

# THE NEEDS AND ROLE OF PARAPROFESSIONALS (VOLUNTEERS) IN SOCIAL WORK WITH FAMILIES AND CHILDREN



## **OLHA BAIDAROVA**

scientific consultant and trainer of the  
International Leadership and Development Center,  
PhD in Psychology, Associate Professor at the  
Department of Social Rehabilitation and Social Pedagogy,  
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

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**A Family for Every Orphan**



# NGO "International Leadership and Development Center" [ildc.org.ua](http://ildc.org.ua)



we have been working since

**2007**



developed

**25**



training programs

conducted training for

**26 913**



social workers, specialists, volunteers, who work in social sphere, managers and leaders

we have

**30**



experts, practitioners, trainers in our team



we improve the professional competence of specialists in the field of child rights protection



we support organizations and teams during the war **(training, supervision, psychological consultations)**



we prevent emotional burnout among specialists in auxiliary professions



we provide socio-psychological support to Ukrainians during the war **(support groups, psychological consultations)**

# SITUATION BEFORE THE WAR



Deficitary and surplus approach  
to volunteering

**53,1%** - helping people in need, orphans and  
people with disabilities\*



Law of Ukraine "About volunteer  
activities" and amendments to it



Gradual professionalization of the  
volunteer sector



Ways of organizing volunteering: formal  
and informal, organized and  
spontaneous, collective and individual



Volunteer registries: official  
(National Social Service Agency,  
State Tax Service) and unofficial

\*Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine (2021).  
The condition of youth in Ukraine.  
A representative sociological research.

# CHALLENGES IN THE WARTIME



Migration of professionals and paraprofessionals



Significant number of new and inexperienced paraprofessionals



Decreased accessibility of family-oriented services from state and communal providers



Lack of recognition of paraprofessionals on a state level



Lack of competencies



Burnout (36% of charity sector workers have visible signs, while 35% are in the stage of its formation)\*

\*Zagoriy Foundation, Socioinform (2023).  
Research "Professional burnout of non-profit  
sector employees"

# FORMS AND COMMON ROLES OF VOLUNTEERS IN WORKING WITH FAMILIES AND CHILDREN



## Forms

- Public organizations - civil (children's, youth, sports, cultural and educational, women's, veterans') and religious (Christian)
- Individual volunteers (mentors, patrons, animators)



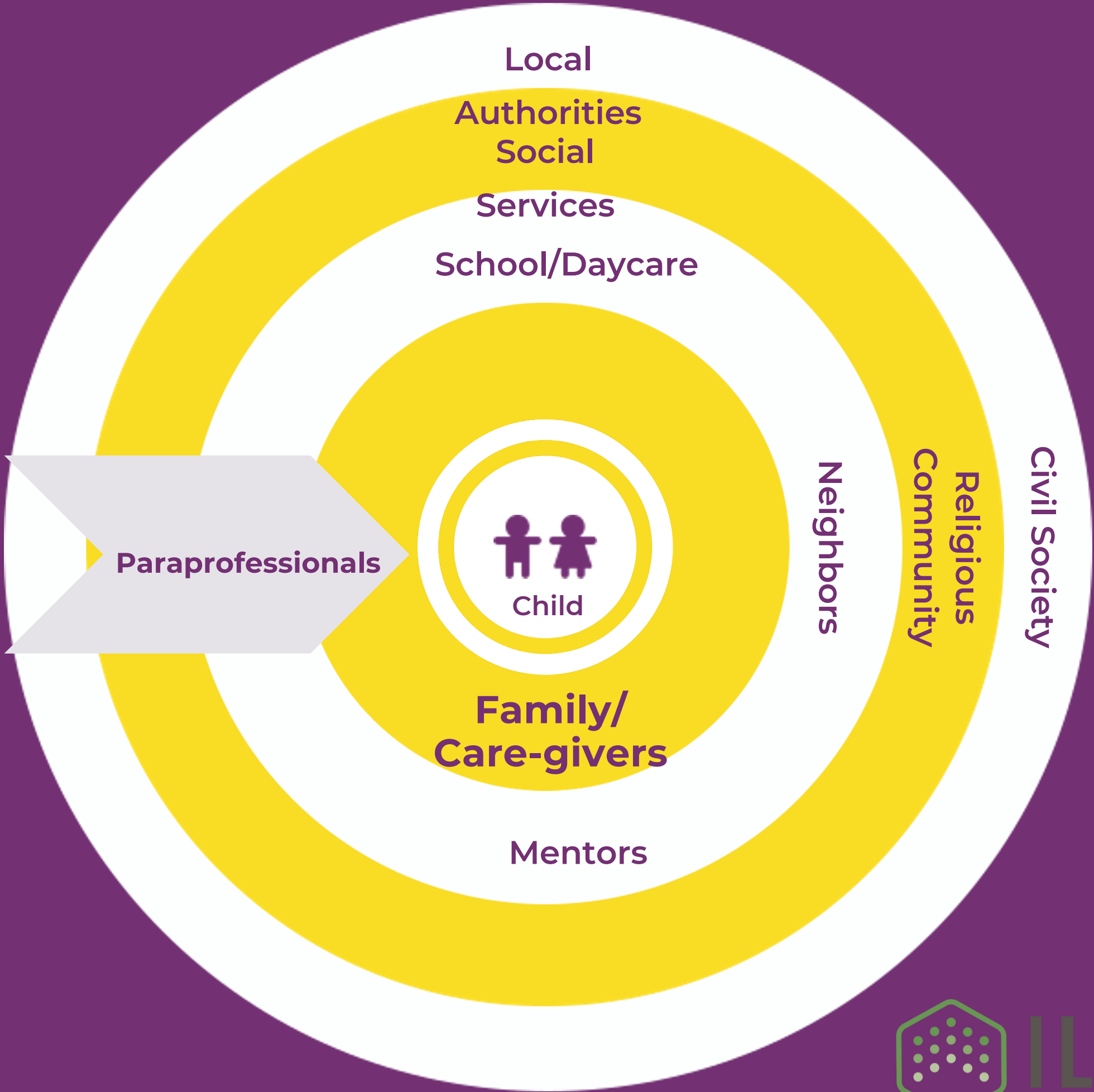
## Directions of work\*

- Evacuation and transportation of refugees and displaced persons
- Blood donation
- Search for children and their parents
- Seeking shelter
- Provision of clothing, food, medicine, basic necessities
- Informational support

\*Kolesnyk O. Volunteer organizations currently working in Ukraine. Finance.ua. URL: [https://finance.ua/ua/saving/volonterskieorganizacii-in Ukraine](https://finance.ua/ua/saving/volonterskieorganizacii-in-Ukraine)

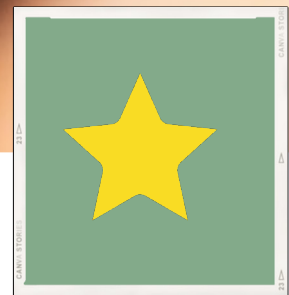


**OUR VISION**  
**THE ROLE OF**  
**PARAPROFESSIONALS**

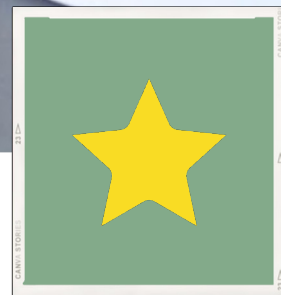


# Solutions for the paraprofessionals

who work with families and children



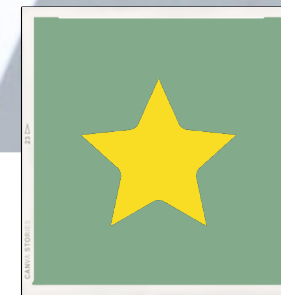
**training**



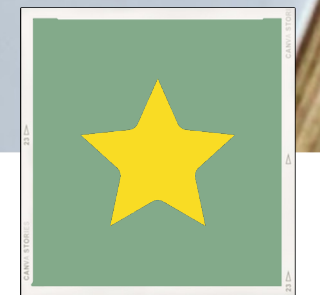
**coordination**



**professional support**  
(supervision,  
mentoring)



**burnout prevention**



**creating opportunities for transitioning to paid positions**

# Key competencies of paraprofessionals working with families and children\*

## Core competencies in working with families and children

Knowledge of the legal framework and ability to work effectively as part of the child protection system

Ability to support families to ensure the protection and well-being of children in accordance with the strategies of the three-level model

Ability to facilitate and maintain secure attachment between children and their families

Ability to develop and implement child placement plan in a manner that minimizes stress, prevents trauma, and supports placement stability and permanency

Ability to identify and respond to cases of child abuse

## Approaches to the work

- **Family-oriented**
- **Trauma-sensitive**
- **Resilient**

\*Karagodina, O., Baidarova, O., Fedchenkov, V. & Pykalo, I. (2021). Needs in Social Workers' Training to Protect the Rights of Children. The New Educational Review, Vol. 63, No. 1. P. 38-48. DOI:

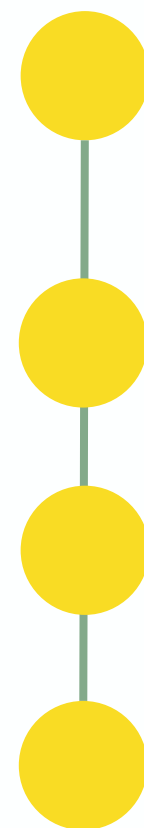
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# Key competencies of paraprofessionals working with families and children

Competencies in working with families and children in the context of ongoing war



**Understanding of the nature of political violence in the conditions of war, its consequences at the level of the individual, family, community and state, and the ability to use this knowledge to organize assistance**

**Ability to provide psychological first aid**

**Ability to deal with loss (of family, home, work, lifestyle)**

**Ability to build communication with veterans and their families, identify their needs and organize services accordingly**

# Training of

# paraprofessionals



## Developing professional competencies


### Training programs

- "From risk to sustainability: work with families in crisis"
- "Trauma, attachment, discipline: key aspects of assistance to orphans and children deprived of parental care"
- "Organization and conducting of support groups"

## Professional training and postgraduate qualification training in cooperation with educational institutions

- **Postgraduate qualification program** with NUKMA University "Fundamentals of social work"
- **Educational program with the Academy of Labor, Social Relations and Tourism** "Social work with families in crisis"


# Why are paraprofessionals critically important?



As a result of the war, Ukrainian society faced numerous social problems: poverty, internal and external displacement of families, law labor market, economic challenges, war trauma, children returning from orphanages to their biological families, etc.



The local government has limited resources to do their role.



Paraprofessionals can become a game changer to address families' needs and support the state in family-based care efforts.

# Key Points

**Recognise the unique role of paraprofessionals in the work with families and children in the community**

**Create opportunities for the professionalisation of paraprofessionals to strengthen social work workforce**

**Strengthen paraprofessionals through coordination, training, prevention of burnout, etc**

**Systematic, accessible professional training to develop professional competences that meets their needs is a main condition to the effectiveness of para-professional workforce**

