operating child-friendly space in Berdychiv.

### TARGET GROUP(S) / BENEFICIARIES

#### Direct beneficiaries:

conflict-affected girls and boys of different ages (from 2 years to 17 years), (IDPs, on the transit way, the local population according the vulnerability criteria)

The project aimed to cover a total of **300** children (**220** children in the stationary CFS and **80** children in mobile CFS), **140** parents/caregivers

will benefit from consultations, joint events for children and parents, other activities that will be proposed within the project.

As of the 30/06/2024 the total numbers of the project beneficiaries are **143** children and **42** parents/caregivers (see the breakdown by gender, age and vulnerability criteria below).

#### Numbers according to sex:

<i>Children total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Parents/ caregivers</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>
143	72	71	42	1	41

**Numbers according to age:**

2-6 y.o.	7-10 y.o.	11-14 y.o.	15-17 y.o.
59	53	25	6

**Numbers according to vulnerability criteria\*:**

IDP families	49	children raised by other relatives (because of the war, they stayed with their grandmother/aunt, etc.)	-	
families with many children and low income	19	families of the deceased	2	
families of military personnel (father or mother at the front)	96	children with special educational needs (autism, speech delay, light developmental disorders etc)	14	
single parents	-	Other	-	

\*Some people could belong to two and more criteria.

<b>Total number of children covered</b>	143	<b>Total number of parents/caregivers covered</b>	42
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### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

The activities of the Charitable Foundation "Caritas Berdychiv of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church" cover the territory of ten territorial communities of Berdychiv district and six territorial communities of Zhytomyr district.

Given that the war in Ukraine is in its active phase, the number of affected people continues to grow, and the social and humanitarian status of those at risk is deteriorating.

According to the Department of Social Protection of Berdychiv City Council, there are about 7,000 people with IDP status in the community.

Berdychiv district has a large number of military facilities. These include military units, training centres, and the centre of the Special Operations Forces. The community has repeatedly suffered from shelling, and there is a high probability of rocket attacks in the future.

There are thousands of military personnel in the region who are defending the territorial integrity of our country. Therefore, families are left alone with their own pain of losing relatives in the war, and children are experiencing long-term separation from their relatives (father or mother in the military). Caritas is providing support for the families of those deceased or recognized as missing. Currently, 240 families in the Berdychiv territorial community have lost a father or mother at the frontline. At the moment, there is no increase in the number of children with IDP status, but the number of local families with the vulnerability category of families of fallen soldiers is increasing. Military families face major problems due to the long-term absence of a family member. The number of children experiencing the stressful effects of war has increased.

In cooperation with the Berdychiv District Military Administration, Caritas was involved in

responding to and supporting internally displaced persons from frontline settlements in Donetsk Oblast, who arrived in Berdychiv by 32 evacuation trains (they come every eight days). Our specialists provided psychological assistance to the evacuees, psychologists worked with children immediately at the railway station while their parents were registering, and social workers, together with numerous volunteers, provided evacuees with hot meals, warm drinks and clothes. The response of Caritas Berdychiv UGCC to the evacuees, most of whom belonged to vulnerable and low-income families, continues. Thus, mobile visits of specialists were conducted to places of temporary residence of IDPs (these are equipped educational institutions, preschools, and village outpatient clinics). At the same time, our psychologists and social pedagogues conduct regular visits to shelters where they work with children to improve their emotional state, and teach parents to support their children and fulfill their parental responsibilities.

#### 4. OTCOMES

Oc 1.	Provide an inclusive space for children where they can stay safe, play and spend quality time with other children
Oc 2.	To improve access to alternative learning opportunities and educational support for war-affected children
Oc. 3	Contribute to improvement of psychosocial wellbeing by creating a favourable atmosphere and by providing psychological consulting for children and adults

## 5. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### OUTCOME 1.

#### **The activities as planned:**

- 1.1. Provide an inclusive safe space for children to spend their time, socialize with peers, play, learn, and participate in creative activities. (two-three times per week for each group)
- 1.2. Add or update the necessary furniture and computer equipment at the CFS.
- 1.3. Enroll children with special educational needs for activities, and form groups.
- 1.4. Launch the activities for the groups.
- 1.5. Enter the information about all the beneficiaries into the Caritas Ukraine database. This will reach two goals: firstly, avoid duplication of services for the same beneficiaries, and secondly, provide the beneficiaries with assistance within other Caritas Ukraine programs if Caritas Ukraine staff identify such needs.
- 1.6. Spread the information about the CFS in local communities to raise awareness about them (Monthly).
- 1.7. Spread the information about Caritas Ukraine services to increase awareness and provide necessary access to them for local communities (on a regular basis).

#### **The activities implemented:**

1. Caritas Berdychiv UGCC has an inclusive safe space for children where they spend time, communicate with peers, play, learn and participate in creative activities on a systematic basis.
2. A laptop for the manager and three tablets for the specialists were purchased to ensure quality data collection and processing, registering new project participants, working on the database and preparing other documents under the project.
3. Children with special educational needs are enrolled in individual and group lessons with a speech therapist and psychologists. The formed groups work systematically according to the schedule.
4. Caritas Berdychiv employees regularly enter up-to-date information about all beneficiaries into the Caritas Ukraine database.
5. The information is disseminated through social networks: Facebook, Telegram and Instagram (posting a weekly schedule of classes, registration via Google form, presenting of the events held), and a parental chat in Viber.

#### **Justification of the deviation (if any)**

no deviation

### OUTCOME 2

#### **The activities as planned:**

- 2.1. Social pedagogue will conduct classes of informal learning according to the age of children every day (5 days a week) following the schedule. (on a regular basis)
- 2.2. Animator will conduct entertaining and developmental activities using game techniques and will organize events for children. (on a regular basis)
- 2.3. The CFS team will conduct regular joint events for children and their parents/caregivers: visits to theaters, cinemas, trips around the cities, and others. (on a regular basis)
- 2.4. Speech therapist will conduct individual lessons according to the developed plan for every child and assist children with special educational needs during the group activities when needed.

#### **The activities implemented:**

- 2.1. According to the weekly schedule, the following age groups are formed and meet regularly:  
Club of future first-graders (4-6 years old).  
During the classes, children are prepared for school, trained in logical and mathematical activities,

coherent speech, expand their knowledge of the basics of literacy and speech sound culture, are practiced in drawing, applique, and construction tasks; they develop logical thinking, attention, creative imagination, and ear for music.

#### Creative workshop (7-10 years old).

The creative process in the group allows children to express their feelings and emotions, relieve stress and fatigue, promotes the development of imagination, concentration, memory, and creative and logical thinking, through work with various natural and ecological materials, soft plasticine, the use of natural threads, harnesses and ropes with the addition of various decorations, wooden sticks.

#### The Territory of the Cools for 11-13 year olds and 14-17 year olds.

Cools' territory is a place where teenagers feel free. The classes include trainings, competitions, master classes, excursions, music and environmental activities, and volunteering.

The Territory of the Cools is a place where teenagers can attend events designed to improve their mental health:

- Secrets of successful communication: how to build healthy relationships with peers and parents.
- Stress management: techniques and tips to reduce anxiety.
- Self-esteem and self-confidence: how to develop a positive self-image.
- Career guidance: help in choosing a future profession.
- Conflicts and ways to resolve them: learning to find compromises and communicate effectively.
- We are moving forward with the help of our teenagers' creative ideas!

2.2. Animators conduct outdoor games, logic and board games with children on a regular basis - the territory of "Play. Dream. Rejoice.", "Board Games Club".

The beneficiaries are systematically involved in watching cartoons and movies, and taking tours of the city's architectural monuments.

During long-term events, social pedagogues are involved in conducting exercises, presenting riddles, logical and intellectual exercises to relieve stress.

We have organized and conducted a quest with sports competitions. And held a mass event during a mobile visit to the Hlukhivtsi community on the eve of Children's Day.

2.3. The CFS team organizes the following regular joint activities for children and their parents/guardians:

Creative workshops with parents, city tours, excursions to the Local History Museum of Berdychiv, to the All-Ukrainian Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Holy Scapular.

2.4. A speech therapist systematically and regularly provides professional assistance to children from vulnerable families who have difficulties in sound pronunciation, lexical-grammatical, phonetic-phonemic speech, its rhythmicity and fluency, as well as speech disorders of children with special educational needs.

Children have the opportunity to get a comprehensive speech examination conducted by a speech therapist in the speech therapy room. After assessing the level of speech skills, the speech therapist, if necessary, prescribes individual and subgroup speech therapy sessions in the speech therapy room or sensory room.

Correctional work for children involves an interesting form of play, the use of a large number of toys, manuals, printed didactic materials and close cooperation with parents who are partners in speech therapy.

#### **Justification of the deviation (if any)**

no deviation

#### **OUTCOME 3:**

##### **The activities as planned:**

3.1. Psychologist will conduct regular group activities with the children (such as trainings, games) to increase the resilience of children and improve their capacities to cope with stress. (on regular basis)

3.2. Psychologist will conduct joint child-parental activities for children and their parents/caregivers to improve relationships between them, make families closer, and provide quality time for them. (on regular basis)

3.3. Psychologist will provide psychological consultations for children and adults according to their requests and will refer them to specialized assistance if needed. (on regular basis)

**The activities implemented:**

3.1. Psychologists conduct regular classes with children, such as art space for children; clay therapy; florotherapy; isotherapy; and sand therapy, as well as training, cognitive skills development, a group of mutual support for teenagers, and games with a psychological focus.

3.2. In their activities, the CFS employees actively apply the Emotional First Aid Kit program, which aims to develop children's basic social and emotional skills, as well as prepare them to overcome difficult situations on their own; strengthen stress resistance, self-confidence, and a positive thinking and optimistic view on life. The program is designed to be implemented by social pedagogues and psychologists with children aged 7-13. The Art Space for Parents group was created.

3.3. Psychologists provide individual psychological counseling to children and adults in accordance with their requests, such as increased anxiety, low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, aggressive behavior, and, if necessary, refer them to specialized assistance.

**Justification of the deviation (if any)**

no deviation

**6. ACHIEVED RESULTS**

Outcome 1:		
Objective	Intermediate Results Achieved	Indicators
Providing a safe and inclusive space for children where they can stay safe, play and spend quality time with other children	a. CFS is operational and fully equipped for activities with children and their parents/guardians for project goals achievement.	The child-friendly space operates in two stationary locations that have rooms filled with the necessary equipment: Tables, armchairs, frameless chairs, soft flooring, furniture for organizing and storing materials. The rooms are filled with a sufficient number of different toys and educational games, as well as materials for working with children. There is a specialized resource room and a speech therapy room equipped with high-quality and diverse equipment for working with children with special educational needs. Thanks to the project, <b>1 laptop</b> for a manager and <b>3 tablets</b> for specialists were purchased
	b. Children are provided with the possibility to visit the CFS on a regular basis (2 times a week for 3 months)	<b>143 children in total:</b> girls – <b>71</b> boys - <b>72</b>
	c. Children with special educational needs benefit from CFS activities	<b>14 children</b> with special educational needs
	d. Beneficiaries report an improvement in their personal well-being and emotional state	<b>100 %</b> of beneficiaries
Outcome 2:		

Improved access to alternative learning opportunities and educational support for war-affected children	a. Children take part in educational activities	- <b>42 children</b> : - Types of educational activities: Speech therapy and preparation for school
	b. Beneficiaries are satisfied with the quality and relevance of the educational activities	<b>100 %</b> of beneficiaries
	c. The displaced population living in at least 2 shelters or remotod communities have benefited from mobile CFS events in their territory	- <b>66 children</b> covered by mobile services - List of shelters/remote communities <b>village of Vakulenchuk, Chudnivska community;</b> <b>village of Sadky, Berdychiv community;</b> <b>village of Kashperivka, Hlukhivtsi community (Vinnytsia region).</b>
<b>Outcome 3:</b>		
The psychological well-being of conflict-affected boys, girls, women and men is improved and their individual resilience is strengthened.	a. Children and parents received psychological individual or group consulting	- <b>106 persons</b> - <b>72 individual consultations</b>
	b. Level of satisfaction with the consultations	<b>100 %</b> of beneficiaries
	c. Parental or child-parents group meetings with psychologists are provided	- <b>6 meetings</b> of parents with a psychologist - <b>1 child-parents group</b> (Early development group)

## 7. MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY:

*Monitoring of the level of satisfaction with services provided. Monitoring tools used and the information received*

Monitoring tools have been improved: questionnaires have been developed to collect qualitative indicators (both by children and parents). The results of the questionnaires allow us to analyze the needs of beneficiaries and better respond to their needs.

25 parents who answered for their children, 4 teenagers and 7 parents who answered for themselves were interviewed. According to the monitoring report from the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, visits to the Child-Friendly Space have received positive feedback, with children and parents satisfied with attending events and reporting improvements in their psycho-emotional state. The children felt supported and cared for, which had a positive impact on their mental health. But despite of the clear positive results, current activities are not sufficient to meet the needs of children in full. If possible, it is important to expand the number of services provided, and to continue the project activities, as well as provide more consultations with speech therapist. This will help to create a more stable and supportive environment for children.

Recommendations, suggestions, and feedback from beneficiaries:

- "Everything is great!"
- "Keep up the good work"
- "Need more locations"
- "More activities for kids"

## 8. ECOCOMPONENT

*Describe the implemented activities*

During the preparatory classes for school, children discover the world of plants listed in the Red Book of Ukraine, knowledge of which helps to form environmental awareness and foster a responsible attitude

towards nature, their importance for the ecosystem, and learn how everyone can contribute to the preservation of our nature.

Eco-component in creative activity:

1. The use of recycled materials, which promotes environmental awareness and responsibility for the environment.
2. Conversations, environmental games, educational games made from waste material. Thus, teaching parents to reuse various things together with the children at their homes.
3. The eco-component in the psychologist's work is implemented during art therapy, in particular clay therapy, florotherapy, which includes the use of natural materials.
4. The youngest children are constantly taught about the value of nature and how to treat it with care. In this way, we form eco-consciousness from early childhood.
5. To teach children the habit of not using plastic bags, we held workshops on painting eco-bags for children's own use.

In the CFS, we use eco-dishes and wooden games.

## **9. CHILD PROTECTION**

*How child protection was ensured in the centers?*

The protection of children is guaranteed by the "Policy for the Protection of Children's Rights of Caritas Berdychiv", as well as the Caritas-Ukraine Safeguarding Policy.

## **10. CHALLENGES IN THE PROJECT ENVIRONMENT AND HOW THEY WERE RESOLVED**

*Hindering factors in the project implementation, risk mitigation*

The security situation at the Caritas Berdychiv UGCC location is consistently tense due to the constant threat of rocket attacks. Due to sudden air raids, sometimes it is hard for employees to plan their working hours well and fulfill their job responsibilities. Due to the large number of military units in the area, there is a high probability of rocket attacks.

The following security measures have been taken to mitigate the risks:

- Informing employees and beneficiaries about the nearest shelters (bomb shelters);
- Parents are obliged to pick up their children from the locations of Caritas Berdychiv during air raids;
- Studying and monitoring the security situation in the district.
- Preparation of security protocols for visits to the locations where Caritas Berdychiv operates.

## **11. LESSONS LEARNT AND PLANS FOR NEXT PROJECT PERIOD**

*Necessary changes and corrections, and useful lessons learnt, plans for next project period*

7 employees (manager, social pedagogue, animators and a psychologist) of project team attended the training "Innovative tools for working with children affected by war in child-friendly spaces", which was conducted by Caritas Ukraine specialists in June this year.

The specialists plan to implement the new techniques, exercises presented during the training in their work with younger children and teenagers.

In the next project period, we will introduce new activities: summer camps with Caritas, morning yoga, Judy Moody reading club, Happy English, guitar lessons from 0, and Mum's Hour.

Before the start of the new school year, we plan to hold a fundraising campaign "Schoolbag" to collect the necessary educational materials and schoolbags for those children who cannot afford to buy everything they need for school on their own.



## 12. PARTNERSHIPS

*Collaboration with national/international and governmental organizations, which gives an added value to the project*

### **State/public structures:**

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – provided additional financing for organizing 7 psycho-educational camps in the Carpathians. 23 children from CFS were involved.

Berdychiv National Police Department – a training on ‘Life Safety’ was conducted

Berdychiv City Council – discounted rent of premises

### **Local civic/community structures:**

Local History Museum of Berdychiv, All-Ukrainian Sanctuary of the Mother of God Holy Scapular – free guided tours for children and parents

NGO "CRiM-SOS" - training on First aid for staff and parents

Parish of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Vakulenchuk village – donated some materials for classes with children

Ukrainian Educational Platform - microgrant (furniture, equipment and materials for a speech therapy room).

Report prepared by:

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Zoriana Lukavetska, program manager

## Annex 1 – Pictures and publications

Photo	Date & description
 A photograph showing two children, a boy and a girl, sitting at a table and drawing on a white towel. They are using markers and have various drawing supplies like pens and markers on the table. The background features a banner with the text 'КАРИТАС БЕРДИЧІВ УГКЦ' and 'CARITAS BERDYCHIV UGCC' repeated.	<p>11.05.2024</p> <p>Creating an authentic towel for Mother's Day with volunteer Lilia Chebotar from Zhytomyr</p>
 A photograph showing a woman, Lilia Chebotar, standing in a room and presenting to a group of children. She is wearing a light-colored top and pants. The children are gathered around her, some looking at a drawing on the wall. The room has a wooden floor and a wall with a tree-like structure made of paper and string.	<p>29.05.2024</p> <p>Creating an authentic towel for Mother's Day with volunteer Lilia Chebotar from Zhytomyr</p>

14.06.2024

*Psycho-educational  
camp "New Breath" in  
the Carpathians.*



List of publications

<https://fb.watch/tkFt9MHKx7/>

<https://t.me/caritasberdychiv/3114>

<https://www.facebook.com/100005142376940/videos/1148470756607931/>

More photos here:

[https://caritasua-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/person/akilas\\_caritas\\_ua/EmksRXt0Q1ZHj7xf6mNWRIEBcCS0I6trCy0AYaRL7NJxCw?e=h1RlpJ](https://caritasua-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/person/akilas_caritas_ua/EmksRXt0Q1ZHj7xf6mNWRIEBcCS0I6trCy0AYaRL7NJxCw?e=h1RlpJ)