

# WORLD VISION'S PARENTING IN CRISIS CHATBOT:

## A Pilot in Ukraine and Georgia



### Learning Report

#### Executive Summary

As the war in Ukraine continues to affect families, caregivers are facing increasing challenges in supporting their children's emotional wellbeing. With limited access to in-person services, digital tools offer a potential way to expand support at scale.

To address this need, World Vision Ukraine Crisis Response, in partnership with [World Vision Middle East and Eastern Europe Region \(WV MEER\)](#), [World Vision Georgia](#), [Parenting for Lifelong Health \(PLH\)](#), and the [University of Oxford](#), piloted the Batkivska Opora Parenting in Crisis chatbot in Ukraine and Georgia between December 2025 and March 2026. Delivered via Telegram, the chatbot provides practical parenting advice, psychosocial support, and links to services through a fully automated system.

#### Key findings:

- Caregivers showed clear interest in this type of support. They valued being able to access advice at convenient times, especially when in-person services were difficult to reach. Users generally described the chatbot as practical, relevant, and easy to use, and many highlighted its value in helping them manage stress, improve communication with their children, and create more meaningful moments of connection.
- Sustained engagement was more difficult. Completion rates were moderate, shaped by a combination of user-side and contextual constraints, including lack of time, research-related onboarding requirements, electricity outages, holiday disruptions, site closures, and operational changes in some locations. Participants also expressed a strong preference for greater flexibility and more personalised content pathways, indicating that future iterations should allow caregivers to engage with topics according to their immediate priorities.
- Digital parenting support can make a valuable contribution to humanitarian response, but it is most effective as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, in-person services. The chatbot provided caregivers with an additional low-barrier source of support while reinforcing key messages delivered through community-based programmes.
- Overall, the pilot demonstrates promising potential for scaling digital parenting support in humanitarian settings. Future development should prioritise simpler onboarding, greater personalisation, clearer user pathways, and stronger outreach through trusted partners and frontline teams. With these improvements, the chatbot could become an important part of broader child protection and mental health support for families affected by crisis.

## 1. Background and Purpose

The ongoing war in Ukraine continues to place significant psychological strain on children and their caregivers. [Assessments](#) indicate that 84% of households report psychosocial distress among children, with nearly one-third of children under five showing visible signs of anxiety and trauma. At the same time, many caregivers face barriers to accessing in-person support due to displacement, insecurity, and time constraints.

In response, World Vision Ukraine Crisis Response, in partnership with World Vision Middle East and Eastern Europe Region (WV MEER), World Vision Georgia, Parenting for Lifelong Health (PLH), and the University of Oxford, piloted the **"Batkivska Opora" (Parental Support) chatbot** between December 2025 and March 2026.

The chatbot is a Telegram-based digital tool designed to provide accessible, evidence-based parenting guidance and psychosocial support. It delivers concise advice, practical exercises, and links to specialised services in a format suited to high-stress environments. The system is fully automated and rules-based, enabling scalable delivery without live facilitation.

Prior to launch, a six-month localisation process (May-November 2025) ensured that the content reflected the realities of families affected by war and displacement. Materials were adapted to be culturally appropriate, relevant, and easy to use for caregivers experiencing stress and emotional fatigue.

The pilot aimed to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of digital parenting support in a humanitarian context, with a focus on user experience, engagement, and potential impact on wellbeing and parenting practices.

## 2. Content & Structure of the Chatbot

The chatbot functions as a flexible, on-demand support tool for caregivers. Its content is designed to be practical, concise, and easy to apply in everyday situations.

### It integrates three main components:

- **Thematic guidance**, covering topics such as stress management, supporting children during crisis, coping with loss, safety, and prevention of violence and online risks
- **Interactive activities**, including breathing exercises, games, and shared routines aimed at reducing stress and strengthening parent-child relationships
- **Service referrals**, connecting users to helplines, psychological support, and child protection services

Content is delivered through text, images, audio, and video, allowing users to engage in different ways depending on their preferences. The pilot version included 11 short modules, which users could complete at their own pace and revisit as needed.

MODULE	FOCUS
Care for Yourself	Managing caregiver stress, emotional regulation, and self-care
Make a Routine for Time Together	Building structure and quality time with children
Help Children Cope with Crisis	Supporting children during stress, fear, and uncertainty
Protect Children from Sexual Violence	Awareness and prevention of risks
Help Children when Someone Dies	Supporting children through grief and loss
Keep Children Safe	General child safety in crisis settings
Prepare to Travel	Preparing children for displacement or movement
Protect Children from Traffickers	Awareness of trafficking risks and prevention
Care for Children in a Shelter	Supporting children in shelter environments
Keeping Children Safe from Bullying	Addressing bullying
Keeping Children Safe from Online Bullying	Online safety and digital risks

### 3. Pilot Implementation

The pilot was implemented in two phases between December 2025 and early March 2026 across Ukraine and Georgia.

In Ukraine, the chatbot was introduced in 15 child-friendly spaces across cities including Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Odesa, Bucha, Bashtanka, and Kryvyi Rih. In Georgia, it was implemented in two "Happy Spaces" and Ukrainian schools in Tbilisi and Batumi, reaching displaced Ukrainian families.

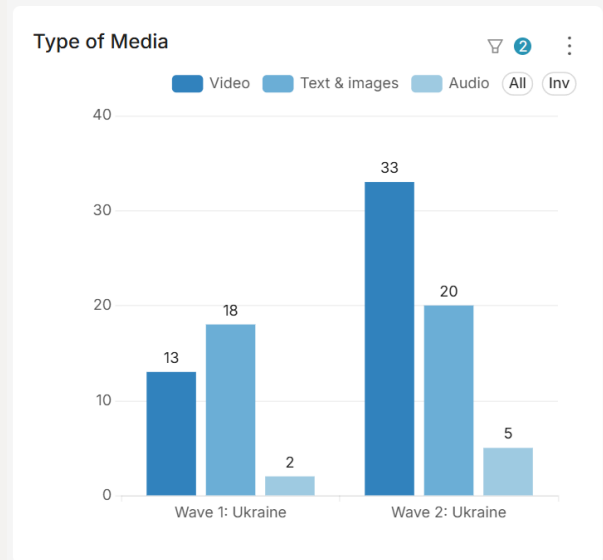
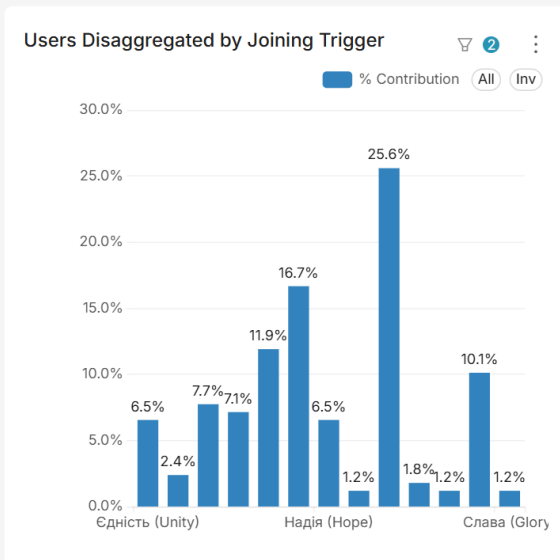
Caregivers accessed the chatbot through QR codes and location-specific keywords, allowing teams to monitor engagement across sites. Higher levels of participation were observed in Kyiv, Bashtanka, Kryvyi Rih, Kharkiv, and Batumi.

Each country aimed to reach 500 chatbot users, divided into two pilot groups. Unique trigger keywords were used to track how users accessed

the chatbot and to monitor engagement across different locations. Higher engagement levels were observed in Kyiv, Bashtanka, Kryvyi Rih, Kharkiv, and Batumi.

Implementation of the chatbot coincided with several contextual challenges in both, Ukraine and Georgia:

- **In Ukraine**, the pilot took place during the winter period, when frequent electricity outages, heating issues, and temporary closure of some centres - particularly in Kyiv oblast - affected attendance.
- **In Georgia**, the pilot coincided with the closure of the Batumi Happy Space and reduced operational scope of the Tbilisi Happy Space, resulting in significant staff turnover.
- In addition, the pilot overlapped with the Christmas and holiday period, which also influenced participation levels.



## 4. User Engagement and Participation

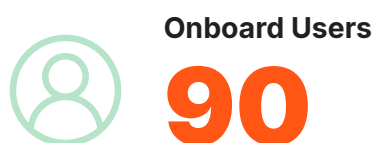
During the pilot period, in Ukraine **168 users** initiated interaction with the chatbot, of whom 91 completed the onboarding process, resulting in an onboarding rate of **54.2%**.



Among those onboarded, **98.9% were female caregivers**, reflecting typical participation trends in parenting support programmes. The average time required to complete the programme was approximately **20 days**.

The chatbot includes a research component led by the University of Oxford, aimed at assessing its effectiveness. As part of this, users completed a short baseline survey covering wellbeing, stress levels, emotional state, and perceived support, followed by an endline survey approximately 20–25 days later. Evaluation results of this analysis are expected in mid-2026.

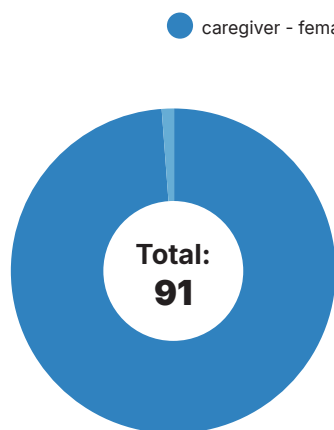
In Georgia, a total of 146 users started programme within the chatbot, of which 90 completed the onboarding process (61.6%). Among those who completed onboarding, only 5.4% completed the full programme. These results suggest that while initial interest was generated, both external constraints and potential engagement challenges affected overall retention and completion rates during the pilot phase.



Content engagement trends showed that:

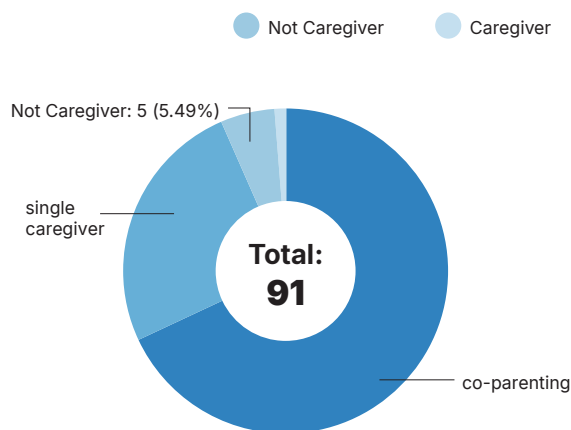
- Video was the most popular format, followed by text and images
- Early modules had higher completion rates, with drop-off increasing in later lessons – particularly those focused on routines and self-care

### Caregiver Gender



Caregiver - female: 90 (98.90%)

### Caregiver Marital Status Distribution



## 5. Feedback from Participants

Feedback from caregivers was consistently positive.

Users described the chatbot as:

- **Easy to use**
- **Relevant and practical**
- **Flexible, allowing engagement at convenient times, often in the evening**

Many parents highlighted the usefulness of breathing exercises for emotional regulation, as well as suggested games, communication prompts, and daily activity ideas for engaging with their children. However, lack of time was frequently mentioned as a barrier to consistent use. Despite this, the chatbot appeared to encourage reflection on priorities, with some participants expressing a desire to slow down and spend more meaningful time with their children.

“I really like the breathing exercises when you need to calm down. Also, the suggested games with the child and the communication topics. I like the daily activity ideas. The only issue is lack of time, so we don’t do them regularly, but now I keep thinking that I need to slow down and spend more time with my child.”

The chatbot also fostered increased self-awareness among caregivers. Several participants reported becoming more conscious of their emotional states, the importance of quality time with their children, and the need for self-care. For some, the experience was described as “eye-opening,” leading to small but meaningful behavioural changes.

“My husband and I decided that in the evenings we won’t use phones or tablets and will spend more time communicating with our child. Thanks to the chatbot, you opened my eyes to how important it is to spend quality time together.”

The tone and format of the chatbot were widely perceived as supportive, simple, and non-intrusive, which contributed to a high level of trust. Notably, participants did not report significant technical challenges. Instead, time constraints remained the primary limitation to engagement.

“I like simple advice – to pause, give yourself time, talk, rest. The advice is simple, but we often forget. And the chatbot reminds us that we also need to take care of ourselves.”

Additionally, participants emphasized that the chatbot created space for deeper self-reflection, particularly in relation to stress and ongoing emotional pressure.

“Some questions made me realise that there isn’t a single day without anxiety. It made me think about my actions and my attitude toward life.”

Overall, participants expressed a strong willingness to recommend the chatbot to other parents, especially those experiencing stress related to displacement and conflict.



## 6. Key Learnings

The pilot highlights both the potential and the limitations of digital parenting support in humanitarian settings.

**Accessibility** emerged as a key strength. Caregivers valued having immediate, on-demand support via their phones, particularly given the challenges of attending in-person sessions. However, Ukraine's highly digitalised environment also means users are accustomed to a wide range of online services, raising expectations for more personalised and flexible content. This points to the need for further refinement in both content design and delivery.

In particular, participants expressed a strong preference for greater control over navigation. While activities could be accessed directly, lessons were presented in a fixed or random sequence. Caregivers indicated that the ability to select specific topics, through a structured or menu-based format, would make the tool more relevant and easier to use, allowing them to engage with content based on their immediate needs.

**The onboarding process**, especially the initial survey questions, was identified **as a barrier** for some users. Although essential for research purposes, simplifying or streamlining this step could help improve retention.

**Engagement** was also **influenced by external factors**. Electricity outages and unstable internet connectivity affected usage during the pilot period. While the chatbot is designed for low-bandwidth environments, it still relies on access to charged devices and stable connections.

Feedback from partners further highlighted the importance of clear communication and promotion. Ensuring that caregivers understand the purpose and benefits of the chatbot is likely to improve uptake and sustained engagement.

Finally, the pilot reaffirmed that **digital tools are most effective when used to complement, not replace, in-person services**. They offer an additional entry point for support and can reinforce key messages delivered through community-based programmes.

## 7. Conclusion

The "Batkivska Opора" pilot demonstrates strong potential for scaling digital parenting support within humanitarian programmes.

While engagement and completion rates were affected by external factors, the pilot confirms clear demand for flexible, accessible support for caregivers. Users valued the relevance, simplicity, and practicality of the content, as well as the ability to engage at their own pace.

Future development will focus on expanding content, improving personalisation and navigation, simplifying onboarding, and strengthening outreach through partner networks. Overall, the pilot provides a solid foundation for integrating digital solutions into child protection and mental health programming, helping extend support to families affected by crisis.

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