

# “Get up! There’s no school today, there’s a war on”

## HOW UKRAINIAN CHILDREN EXPERIENCED THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, AND HOW THEY PERCEIVED THE SITUATION AT THAT TIME

Maya Götz, Lara-Sophie Pohling, Anne Pütz

**In a qualitative study, 21 Ukrainian children (who had come to Germany as refugees) were asked about their experiences of the beginning of the war and their perceptions of the current situation. The article summarizes the role of the media and what children would like to see on television in this context.**

In the early hours of February 24, 2022, the Russian military began a bombardment and invasion of Ukraine, described as a “special military operation”. Children who live in a war zone are particularly affected by the events. They are immediate victims and are in danger of being injured or even killed. They endure traumatic experiences but generally have no time to deal with these emotional wounds. Everything they know – their previous experiences, everyday routines, the role of their parents etc. – crumbles more or less overnight, and they must adapt to life in a war zone or seek safety as refugees (Save the Children, 2021; Alhaj Hussein et al., 2022).

What form does this take in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine? What images and interpretations do Ukrainian children use to try and understand the situation? In spring and summer 2022, IZI conducted a qualitative study to explore this question, interviewing n=21 children from Ukraine who were living as refugees in Germany.

### THE STUDY

The study is based on interviews with 21 children aged 7 to 13 who had come to Germany from Ukraine as refugees. A sample of this size cannot claim general validity, but can – as a qualitative study – give insight into the experiences and inner pictures of some refugee children from Ukraine. With a gender distribution of 15 girls and 6 boys, the study focuses substantially more on the point of view of girls.

The method used was a semi-structured interview based on 8 main questions about the war against Ukraine. Drawings by children, expressing their experiences and feelings, have proven valuable as a method in qualitative research of this type (Muhati-Nyakundi, 2022; Walker et al., 2011), and have been used in multiple IZI studies, including those on the theme of “children and war” (Götz, 2007). We therefore asked the children, before the interviews, to draw whatever came into their minds in relation to the current situation in Ukraine, and what they would like to see on this topic in a TV programme for children. The method was the same as that used in interviews with children in Germany and Russia (see also Götz and Götz & Holler in this issue).

The interviews were conducted by a female interviewer with training in trauma pedagogy. To create an atmosphere of trust, the interpreting was done by

the children’s mothers or other people they knew well. The questions were played to the children in Ukrainian on a mobile phone, and their answers were then translated into German or English depending on linguistic ability. The statements were transcribed and translated. For checking purposes, the interviewer made notes of the key statements.<sup>1</sup> The interviews with the children were generally followed by an informative conversation with the mothers, which lasted up to 2 hours and showed how much the refugees needed an opportunity to talk.

The following article summarizes the results as they relate to the core research questions:

1. How do Ukrainian children describe the beginning of the war?
2. What inner pictures do the refugee children have of the current situation in Ukraine?
3. What would they like to see in a children’s TV programme about the situation?

### THE MORNING WHEN EVERYTHING CHANGED ...

In the interviews, the children describe how they heard about the beginning of the war. Almost all of them tell of the moment when their parents – usually the mother, but sometimes the father or both – told them that there was a war on.



Ill. 1: Nadiya (9) from Kharkiv draws 4 oversized rockets falling on buildings important in her everyday life (school, kindergarten, etc.)

**Taras**<sup>2</sup> (8) from Kherson: “I’d heard rockets flying past. I got up and my mother told me that I wasn’t allowed to go to school today because the war had started.”

**Daria** (11) from Kyiv still clearly remembers being woken by a rocket flying past. On her phone there were notifications from TikTok and YouTube that the war had started. Daria went out onto the balcony and saw a rocket destroy a large house not far away from her. Then she ran to her mother, who told her that the war had started. Before that, Daria hadn’t known what war actually was.

**Petro** (13), who actually lives in a children’s home in Bucha, but had gone to stay with a foster family, had a late start at school on the day the war started. But before he set out, his foster siblings came back from school and told him about the start of the war. He then looked for information on TikTok.

The older children in particular looked for information on the situation in the media. 7 out of 21 children mentioned linear television, and some mentioned the social media platforms TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and Telegram.

**Nadiya** (9) from Kharkiv recounts: “I heard a loud bang at 5.00 a.m. and thought it was just fireworks. And then

Mum said ‘Get up! There’s no school today, there’s a war on.’ (...) Then we turned on our TV and there was something about this war on every channel.” All the Ukrainian television stations that the families could access were transmitting a joint broadcast with information about the attack.

The war came as a total surprise, especially to the children. Before this most of them had no concept of what a war was. February 24, 2022 changed their everyday lives completely, and they learned what war can mean for those who are under attack.

## HOW FAMILIES ACTED IN THIS SITUATION

The parents of the children in this study tried to get themselves and their children to safety. Some fled the city on the same day and went to stay with close relatives in the country. The parents of **Oleg** (10), for example, took both their children and went to the grandmother in the country. They woke Oleg with the words: “Wake up, quick, we have to go!” About 10 minutes later they were sitting in the car. They left the city while it was still dark. Oleg didn’t understand the situation. Then they saw a rocket in

the sky, and suddenly everything was lit up by the explosion. Oleg said “Wow, that’s beautiful!”, then his parents explained what the rockets meant. For a week they hid in the grandmother’s cellar, but there were helicopters in the sky all the time, so the family decided to leave Ukraine.

Other families hid with their children and pets in basements or in windowless parts of their homes so they wouldn’t be hit by shattered windowpanes during explosions and bombings. The family of **Katia** (11) and **Ksenia** (7) spent several days and nights in the hallway because there were 2 protective walls there. Despite the war, there was also something nice about those nights – it was the first time that the 2 sisters had been allowed to sleep with their 4 dogs. Not everyone was at home when the war started. The family of **Oleksandr** (10), for example, was on holiday. Oleksandr’s great-uncle phoned the parents at 5.00 a.m. and said that the war had started and that they shouldn’t return to Ukraine.

The parents of the children in this study tried to get themselves and their children (and in most cases their pets) to safety. After a few days, unfortunately, many had to accept that the war was going to last for some time. Suppositions based on humanity or logic – e.g. that the Russians would only attack military bases, not residential areas in cities, and not villages far away from military bases – proved false. The only option left was to flee the country. In this situation, children had no choice of action. The parents made decisions and they had to follow. For many of them, this meant saying goodbye to their fathers and grandfathers, as well as traumatic experiences resulting from the threat to their physical safety, the interruption of their normal school and extra-curricular routines, separation from (or the death of) family members and friends, and the loss of familiar places (APA, 2018; see also Lopatovska in this issue).

## CHILDREN'S INNER PICTURES OF WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN UKRAINE

The children's actual experiences of war vary. Some have seen rockets hitting targets, known of Russian soldiers who were near their hiding places, or seen bombed cities from the train or car. But all the respondents have also seen media images of the situation. Their own inner pictures of the situation on site are based on all these impressions, pieces of information and media images. Inner pictures are ideas and patterns stored in the brain, which determine our thoughts, feelings and actions (Hüther, 2014). They are not a direct reflection of reality, even if they are the product of an attempt to represent reality. These representations are always symbolic and differ from person to person (Piaget & Inhelder, 1979, pp. 497 ff.). To assess their inner pictures, we asked the children to draw a picture of how they imagined the current situation in Ukraine. Another advantage of this method is that the multisensory nature of painting and drawing allows individuals to form new interpretations. Painting or drawing brings the children into contact with traumatic experiences. This can encourage a more meaningful interpretation of the experiences and facilitate adaptation to a changing world or a new environment. Drawing or painting allows children who have fled from war zones to reconstruct a mental map, restoring the orientation that has been destroyed by the events of the war (Jabbar & Betawi, 2019). The openness of the questions gives them the choice of how closely they want to refer to real experiences or difficult topics – or avoid this.

In the following discussion, prototypical cases are used to summarize the inner pictures, symbols and topics mentioned by the children in the study. The first step in our analysis was to count how many times each motif ap-



Ill. 2: Mykola (12) draws his experience of the Russian occupation of his place of residence, Bucha, in his foster family's basement

peared. Many children drew weapons (18 out of 21) and scenarios of attack (16 out of 21). Around half of the images showed buildings, mostly destroyed and/or on fire. About half the children drew soldiers (10 out of 21) and/or civilians (8 out of 21). Many of the civilians are explicitly depicted as sad. As was to be expected, the pictures revolve around a war of aggression with weapons, destruction, and people who are suffering. The in-depth analysis of the pictures and the descriptions given in the interviews showed typical, recurring themes.

### Scenarios of war and destruction

In the picture drawn by 9-year-old Nadiya from Kharkiv, 4 oversized rockets are falling on buildings that are already destroyed and burning (Ill. 1). Stick figures can be seen in the foreground. Nadiya describes it as follows: "A person who's on their own and crying because they don't have a house or people around them. They're just staying there and crying about the destroyed house." This is an image in which Nadiya attempts to comprehend the incomprehensible, showing people standing in despair

next to the burning ruins of their own lives. Her representation doesn't focus on the appearance of the people, who are drawn as stick figures. Instead she concentrates on what she wants to show, and labels the buildings – already burning – which are now under fire again, as school, hospital, kindergarten and house. "Those rockets, they're flying into the buildings, and there's rubbish [lying around], lots of people, they're all sad, because they don't have a house, just this destroyed building." It is striking that she draws the 4 rockets oversized and parallel to each other, aiming down towards the buildings. It was important to Nadiya to show that the Russian attacks are destroying infrastructure that is crucial for children. In contrast to the rockets, the people – "head footers", i.e. stick figures with arms and legs directly attached to the head – are small. Their main characteristic is their downturned mouths, indicating their unhappiness. In her picture, Nadiya, like other children, tries to evoke the unbelievable destruction the children are experiencing, the fact that public buildings are being destroyed, and that every element of everyday life is in ruins. To show this, the children



Ill. 3: Oxana (8) paints “how they kill people. How they try to kill people, and the people try to hide”

### Death and being killed

Another less common motif in the children’s drawings is dead people or people who are being shot. This does appear in 4 out of 21 pictures, however. The theme of “killing and dead people” is particularly obvious in the drawing by Oxana (8). She describes what she has drawn as follows: “How they kill people. How they try to kill people, and the people try to hide.” Her very striking picture shows 5 people who have been killed, of whom 4 are ascending to heaven (Ill. 3). A tank is shooting at the 2 people who are still alive, who are dressed in the colours of the Ukrainian flag.

generally draw burning multi-storey buildings, parts of which are already destroyed. A typical, frequently occurring theme in their inner pictures and drawings is the combination of scenarios of attack with oversized rockets, damaged apartment blocks or other urban buildings, and in some cases sad civilians. The children thus create a symbolic representation of the situation of the Ukrainian civilian population at the time of the study: they are under military attack, and can only look on helplessly as everything they know and every component of their lives is brutally destroyed.

### Overwhelming threat and hiding

In some cases the children explicitly draw themselves, their families, and what they have experienced. Mykola (12), who lives in a children’s home in Bucha, but then went to stay with a foster family, describes his picture: “That’s our house and us down here in the basement.” 4 small people can be seen in the bottom right-hand corner of the drawing. “That’s us and those are the bombs that are flying towards

us. And those are 2 men. They’re Russian soldiers.” (Ill. 2) Mykola’s foster mother explains the context: their village of Bucha was occupied by the Russians at the time, and armed Russian soldiers were patrolling near their house. Very close by there was a Russian defence system used to shoot down Ukrainian planes. In Mykola’s drawing, the house is surrounded by a picket fence, wrapped around it like a protective cloak. Outside the protective fence there are 2 armed soldiers, 3 large rockets and 3 smaller ones, and 2 tanks, all of them aiming their weapons at the house. One of the tanks has already pushed through the fence and is threatening the 4 small people, who are now only protected from it by a wall. The drawing shows a scenario where lives are in danger. In light of the massacre of Bucha, in which 400 civilians were murdered (Krüger, 2022; Lumetsberger & Bilger, 2022), this threat can be seen as very real.

A less commonly occurring type of image symbolically represents the danger to life and limb currently facing the Ukrainian civilian population.

The sky is crying from the clouds.

The clothing (dresses) and long hair suggest that it is women who are dying and going up to heaven. Oxana has already had to deal with death earlier in her life, and the women ascending to heaven are probably a reference to her own mother. The current situation, the occupation of Bucha, is (probably) reactivating this topic and reviving painful memories.

Her previous experience of the subject of death enables Oxana to give more explicit visual form to the idea that Ukrainians are being killed on a massive scale. This is an idea that is difficult to process, representing an event that is inherently traumatic. For Oxana, it (probably) reactivates the experience of her parents’ death, and (possibly) allows further processing of this topic. Another girl from Bucha also explicitly shows people murdered or seriously injured by Russian soldiers. And a girl from Zaporizhzhia draws a dead, bleeding Russian soldier.

In this type of inner pictures of war, children symbolically depict the human consequences of combat operations: dead and injured people.



Ill. 4: Stanislav (10) depicts how his heroes, the brave, strong Ukrainian army, drive the Russian soldiers out of his hometown

### Ukrainian soldiers who repel invaders and protect civilians

As well as showing Ukrainians in the very real position of victims, a number of children also depict the Ukrainian soldiers in the role of defenders.<sup>3</sup> Stanislav (10), from a town near Zaporizhzhia, draws the big shopping centre in his home town (Ill. 4). He describes a typical experience from his everyday life:

"This is Aurora [the name of the shopping centre], and we want to go shopping in this little shop. My mother and I buy something for school, clothes. There's space for children to play. And now Aurora is destroyed, because a bomb [fell on it]."

Stanislav draws the result of the Russian army's attack: a place that had positive associations for him is on fire, and the windowpanes are shattered. However, Stanislav also draws 5 soldiers who intervene, commando-like, to save the day. They're heavily armed, they've parachuted down from a "very modern" plane or arrived in a tank, and they shoot at the Russian tank (recognizable by the "Z"). A Russian soldier lies down on the ground in surrender. Stanislav states emphatically: "Ukrain-

ian soldiers [...] are my heroes." His drawing and those of 3 other children symbolically represent not just the destructive power of the Russian assault, but also the resistance of the Ukrainian army, which repels Russian soldiers and protects Ukrainian civilians.

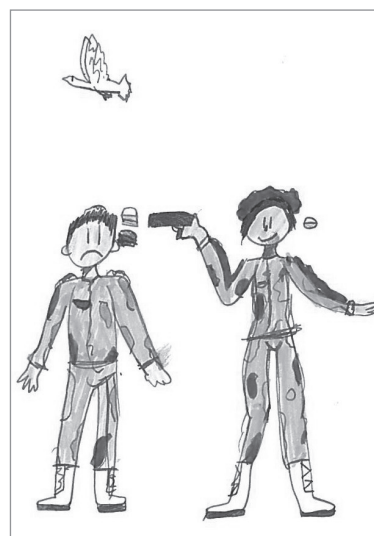
### Ukrainians in a position of power

While most children draw realistic images, a few pictures are mainly imaginative, and contradict Ukraine's position as victim. Diana (7) from Cherkasy depicts a childish but militant fantasy: her picture shows the "Ukrainian President Zelensky, who's shooting an arrow straight through Putin. (...) I've drawn Putin in blue and yellow because he hates those colours." What Diana is presenting here, in symbolic form, is a fantasy of power for the powerless. Not only does she show "her" President Zelensky piercing Putin with an arrow, but she also dresses Putin in the colours of the Ukrainian flag as an act of revenge.

Svetlana (10) from Kyiv draws 2 soldiers in camouflage uniform (Ill. 5). Beside their heads she draws little flags, to

identify a male Russian soldier and a slightly taller female Ukrainian soldier. She describes the picture as follows: "This is a Ukrainian soldier and that's a Russian soldier. And that's a dove, it just pooped on his head. Yes, exactly, that's the poo on the head [of the Russian soldier]." In her inner picture, Svetlana has found a way to restore a little justice. A Ukrainian soldier gets to decide whether a Russian soldier lives or dies, and even the peace dove is getting its revenge, with cheeky humour, by making the Russian soldier's situation even worse.

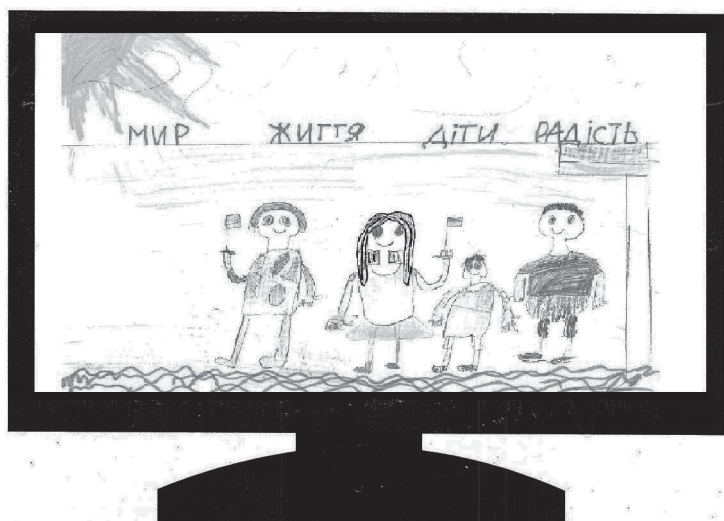
Besides the typical themes of the children's inner pictures, which include war scenarios, destruction, overwhelming threat, hiding, death and killing, and Ukrainian soldiers repelling attackers and protecting civilians, a few counter-fantasies also appear. For example, 7-year-old Ana draws herself and her father in a hot-air balloon with hearts on it, floating over a peaceful Ukraine. In another picture, which was drawn for an exhibition, not for this study, we see an eye on a purple-black background, with the title "What children's eyes have seen".



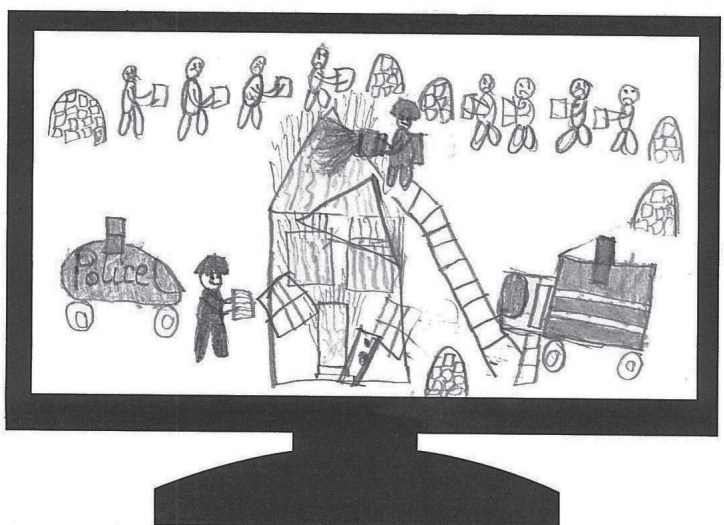
Ill. 5: Svetlana (10) draws a superior female Ukrainian soldier, and a (peace) dove that takes its revenge by defecating on the head of the Russian soldier



III. 6: Sofiya (8) imagines a children's television programme in which a female presenter reports: "The war is over"



III. 7: Stanislav (10) wishes for "peace, life, children and joy"



III. 8: Nadiya (9) from Kharkiv draws people working together to put out a fire

## WHAT UKRAINIAN CHILDREN WANT TO SEE IN A TV PROGRAMME ABOUT THE WAR

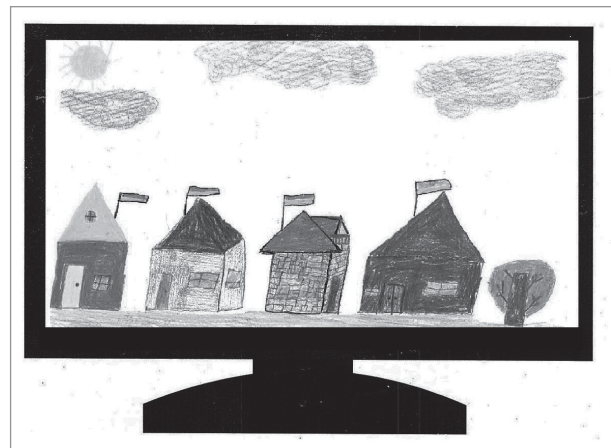
To find out more about the hopes and wishes of the Ukrainian children, we asked them to draw a second picture before the interviews. Inside a TV screen, they drew what they would like to see in a children's TV programme on the topic of "war". Even before the war, there were only a limited number of programmes for children in the Ukrainian media system. The children's news programme, *WADADA News for Kids*, had only been available for a few years, and only online. This means that the children in the study had few concrete models for TV formats, unlike e.g. children in Germany, with the children's news programme *logo!*. Instead, they simply imagined what they would like to see.

### News of Ukraine's victory

The motif the children draw most often is a news programme in which the presenters (who are always explicitly women) report Ukraine's victory. The programmes have names like "The Ukraine has won" (*Sasha*, 9, Kyiv) or "Ukr. News" (*Taras*, 8, Kherson).

*Olena* (10) from Mariupol wants the Ukrainian broadcaster 1+1 to report, with jubilation, "Bravo, bravo, bravo, Ukraine is the winner!". *Taras* also draws a "breaking news" ticker in the blue and yellow colours of the Ukrainian flag at the bottom edge of his picture. *Sofiya* (8) from Kyiv imagines a children's television programme in which a young presenter reports "The war is over", and the slogan "Glory for Ukraine" – frequently heard at the time – is shown on the screen (III. 6).

*Mykola* (12) from Bucha goes a step further and draws an outline of Ukraine. The colours of the Ukrainian flag can be seen in the background, and above and



Ill. 9: Oleksandr (10) draws how he imagines the current situation (left) and what he wants to see on (children's) television: a programme that shows everything being rebuilt again (right)

below the outline he has drawn blue and yellow people, whom he identifies as soldiers. At the centre of the “map of Ukraine” he has written names:

“Kherson, Crimea, Mariupol, Zaporizhzhia and Mykolaiv. Those are the cities that are occupied by the Russians. (...) I just want them to reconquer these cities and Crimea. I want all these cities to become Ukrainian again.”

### Death or killing of Putin

Three of the children fantasize about a television programme reporting that Vladimir Putin is dead. 7-year-old **Diana** from Cherkasy would love to see this: “President Zelensky shoots Putin [with a bow and arrow] and Putin is dead for ever. (...) And everyone’s happy.” **Oleg** (10) from Kyiv draws Putin with a knife in his head, and “the man from the TV [reports] that Putin is dead”. Oleg adds that he doesn’t actually want to see any blood on television, but he wants to know that Putin is dead. **Petro** (13) draws a tombstone: “And it says ‘Putin’. (...) If Putin dies, then the war in Ukraine is over.”

### The desire for peace

A few children drew pictures that focused on harmony, community and peace.

**Stanislav** (10) from Kushuhum, for example, draws 4 people laughing: “That’s the man from the military, the soldier, the Ukrainian soldier (on the left). That’s my mum (in the middle). That’s me. That’s my dad.” Stanislav has written down his wishes above the picture: “Peace, life, children and joy” (Ill. 7).

### Helping Ukraine

**Natalya** (12) from Kharkiv is more realistic and wishes for specific news about the current situation. Her picture shows bombed multi-storey buildings in Ukraine. Around the outside are the flags of various nations, such as France, Canada, Japan and Germany: “Those are the flags of the countries that are helping our Ukraine. (...) They’re thinking about what they can do so the war will be stopped.”

**Nadiya** (9) from Kharkiv draws a “destroyed house that’s on fire. The fire brigade. Next to it is the police, writing down what house [has been destroyed]. And behind them are the people (...) who help to demolish the house and then rebuild it” (Ill. 8). This is about the desire for healing through reconstruction, with (probably) a simultaneous police investigation into who the guilty parties are.

As well as an appeal to other countries to “Help Ukraine”, **Oleksandr** (10) would like to see a children’s TV programme showing the rebuilding of Ukraine. At the same time, he emphasizes, people cannot start rebuilding these villages until the war is over, because otherwise “Putin can use the bomb again and destroy these villages again”. In his picture, he carefully draws the same houses twice: at first they’re destroyed, and then the programme shows them all being rebuilt (Ill. 9).

The sisters **Ksenia** (7) and **Katia** (11) from Zaporizhzhia also have a specific wish for children’s television. They grew up with 4 dogs (see above), who were left with their grandparents and father in Ukraine. They would like children’s television to show people helping all the animals who have been left behind in Ukraine. The title reads: “Saving the animals in Ukraine”. Ksenia draws a parrot being fed, a cat being helped down a tree after running away from a dog, and a dog with a broken leg being treated by a vet (Ill. 10). Katia shows all the animals speaking their own languages and asking for help. She also writes the programme’s message, in English, on the right-hand side of the picture: “Help Animal in Uckrainia” (Ill. 11).



Ill. 10: Ksenia (7) draws animals in Ukraine being cared for

ing and bombed-out houses and apartment blocks symbolize the real destruction taking place, and the loss of the basic necessities of civilian life. Several of the pictures of this type show people standing among the ruins. The corners of their mouths are turned down, some have tears running down their cheeks. The children draw unhappy people, and during the interviews they generally stress that the people are crying because they no longer have a house. The children are giving symbolic form to the perceived despair, hopelessness

## CONCLUSION

The inner pictures of the children in the study are, on the one hand, characterized by scenarios of war and destruction. The houses are bombed out and burning, the windowpanes are shattered. In research on refugee children, images of houses are known to symbolize stability; they represent a place where basic needs are fulfilled (Farokhi & Hashemi, 2011, p. 2223). The pictures drawn by these Ukrainian children thus symbolically represent the loss of stability and of basic need-fulfilment. Some children draw the moment in which this happens, mostly represented by oversized rockets raining down on Ukrainian cities, or tanks firing at targets. The excessive size of the rockets and tanks stands for the excessive magnitude of the

threat and destruction. In some cases the children write the names of the cities on their pictures, and want this to be taken as an indication that many cities are affected. One girl labels the burning buildings: school, hospital, kindergarten etc. This shows that the war is destroying places and infrastructure that are important to children. Burn-

and helplessness experienced by many Ukrainian civilians.

For one boy (Mykola), the threat experienced while hiding in his foster family's basement in Bucha is still so present in his mind – and (probably) still unprocessed – that he draws this specific situation. In his picture, Russian soldiers, tanks and rockets are



Ill. 11: Katia (11) draws animals calling for help



## RESEARCH

threatening the house from all sides. Even the protective fence he has drawn around the building has been breached by a tank. The picture symbolizes **the all-encompassing threat, with no safety and no chance to escape**. Some pictures contain the theme of “death and being killed”. 2 out of 4 children from a children’s home/a foster family in Bucha draw this motif. This (probably) has something to do with their own biography, but it also most likely reflects the brutality of the Russian army and the massacre of civilians in Bucha. These drawings symbolically depict **the merciless killing of civilians**. However, they also contain other aspects: in Oxana’s picture, the dead are ascending to heaven; in Valeriya’s, the Ukrainian soldiers are driving the Russians away. While some children remain focused on helplessness, others add more militant elements to their pictures. The key element here is **Ukrainian soldiers, symbolizing strength and resistance**. They have modern equipment and drive out the Russian soldiers. With one exception, the Ukrainian soldiers in these drawings do not kill the Russian soldiers – or at least not explicitly. They threaten them, hold a pistol to their heads or make them lie on the ground with their arms crossed. This is a sign that the Ukrainian soldiers have seized back power in their country, and that the Ukrainian population is regaining its **autonomy and agency**. Their actions, in contrast to those of the Russian military, tend to be morally right. When the Ukrainian children draw what they would like to see on television, some of them think about **help in the current situation**. They urge other states to continue helping Ukraine; they imagine fires being extinguished and houses being rebuilt; and they like the idea of a TV programme about saving the pets who were left behind in Ukraine. These children depict current crisis situations where they imagine that reporting and discussion might be helpful.

The scene most often drawn shows the news of the end of the war. This is mostly announced by a female newsreader in a studio, as a **symbol of factual reporting**. For the children there is (as yet) no doubt that Ukraine will win. They can imagine 2 ways this might happen: the victory of the Ukrainian soldiers over the Russian army, or the killing or death of the Russian president, Vladimir Putin. Under these conditions, **the all-encompassing threat could be brought to an end**. To ensure long-term security, Mykola stresses that all parts of Ukraine including Crimea must be reunited. The goal is a peaceful Ukraine in which families are brought back together. ■

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In this case this method was completely justified. However, at times there is a blurring of the line between the mothers’ statements about what the children have said and their own statements on the subject. Furthermore, the children’s statements were sometimes given in the third person (he or she form). Some children were already good enough at German to answer for themselves. To make these interviews comparable to those with Russian and German children, the sentences were put into the first person (I form), or reported indirectly.

<sup>2</sup> All the names are pseudonyms to preserve the children’s anonymity.

<sup>3</sup> In many pictures these are very simply drawn figures, and the children probably think of them as male. But there are also other representations, such as a picture showing a soldier in a kind of spacesuit (Ksenia, 7), or one explicitly depicting a female soldier (Svetlana, 10).

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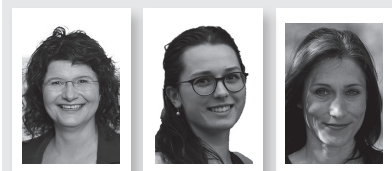
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## THE AUTHORS



Maya Götz, Dr. phil., is the head of IZI and of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE, Munich, Germany.

Lara-Sophie Pohling, M.A. in Gender Studies, is a freelancer at IZI, Munich, Germany.

Anne Pütz is a self-employed author and lives in Berlin, Germany.