

Educational Resilience in a Zone of Conflict: Challenges, Gaps, and Adaptive MHPSS Systems for Children in Ukraine



Dr. Viktor Vus, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Department
of Psychology, Kherson State
Agrarian and Economic
University (relocated)



Editor-in-Chief of "Mental Health:
Global Challenges Journal"



World Federation for Mental Health
Representative to the WHO (2025-2027)



Former Co-Chair of Ukraine's National
MHPSS TWG (2025-2026)



Former MHPSS Technical Advisor and
National Child-Centered Programs
Coordinator for Save the Children
Ukraine (2022-2025)

ROLLING BLACKOUTS & THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN EDUCATION

3,000+

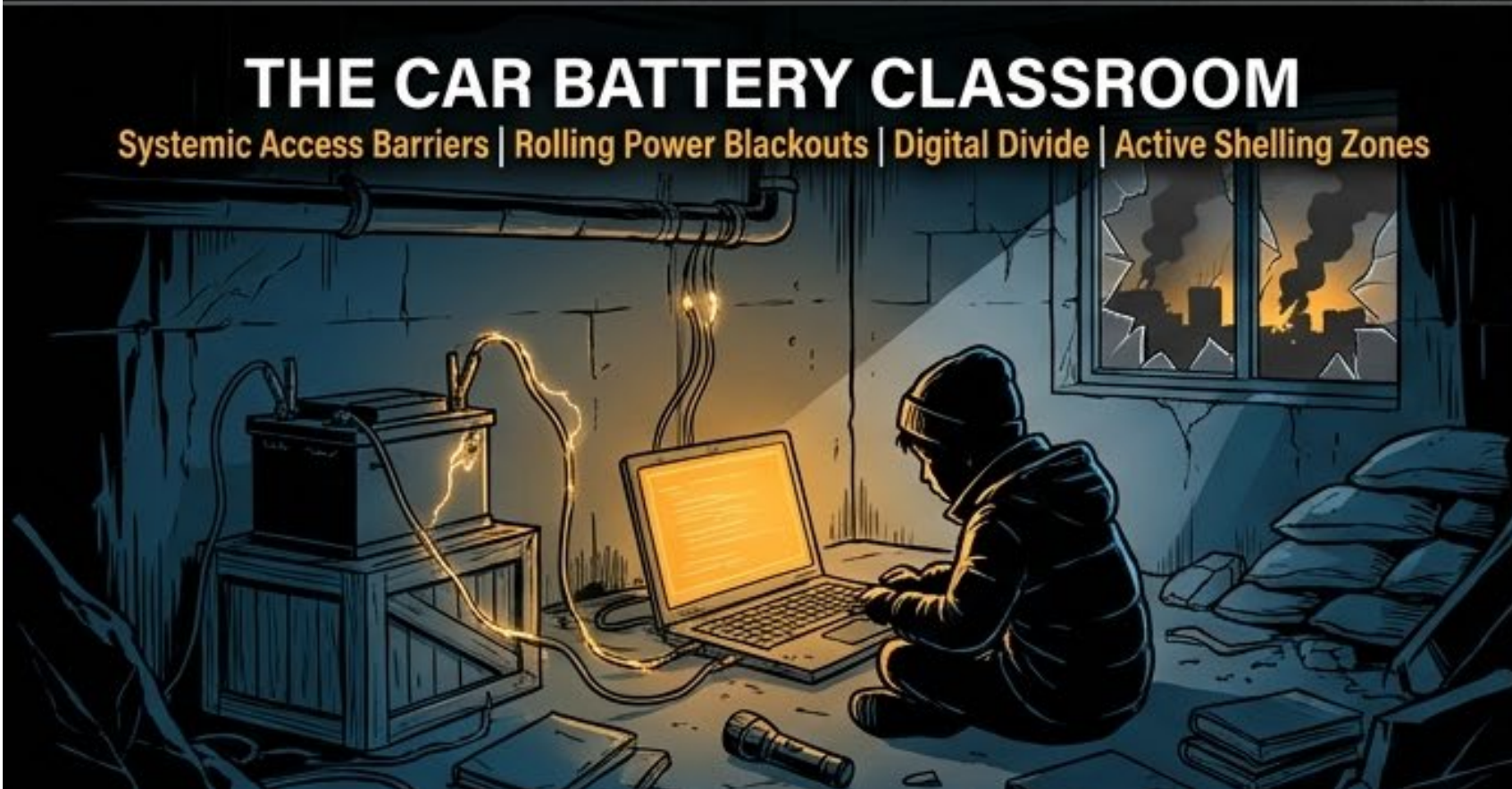
Damaged or Destroyed
Educational Facilities

1.4 Million

Refugee Children

THE CAR BATTERY CLASSROOM

Systemic Access Barriers | Rolling Power Blackouts | Digital Divide | Active Shelling Zones



School as
Academic Institution



School as
Secure Space

Prioritizing Emotional Stabilization, Safety, and
Socialization to combat the 'COVID-to-War' loop.

Systematic Taxonomy of Wartime Learning Modalities

Macro-Block 1: Local	Macro-Block 2: Displaced & Relocated	Macro-Block 3: Cross-Border
		
Modality	Modality	Modality
Traditional offline (shelter-dependent), online, and hybrid schooling.	Relocated schools and universities	Refugee students

Friction Point

Frontier underground schools (metro/basements) operating under active threat.

Friction Point

Rapid integration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) while preserving academic institutional capacity.

Friction Point

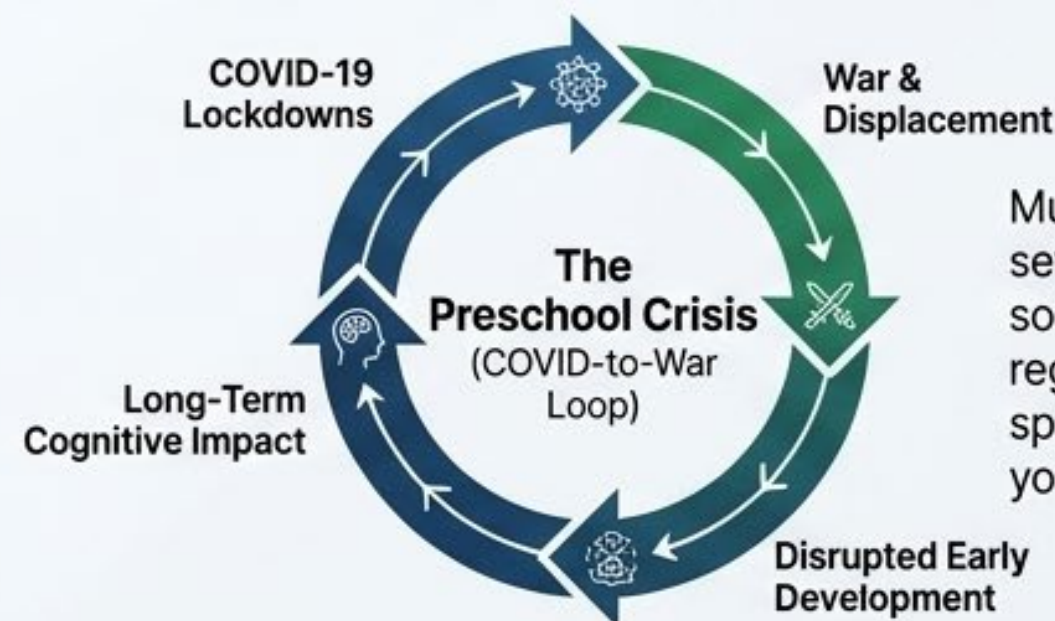
The 'Double Workload' phenomenon: refugee children completing online Ukrainian programs after offline European school hours.

The hidden cost of survival on cognitive capacity and development



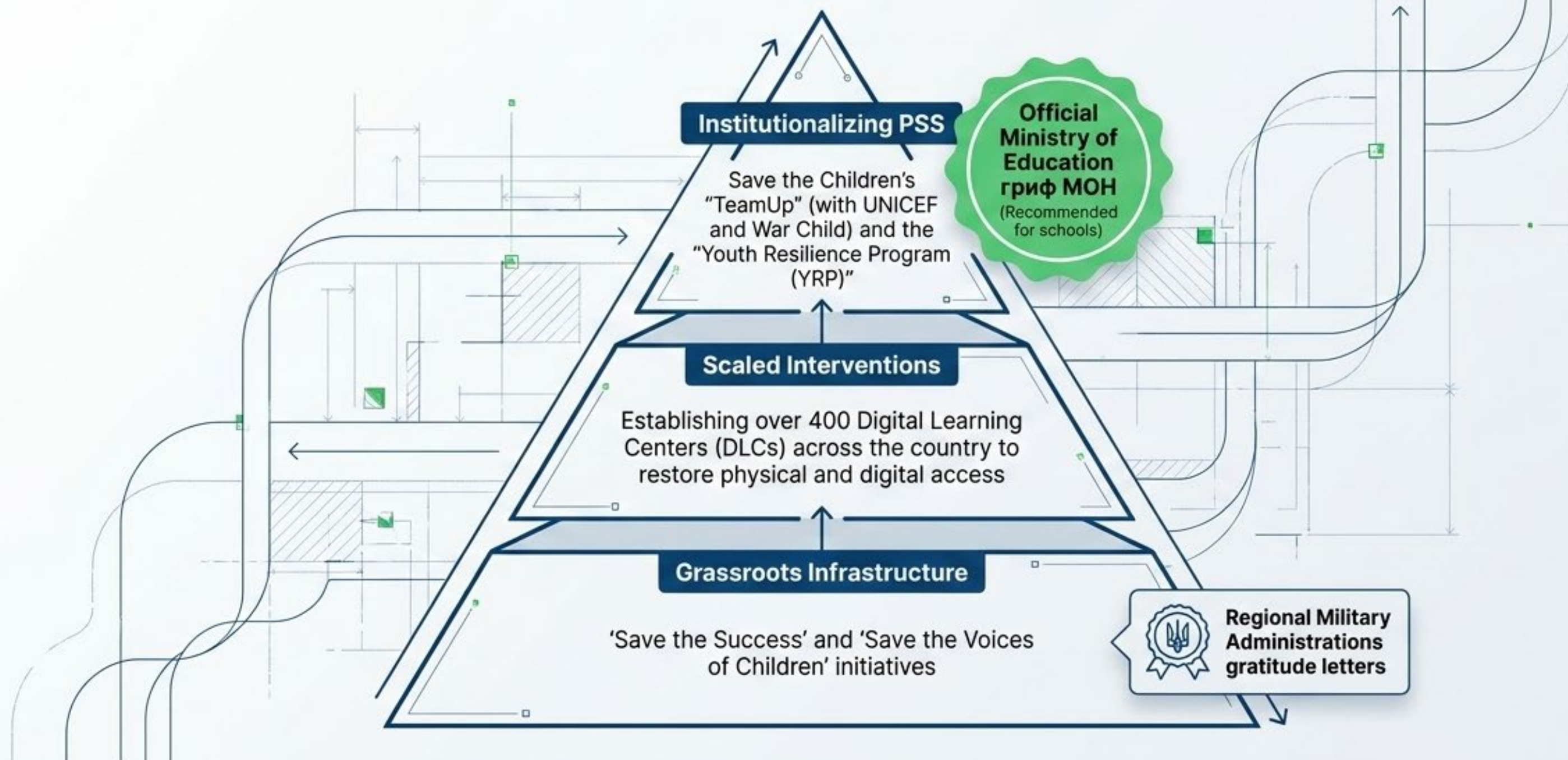
Cognitive Gaps (PISA-2022)

Ukrainian 15-year-olds lag behind OECD peers by 1.5 years in math/science and 2.5 years in reading.



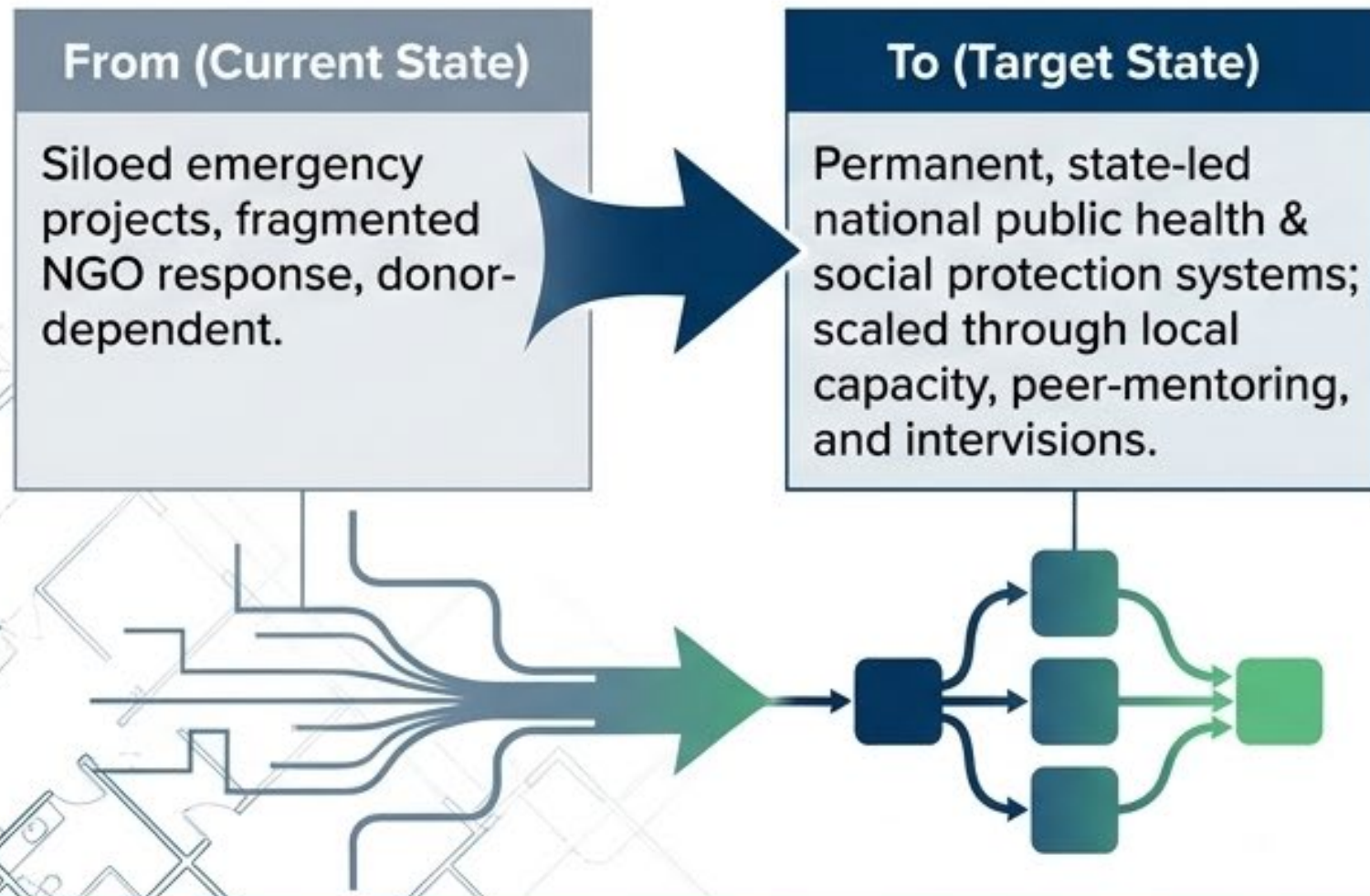
Multilevel monitoring reveals severe deficits in basic socialization, emotional regression, and delayed speech development in the youngest generation.

Bridging emergency response with state-endorsed stabilization frameworks

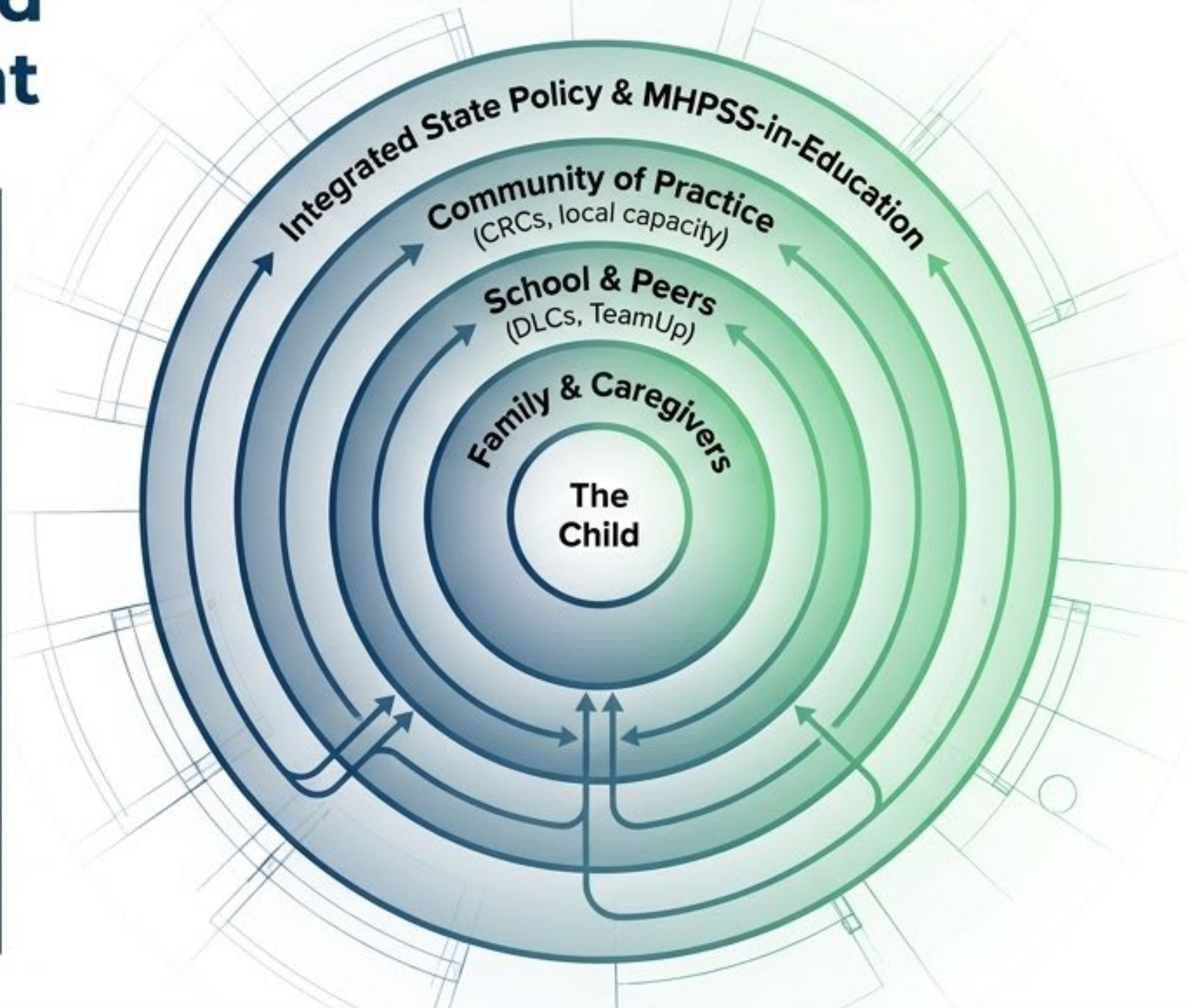


Transitioning from fragmented emergency aid to a permanent MHPSS ecosystem

Transition Matrix



The Bronfenbrenner MHPSS Ecosystem



**Educational recovery is impossible without psychological stabilization.
Fund systemic transition, not temporary silos.**

REFERENCES

1.  Vus, V., Nalyvaiko, O., Zotova, L., Kostruba, N., Fradelos, E., & Papathanasiou, I. V. (2025). Building a child-centred, multilayered MHPSS eco-system for conflict-affected children (Ukraine). *Polski Merkuriusz Lekarski*, 53(5), 592–599.
<https://doi.org/10.36740/Merkur202505105>
[Grounded in IASC and Bronfenbrenner's systems theory].
2.  Kosenchuk, O. et al (2024). Mental Health in Education for Crisis-affected Preschool Children: Multilevel Monitoring. *Mental Health: Global Challenges Journal*, 7(1), 95–117.
<https://doi.org/10.56508/mhgcj.v7i1.235>
3.  Kosenchuk, O. et al (2025). Parental Involvement and the Psycho-Emotional Development of Children in Crisis Conditions: Findings from the Third Wave of Multilevel Monitoring: Literature review. *Mental Health: Global Challenges Journal*, 8(1), 67–83.
[Documenting preschool socialization and developmental deficits].
4.  Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment. (2023). National Report on the Results of the International Study of the Quality of Education PISA-2022. Kyiv: UCEQA.
[Gaps of 1.5 years in math/science and 2 years in reading].
5.  National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine. (2026). National Report on the State and Prospects of Education Development in Ukraine: Monograph. Kyiv: Pedahohichna Dumka.
[Over 3800 damaged/destroyed educational facilities; 12,596 active secondary schools].
6.  Shkoliar, M., et al (2025). Leveraging Communities of Practice to Sustain Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Crisis Contexts. *Mental Health: Global Challenges Journal*, 8(1), 48–59.
<https://doi.org/10.56508/mhgcj.v8i1.274>
[Case studies on Community Resilience Centers and localized sustainability].
7.  Social Initiative "Save the Success" - Multiplier effect of child-centred MHPSS programs within the Ukraine Response [Video Playlist]. Save the Children Ukraine. YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrg5XNeFrghaWAcARlFX6h7pC-0Q4tFit>.