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**Project 101132435 — SKILLS4JUSTICE Topic: HORIZON-CL2-2023-
TRANSFORMATIONS-01-03 "SKILL PARTNERSHIPS FOR
SUSTAINABLE AND JUST MIGRATION PATTERNS"**

**ANALYTICAL REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH
INTERNALLY/FORCEDLY DISPLACED CITIZENS OF UKRAINE OF
WORKING AGE**



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INTRODUCTION.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 caused an unprecedented wave of forced migration and displacement. Millions of Ukrainians have found themselves in other regions of the country in search of safety, housing, education for their children, and life opportunities. A new social reality has emerged before Ukrainian society and the state that is the formation of a large share of the displaced population in new, safer regions and communities of Ukraine.

In this context, studying the experiences of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is particularly relevant. It includes the ways of adaptation, the challenges they face, the degree of integration in new communities, as well as intentions to return and the conditions that can ensure this. Knowledge of such attitudes is necessary for the formation of the state policy on the return and reintegration of that group of citizens.

This Analytical Report presents relevant up-to-date information, namely the results of interviews with IDPs. The study aims to identify adaptation experiences, difficulties, new opportunities, as well as respondents' expectations and plans for returning home meaning to their place of permanent residence.

The questionnaire consisted of 23 questions. The interview covered 116 IDPs to 14 regions of the country. The largest number of respondents were interviewed in the following regions: Dnipropetrovska (34.4%) and Chernivtska (21.6%) regions and the city of Kyiv (15.5%). 81.9% of interview participants were interviewed in person.

The Project team worked on the Analytical Report, namely:

Sergii Melnyk (conducting interviews, preparing the methodology for interviewing IDPs, coordinating this component of the sociological study, writing the Analytical Report), Yulia Irynevych (conducting interviews, processing questionnaires, methodological support and writing the Analytical Report), Olga Anisimova (writing the Analytical Report), Hanna Belinska, Valentyna Tkachenko (conducting interviews, processing questionnaires), Hanna Tereshchenko, Andriy



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RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH IDPs

1. The most vivid memories of the beginning of the war

An analytical review of emotional memories of the war

1. Physical danger and destruction

The respondents' testimonies are dominated by mentions of shelling, bombing, and rocket attacks on residential neighbourhoods. Numerous responses emphasized the suddenness and uncontrollability of the situation, which was reflected in their statements such as: "It was not clear at all that the war had begun." Such testimonies indicated a deep shock caused by direct encounter with violence that violates the boundaries of private space.

The destruction of residential buildings, educational institutions, and infrastructure facilities had both material and symbolic significance, as it embodies the loss of social order and an established way of life. A missile hitting a "neighbour's driveway" or destroying a school where a child studied was transformed into a collective trauma, as key symbols of security (home, school, city) were transformed into objects of aggression.

2. Evacuation and escape

Respondents' answers contained numerous descriptions of chaotic forced departures: escapes through fields, roadblocks with military equipment, urgent evacuations, and administrative orders. This experience was associated both with physical danger, and with the loss of control over one's own life, as people's decisions were largely determined by external factors (shelling, occupation actions, orders).

Evacuation was a turning point, signifying a break with home, the loss of familiar identities, and starting life "from scratch." It was that stage that was most often identified by respondents as the most emotionally burdensome.

3. Losses: material, social, existential



The statements of the IDPs revealed a wider range of losses than purely material ones. The loss of business, documents or social status (“I lost everything, there is nowhere to return”) illustrated the scale of socio-economic trauma. A special place was occupied by mentions of the death of civilians and loved ones, which created a sense of injustice and impunity for violence. This factor plays a key role in the formation of long-term psychological trauma.

4. Occupation: Life under duress

The experience of being under occupation was described through fear, moral pressure, humiliation, and lack of food and medicine. That was both a physical threat, and an existential experience of powerlessness and life under the control of a foreign power.

Particularly telling were the testimonies of children in basements and the massive presence of military equipment, which created an atmosphere of total fear. Even small details (children's crying, dark shelters) remained carriers of traumatic experiences.

5. Emotional dimension

The most frequent words in the respondents' speech were "fear", "stress", "panic", "crying", "tears". They represented the emotional state at the time of the events, and the long-term psychological consequences that persisted after evacuation. The respondents paid special attention to children: protection from shelling, ensuring safety, caring for their survival. In the collective memory, war appeared as the destruction of the basic parental function to protect children, which was one of the strongest factors in the formation of post-traumatic experiences.

The analysis of the testimonies demonstrated the multidimensionality of the war experience for internally/forcedly displaced persons (IDPs):

- **Physical dimension:** shelling, explosions, occupation.
- **Socio-economic dimension:** loss of housing, work, business, stability.
- **Emotional-psychological dimension:** fear, panic, stress, crying.



- **Existential dimension:** feeling of powerlessness, loss of control, destruction of life's foundations.

Thus, war leaves behind both material destruction, as well as long-term trauma, imprinted in personal and collective memory. The most emotionally charged images were destroyed homes and schools (as a symbol of lost protection) and children in danger (as a concentrated image of war). Thus, individual testimonies of IDPs simultaneously reflected the collective experience of survival, which became the basis for further social transformations and the development of policies to support IDPs.

2. How IDPs chose a region for relocation

Analytical commentary

Analysis of respondents' answers shows that the choice of a region for relocation was determined by a combination of personal, social and structural factors. At the same time, decisions were often made in conditions of crisis and lack of prior planning.

1. Social capital as the main reference point

Most respondents emphasized the crucial role of social ties meaning friends, relatives, acquaintances who directly invited or advised a specific region for relocation.

Motivation was both emotional (community, psychological support, avoiding loneliness) and pragmatic in nature (help with housing, shelter, job search). This indicated that social networks of trust were a key survival mechanism, and decision-making was often influenced by the immediate social environment.

2. Economic and professional factor

A significant part of the responses demonstrated an orientation towards employment opportunities in the existing profession/specialty. For example, Donbas miners chose regions with a developed mining industry (Kryvbas), while other IDPs gravitated towards large industrial centres with diversified labour markets (the cities



of Dnipro, Kryvyi Rih, Kyiv, etc.). For a certain part of IDPs, the organised nature of the evacuation became a determining factor, so when enterprises, volunteer and other institutions or shelter camps provided collective relocation, actually making a regional choice for people.

3. Security factor

Almost a third of the responses emphasised security: remoteness from shelling, border areas, the desire to find a "quiet region", especially for children. It is worth noting that the idea of security was often combined with the availability of housing and the availability of shelters provided by volunteers or other specialised, including international, organisations.

4. Forced and random circumstances

Some of the displaced persons emphasised that they actually had no choice: "where they were taken, that's where they went", "evacuation by the enterprise", "went at random". There were also examples of emergency individual decisions such as leaving due to a child's illness, destroyed housing, lack of access to hospitals or shops in the previous place of residence. In these cases, the choice of region was more likely a consequence of circumstances than a personal decision.

5. The role of institutions and volunteers

A number of responses included charitable and volunteer organisations that provided information about possible evacuation sites, as well as provided housing (dormitories, shelters). This emphasised the importance of institutional support for both initial adaptation and further consolidation in the new region of residence.

6. The Capital and Western directions of movement within the country

For some of the migrants, the city of Kyiv and the region were attractive due to economic prospects, the status of the capital, medical treatment of children and work/service of family members.

The western regions (the cities of Chernivtsi, Uzhhorod, Ternopil, etc.) were chosen mainly because of safety and the availability of free housing. It is interesting that here the motivation to work in the existing profession/specialty is less



pronounced, instead safety and shelter came to the fore. Three main models of decision-making can be distinguished:

1. ***Social*** – movement “following friends/relatives”, often without a prior plan.
2. ***Economic*** – choosing a region where it was realistic to find a job (industrial centres, the capital).
3. ***Security*** – searching for quiet places, remote from the frontlines, especially for families with children. At the same time, moving was rarely the result of the influence of a single factor. Usually, the decision was formed at the intersection of safety, affordable housing and social support, and under stress and often spontaneously.

3. Plans to return home after relocation

1. General trends

Analysis of respondents' answers showed that the majority of IDPs planned to return home after the war ends. The main arguments for such a decision were the availability of their own housing, family and cultural ties, as well as emotional attachment to their native land.

At the same time, a significant share of respondents expressed a conditional position, linking the possibility of return to ensuring the safety of children, restoration of infrastructure, availability of work, and compensation for lost housing.

There was also a percentage of respondents who did not plan to return due to the destruction or occupation of cities, lack of prospects, fear for safety, as well as the desire to integrate into the Ukrainian-speaking environment or start life in more stable conditions.

2. Key motivations for return

- ***Peace and security.*** Virtually all respondents pointed to the need for an end to the war, demining of territories and guarantees of long-term security.
- ***Housing.*** Own housing, its reconstruction or compensation were identified as critical conditions for return.



- *Work and economic prospects.* The possibility of receiving a stable income, the availability of jobs and appropriate conditions for children were important factors.

- *Family and emotional ties.* For many respondents, maintaining contact with family, relatives and the cultural environment was crucial.

3. Motives for non-return

- *Destroyed cities.* Lack of a place to live (“nowhere to return”).

- *Occupation and collaboration.* Distrust of the local population and fear of repeated aggression.

- *Fear for the future of children.* The desire to ensure stability and quality education in other regions.

- *Assimilation in new communities.* Social ties, work and education have been established in the place of displacement.

4. Conditions that determine the decision

- *Peace and security* (cessation of hostilities, Ukraine's control over the territory).

- *Infrastructure reconstruction* (housing, transport, medicine, schools, jobs).

- *Socio-economic support from the state* (compensation for destroyed housing, assistance in employment).

- *Social environment* (availability of trust, Ukrainian identity of the community).

Conclusions

The most important factor is **security**: even those who have lost their housing are ready to return if peace is guaranteed.

At the same time, housing acts as a point of no return, because its absence or destruction significantly reduces the willingness to make such a decision.



The factor of children remains important: parents prefer a safe environment and stable education.

Identity aspects also play an important role as some displaced persons refuse to return due to distrust of collaborators or the desire to live in a Ukrainian-speaking environment.

The respondents' answers demonstrate duality: on the one hand, a strong desire to return to "their native land", on the other, a final rejection of this due to fear and destruction. This indicates the formation of two long-term strategies: return and restoration or settlement in new communities.

4. Education before displacement

1. Education level

Among the surveyed IDPs, a significant proportion had higher education in various specialisations (economic, pedagogical, technical, medical, philological, etc.). Some respondents have obtained two or more higher education degrees or additional qualifications, combining different professional areas (for example, pedagogy and social work, economics and engineering, accounting and philology).

At the same time, a large number of responses concerned professional (vocational) education: among the surveyed IDPs, the professions of electric welders, electromechanics, metallurgists, machinists, turners and cooks were widespread. This indicates a significant proportion of working professional profiles.

Examples of secondary specialised education/professional pre-higher education (office workers, pharmacists' assistants, nannies, technicians, etc.) were also identified. Only a small part of respondents had a general secondary education, but declared their intention to continue their studies.

2. Ways of acquiring knowledge and qualifications

- *Formal education:* universities, institutes/academies, technical schools, colleges, vocational schools.



- *Additional training*: refresher courses, internships, seminars, master classes, including international ones (an example of such training with the assistance of Finland was mentioned).

- *Online education*: distance courses with practical training at enterprises.
- *Non-formal/informal achievements*: training at the job (mines, factories), internships at workplaces, courses based on interests (hairdressing, cooking, etc.).

3. Correlation between education and professional activity

Some respondents worked by their specialty (doctors, teachers, engineers). However, there were common cases where education did not correspond to professional activity: a heat and power engineer worked as a building maintenance worker, a philologist as an accountant, an engineer as a security guard. This demonstrates both flexibility in employment and the irrational use of human capital in the country.

In some cases, the interviewees noted experience in entrepreneurial activity (FOP).

Features of motivation and self-assessment of qualifications

The answers indicated the presence of two strategies:

- some respondents considered their education sufficient and did not undergo additional training ("I have a sufficient level of qualification");
- others actively invested in their own development through courses, trainings, internships.

Older interviewees were more likely to emphasise professional experience and practical experience, while younger ones were more likely to emphasise certificates and additional educational program results.

4. Gender differences

- Men were more likely to report technical and labour professions/specialties (welder, mechanic, turner, metallurgist).



- Women mostly had humanitarian and socially oriented education (pedagogy, economics, medicine, philology), and also took additional courses in mastering applied professions (nanny, tutor, hairdresser, cooking).

Conclusions

The educational structure of IDPs was multi-level, but higher and professional (vocational) education dominated, which indicated a high potential of human capital. Many respondents had practical experience and professional experience, which increased their competitiveness in the labour market. At the same time, the lack of opportunities to work in their specialty due to war, displacement or health issues led to a forced change in professional trajectory.

High flexibility and ability to adapt were noted: readiness to change the field of activity, retrain, start their own business. The gender distribution of professions/specialties corresponded to national trends. IDPs' investments in additional education and self-education (including online courses, webinars, internships) demonstrated their desire for professional development even in crisis conditions.

5. Recognition of diplomas and certificates from temporarily occupied territories

1. Dominant trend

Analysis of respondents' responses showed that the absolute majority of IDPs did not encounter problems with recognition of education. This was reflected in various formulations: "no", "there were none", "there were no problems". Some of the respondents noted that they did not receive education at all in the temporarily occupied territories (TOT), therefore the issue of recognition did not concern them.

2. Some clarifications

Some respondents emphasised that the education was obtained before the start of the full-scale invasion, so there were no difficulties with recognition. Among the explanations, there were also answers: "the city was not occupied at the time of



evacuation", "received education in peacetime". At the same time, one answer contained a clarification: "there were no problems, but it was difficult to find a job in my specialty". This indicates that the issue concerns not so much the legal recognition of diplomas as the actual integration into the labour market.

The only exception was the answer “Yes”, but the respondent did not detail the nature of the difficulties. Thus, this was an isolated case that does not reflect a general trend.

Conclusions

No massive problems with the recognition of education obtained at TOT were identified among the respondents. The most frequent explanations for the absence of barriers were:

- the education was obtained before the war,
- the training was not conducted at TOT,
- the respondents did not receive education during the specified period.

However, even in the absence of problems with the recognition of diplomas, IDPs sometimes faced difficulties in finding employment in their specialty. It was not due to legal aspects, but to the state of the labour market, the needs of specific regions and infrastructure limitations.

Thus, the issue of recognition of education was not a massive barrier to the integration of IDPs, but required attention in isolated cases, especially when it came to diplomas obtained after 2014 in institutions that operated at TOT.

6. Additional training after moving

1. Dominant trend

Most respondents noted that after moving they did not undergo professional training and did not obtain new education. The answers were dominated by the following formulations: “did not undergo”, “did not obtain”, “did not receive”, “did not study”.



The following reasons were found among the explanations for the lack of training: being on maternity leave, temporary unemployment, as well as the refusal of employment centres to assist in obtaining a new education/profession.

2. Positive examples of training

Despite the predominance of the answer “no”, in some cases examples of involvement in educational and professional programs were recorded:

- Courses at employment centres – short-term programs for improving skills or obtaining a new profession/specialty.
- On-the-job training – training in the process of performing work duties (“received training on the job”, “at work”).
- Dual form of vocational education – a combination of study and work.
- *Formal education:*
 - correspondence studies at the Dnipro Industrial and Pedagogical Vocational College;
 - admission to Kharkiv University (full-time with transition to distance learning);
 - advanced training courses at the ChNU (offline) and LNPU (online).
- School education – individual examples of continuing education by minor IDPs (family members of interviewed IDPs) in local schools.

3. Key observations

- Access to education was episodic: most IDPs were not involved in formal programmes.
 - The initiative for learning mostly came from IDPs themselves, rather than from systemic state support.
 - Employment centres appeared as institutions with heterogeneous practices: they could both provide opportunities and deny access to them.
 - Some IDPs acquired informal knowledge directly at the workplace.
 - Cases of obtaining higher education or advanced training occurred, but were not widespread.



Conclusions

The vast majority of IDPs did not obtain new education or undergo vocational training after relocation. The main barriers to access included:

- refusals from employment centres;
- the need to care for children or relatives (in particular, being on maternity leave);
- prioritizing job search over studies.

At the same time, isolated positive examples demonstrated the potential of educational integration. Particularly promising areas were short-term courses, dual education, and flexible forms of learning (online, correspondence).

7. Work before displacement

1. Dominant trend

The responses of the interviewees demonstrated a wide professional palette, which could be conditionally grouped into several main areas:

- Industry and production such as miners, electromechanics, power engineers, engineers, turners, gas welders, workers in metallurgical enterprises. It was the largest category, which indicated a significant concentration of IDPs from regions dominated by heavy industry, energy and the mining sector of the economy.
- Education and science such as teachers (primary, physics, physical education), college and university lecturers, scientists (in particular, postgraduate students). The group was quite large, which confirmed the high educational potential among the displaced.
- Medicine and social sphere such as nurses, paramedics, doctors (otolaryngologists, dentists), masseurs, pharmacists. These professions were critically important for the functioning of communities.
- Administrative and office professions/positions such as accountants, economists, quality specialists, IT specialists, representatives of local governments,



heads of institutions. This category demonstrated the presence of managerial and intellectual resources among IDPs.

- Services and trade such as hairdressers, seamstresses, cooks, administrators, postmen, sellers, conductors. This was a segment with a lower level of wages, but important for meeting the basic needs of the community.
- Construction and transport such as drivers, locomotive engineers, chauffeurs, builders, service station masters, foremen. A group characterized by the need for physical labour and technical skills.
- Unemployed, students and pensioners as a separate category that reflected the impact of maternity leave, education or retirement on the employment structure.

2. Additional observations

- A significant number of responses was related to Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhia regions, where people employed in mines, metallurgy and energy dominated.
- The responses showed an emotional component such as pride in previous work ("I really loved my job and the team", "I was satisfied"), which might complicate professional adaptation after displacement.
- The gender distribution corresponded to traditional roles: women more often worked in education, medicine, culture and trade, while men worked in industry, construction and transport.
- Among the displaced there were both highly qualified specialists (engineers, doctors, IT specialists, managers) and workers with technical professions, which created the potential for their integration into various segments of the economy.

Conclusions

Previous employment of IDPs was characterized by considerable diversity, but had clear sectoral clusters: industry, education, medicine, services, transport and construction. This professional experience constituted a significant resource for the receiving regions, but its effective implementation was limited by:



- the mismatch of the structure of the local economy with the demands of the displaced (in particular, industrial personnel);
- the need to confirm qualifications or acquire new skills to adapt to changed employment conditions.

8. Current employment after relocation

1. *Dominant trends*

Respondents' answers indicated different levels of employment experience after relocation:

- *Employed in their current profession/specialty.* Examples included: accountants (including remotely, on internships, in the field of document management), energy specialists, hairdressers, teachers and lecturers (online and in institutions of various levels), neuropsychologist, group leader, cosmetologist-aesthetician, massage therapist, translator (self-employed, remotely), locomotive driver, locksmith, electric and gas welder, rolling mill operator at a metallurgical plant.

- *Other employment (outside their current profession/specialty).* Examples included: private carrier, milk truck, cleaner, cook or cook's assistant, employees of machine-building and metallurgical enterprises, work in a depot or mine, volunteer work (at dormitories, assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine).

- **Remote work.** Mostly accountants, teachers, translators, document development and accounting workers and other specialists who have retained their previous jobs thanks to remote formats.

- **Unemployed.** Main reasons: care for a child with a disability or being on maternity leave, caring for elderly parents, temporary unemployment, periodic part-time jobs, studies, retirement. Some respondents emphasised: "I don't work, but I want to", which reflected the desire to integrate into the labour market in the region of displacement.

2. *Key observations*



A strong group was made up of those who have retained their profession or were able to find employment in their specialty, in particular in the fields of education, industry and transport.

Some respondents adapted thanks to remote work, which allowed them to remain in their "profession" regardless of the region of residence.

A significant number of responses indicated the presence of unemployment among IDPs due to family circumstances or lack of vacancies.

Some respondents changed their professional field (e.g. teacher → work in a factory or in the service sector).

9. Time required to find a job

1. Dominant trends

- Quick employment (several days — 2 weeks) — approximately 25-30% of respondents. This mainly concerned miners, machinists and workers of industrial enterprises, as well as those who received assistance from employment centres.
- Average search term (1-3 months) — 40-45%. This indicator was typical for IDPs who moved to cities with a developed labour market.
- Long-term search (six months or more) — up to 25%. Some respondents, even after a long period, had problems with official employment, in particular due to low salaries, conflicts in collectives or discriminatory attitudes.

2. Job search channels

- Employment centres were effective primarily for men with blue-collar professions. Employment often took place within a few days.
- Internet resources were popular among younger respondents and those looking for unskilled or temporary work.
- Social contacts (acquaintances, colleagues) were one of the key resources; many people got jobs based on recommendations.
- Direct offers from employers were rare, but indicative cases, indicating a targeted search for personnel among IDPs.



- Private agencies were practically not mentioned, which might indicate low trust or limited access.

3. *Main problems*

- Low wages that did not provide basic needs.
- Discrimination and exploitation of IDPs by some employers.
- Incompatibility of work schedules with family circumstances, especially for women with children.
- Lack of vacancies even after retraining, which indicated structural problems of the labour market in the region of residence.
- Home difficulties (lack of housing, illness, adaptation), which delayed the search for a job.

Conclusions

The experience of IDPs in the labour market was heterogeneous. Some of the displaced people quickly integrated due to the preservation of their specialty or social contacts, while others found themselves in a situation of long-term unemployment. Institutional channels (employment centres) were effective for blue-collar professions, but less effective for women and specialists in intellectual fields. Social capital has proven to be an important resource for employment, compensating for the weakness of institutional mechanisms. *Gender dimension:* Women were more likely to face barriers related to family circumstances, while men described quick employment through acquaintances or employment centres. Risks of social tension were associated with cases of discrimination and exploitation, which could deepen IDPs' distrust of local communities.

10. Sufficiency of current education to perform current work

1. *General trends*

The majority of respondents ($\approx 70\text{--}75\%$) believed that their level of education was sufficient to perform current work. Most often, this applied to working



professions/specialties (mechanics, locomotive engineers, electromechanics), where the acquired knowledge met the requirements of the profession.

Some respondents ($\approx 15\text{--}20\%$) noted that their education formally corresponded to employment, but they had a desire or need for advanced training or additional training. This was especially true for the areas of management, accounting, social work and IT.

A smaller group ($\approx 5\text{--}7\%$) indicated insufficient education or limitations related to personal circumstances (childcare, health, retirement age). Some respondents were already in the process of obtaining higher education to improve their own opportunities in the labour market of their region.

2. Typical arguments of respondents when providing answers

Answer: "Education is enough": "Yes, it is enough", "I work in my specialty".

Answer: "I would like to study further", "I would like to get another education", "I would like to improve my skills in the field of management", "Working with children requires constant training - I attend seminars".

Answer: "Education is not enough": "I think it is not enough. I am currently pursuing higher education", "Insufficient knowledge due to health conditions", "Education is enough, but childcare conditions do not allow me to work".

Conclusions

The level of education of the majority of IDPs was sufficient for current professional activities. At the same time, a significant part of them demonstrated a request for professional development, retraining and additional training, which could be used as a resource for their further integration into the labour market of the region of residence.

11. Problems with the availability of skills and knowledge

1. General trends



Most respondents noted that there were no significant difficulties with the skills they had. The responses often included the following phrases: “none”, “there were none”, “did not encounter any”, “none”. This might indicate three key factors:

- employment based on existing qualifications;
- the lack of high requirements from employers for special training;
- the perception of rapid learning on the job as a natural stage of adaptation.

2. Identified groups of problems

• *Adaptation to new employment conditions:* difficulties arose due to a new schedule, a new position or another professional field (“new job and new skills”, “there are many problems because this is a new position”). This indicated that the difficulty is more related to the transition to a new field than to a lack of basic knowledge.

• *Technical and digital skills:* Respondents mentioned difficulties while working with new equipment, mastering software and lack of digital competencies (“learning a new program”, “not enough knowledge in the IT industry”).

• *Lack of practical experience:* Typical for those who changed professions or positions (“not enough practice”).

• *Socio-psychological factors:* Adaptation problems in the team, prejudiced attitude towards IDPs or military personnel (“disrespect for IDPs”).

• *Financial and organizational difficulties:* Salary delays, general economic problems, which respondents identified with “problems at work”.

Conclusions

Most IDPs had sufficient basic skills to perform their work. The most vulnerable were those who faced the need to quickly master new technical and digital competencies.

An important additional barrier remains socio-psychological factors: prejudice, difficulty integrating into new teams. Promising areas of support were:

- digital literacy courses and technical trainings;
- adaptation programs for new areas of employment;



- educational work with employers to prevent discrimination.

12. Experience of working without formal registration

Respondents' answers demonstrated a clear polarization of positions: Some of the respondents believed that IDPs were indeed more often employed informally. Another large group of respondents was convinced that employment conditions were the same for everyone or they did not notice significant differences. A fairly large share of respondents chose the option “don't know / have not encountered”, which indicated a lack of personal experience or reliable information regarding this phenomenon.

Arguments in favour of informal employment among IDPs included:

1. *Fear of losing social benefits.* One of the most common reasons was the fear that formal employment might lead to a reduction or termination of state assistance.
2. *Temporary nature of stay.* Respondents noted that IDPs were in no hurry to formalize official employment relationships due to plans for a possible return to their place of permanent residence or a change in the region of stay.
3. *Unwillingness of employers to officially employ IDPs.* There was evidence from interviewed IDPs about the distrust or reluctance of private employers to conclude employment contracts with IDPs.
4. *Flexibility and low pay.* Some respondents noted that informal employment allowed for more flexible work schedules or to avoid taxation at a low wage level.

Arguments against the thesis about the predominant informal employment of IDPs:

1. the respondents emphasized that local residents also often worked informally, which eliminated the differences between them;
2. their own experience of formal work. Individuals who were themselves formally employed denied the thesis about higher informality among IDPs;
3. examples of acquaintances. Some respondents noted that all IDPs they knew worked formally, which indicated a possible exaggeration of the problem.



Conclusions

4. *Heterogeneity of the situation.* Opposing opinions of respondents indicated that the level of formal employment of IDPs varied depending on the region, sector of the economy, personal circumstances (presence of children, receipt of social benefits, plans for the future).

5. *The factor of social benefits.* The fear of losing benefits was one of the key barriers to formal employment, which demonstrated the potentially demotivating effect of the current social support system.

6. *Temporality of stay.* IDPs who were not sure about the long-term sustainability of their residence might avoid formal employment, which reflected their uncertainty about the future and the instability of their situation.

7. *The role of employers.* The presence of a biased attitude towards IDPs among employers created additional risks of discrimination in the labour market.

8. *Regional and sectoral differences.* The experience of formal employment varied from exclusively positive to negative, which confirmed the heterogeneity of labour market conditions for IDPs.

In general, respondents did not provide an unambiguous assessment of the level of formal employment of IDPs. However, among those who believed that displaced persons more often worked informally, a set of reasons stood out: fear of losing social assistance, the temporary nature of the stay, and the limited willingness of employers to conclude formal agreements. This set of factors created the risk of consolidating the shadow employment segment among IDPs, complicating their integration into the labour market.

13. Working hours at the new workplace

Respondents provided a variety of answers regarding working hours. Standard hours (around 40 hours per week) were the most common, indicated by more than a third of respondents. Less than 30 hours per week (16–30 hours) were indicated by



a small share of respondents, which mostly corresponded to part-time job or flexible work schedules.

More than 50–70 hours per week were indicated by some respondents, indicating significant overload, for example, 70–80 hours per week or 12–16 hours per day, and a significant number of respondents indicated that they were unemployed at the time of the survey.

Regarding the assessment of employment conditions at the new workplace, most respondents considered the conditions to be the same for everyone, formulating opinions as “everyone in the same conditions” or “the conditions are the same as for local residents”.

Isolated complaints about differences concerned unstable schedules or higher workload among IDPs, but these cases were exceptional. Respondents who were not working were mostly unable to assess the situation.

Regarding overtime and working on weekends/holidays, some respondents confirmed cases of overtime, including working on weekends, holidays or exceeding the standard working hours, especially until 2022. Other respondents noted that working hours were limited to the established schedule. In some cases, the responses mentioned long workloads (12–14 hours per day) without additional pay, which indicated the risks of labour exploitation of IDPs.

Conclusions

1. The most typical among employed IDPs was a standard 40-hour workweek.
2. In most cases, no differences in working hours between IDPs and local workers were recorded.
3. There were isolated cases of overworking and overtime without compensation, which might indicate the risks of labour exploitation of employed IDPs.
4. A significant share of IDPs did not work at all, which affected their perception of employment conditions and its overall picture.



14. Is the salary received for work in a new place enough for the life of the respondents?

The majority of survey participants indicated a lack of financial resources. The most frequent and most emotionally coloured answer was “not enough”, which ranged from categorical formulations (“not at all”) to specifics regarding the coverage of only basic needs (“barely covers basic expenses”, “not enough due to high rent and prices”).

Some respondents noted that the salary was enough only to meet basic needs — food, household expenses, and partly clothing. At the same time, financial resources were insufficient to cover medical expenses, housing, ensuring the educational needs of children, and organizing recreation.

A small group of survey participants indicated relative satisfaction with the level of income, emphasizing the sufficiency of the salary to cover all needs. However, such cases were rather exceptional and did not reflect a general trend.

A separate category was made up of respondents who did not work or were supported by social payments (pensions, assistance for IDPs). The vast majority of them emphasized a critical lack of funds.

Among the key reasons for financial instability, respondents noted: the high cost of housing rental, rising prices for food, clothing and utilities, significant medical expenses, loss of property and housing as a result of the war, as well as the low level of social benefits (for example, 2 thousand UAH for IDPs).

Conclusions

- The financial vulnerability of IDPs significantly exceeded the similar indicator among the local population: even if they had a job, they could not always provide for housing and basic needs.
- The system of social benefits did not compensate for losses: 2 thousand UAH per IDP or minimum pension payments were insufficient to support a family in conditions of war and inflation.



- Socio-economic inequality was manifested in a significant gap between groups of respondents: some individuals were satisfied with their financial situation, but the majority was in a state of financial hardship, which indicated limited access to high-paying employment.
- Additional sources of income (part-time jobs, entrepreneurial activity) were often considered as a forced means of ensuring basic needs.
- Socio-demographic factors (presence of children, chronic diseases) significantly increased the risks of financial instability.
- Psychological aspect: for a significant part of IDPs, the feeling of "lack" had become a normal phenomenon/state. Respondents lowered their expectations to survival levels, which created a culture of limitation and rejection. This, in turn, could have long-term consequences for motivation, work capacity, and integration processes into a new social environment.

15. Living conditions and dependents

1. *Level of satisfaction with living conditions.* Most respondents expressed satisfaction or a mostly positive assessment of living conditions. Most often, they emphasized the modesty of housing (dormitories, temporary housing), but emphasized gratitude for the roof over their heads.

A significant part of the survey participants assessed the conditions as partially satisfactory. The responses noted that although housing was provided, it was inferior to pre-war standards (lack of amenities, high rent, the need to purchase basic things from scratch).

A minority of respondents expressed complete dissatisfaction. Their responses were characterized by a high emotional colouring: the high cost of rent, the low quality of living conditions, as well as a constant feeling of transience were emphasized.



2. *The presence of dependents.* A significant number of respondents reported having dependents, primarily children (often two or more). Cases of caring for the elderly (parents, pensioners) were also mentioned, and in some responses — for people with disabilities (children or parents).

Some respondents specifically indicated the need to keep pets. At the same time, there was a group of respondents who did not have dependents.

3. *Impact on professional activity.* For most respondents, the presence of dependents had no significant or only minimal impact on professional activity. However, the need to take sick leave, combine work duties with caring for children or parents was often mentioned.

For some survey participants, dependents became a reason for the need to work more, while for others was a factor that significantly complicated or even made it impossible to find a job (for example, in cases of caring for a child with a disability or the elderly).

Conclusion

Most of the displaced have adapted to the housing conditions, although they did not meet the usual pre-war standards. In general, the attitude to the situation was characterized by understanding and acceptance of the circumstances.

The most significant challenge remained the presence of dependents, in particular children and people with disabilities, which limited opportunities for full-fledged employment.

The presence of dependents determined the need for more flexible forms of employment and created additional risks of financial instability.

16. Cooperation with public organizations and trade unions

1. *Lack of social ties.* Most respondents reported a lack of social contacts at their new place of residence, stating: “I don’t have any,” “I don’t know,” “no one



helps.” Some survey participants emphasized that certain ties existed before, but were lost (“broken”).

2. *Membership in trade unions.* Some respondents were members of trade unions (in particular, railway workers, miners, metallurgists). However, their answers indicated that trade unions performed mainly an accounting function, while real material or social support was provided extremely rarely.

3. *Volunteer and public organizations.* Volunteer initiatives played a key role in meeting the humanitarian needs of displaced persons. Most often, assistance was provided in the form of food, medicine, clothing, hygiene products, and household items. In rare cases, medical equipment was provided or cultural events were organized. For example, the “With Warmth in the Heart” foundation offered free performances and master classes.

An important aspect was the practice of mutual assistance: some respondents participated in volunteer activities, in particular in gatherings for the military.

4. *IDP and diaspora groups.* Some respondents maintained contacts with IDP associations or regional diasporas (for example, the Bakhmut diaspora).

Their assistance was most often limited to humanitarian kits (food, cereals, sugar, pasta) and support from local communities. At the same time, respondents noted that in some cases such assistance has ceased in recent times.

Conclusions

- The lack of stable social ties was a characteristic feature of most displaced people, which increased their social vulnerability.
- Trade union structures performed a rather formal function, without significant practical benefits for members.
- Voluntary organizations remained the main source of support, providing basic needs with humanitarian resources and promoting social integration.
- IDP and diaspora groups were an additional source of assistance, but its sustainability and regularity remained inconsistent.



- The involvement of displaced people in volunteer activities demonstrated not only the need for assistance, but also a willingness to integrate into local communities and contribute to the support of others.

17. Gender discrimination at work

1. General trend

The vast majority of respondents (over 85–90%) noted that women did not experience discrimination, or emphasized the lack of their own experience of encountering such a phenomenon.

2. Neutral responses

Some respondents chose a neutral position, stating: “I don’t know”, “I can’t answer”, “I don’t have such experience”. This might indicate both the absence of direct cases of discrimination in their immediate environment and low reflection on the problem.

3. Examples of recognition of discrimination

A small group of respondents (less than 5–7%) reported the presence of signs of discrimination. Most often, it was about lower wages for women compared to men for similar job duties. A few respondents answered affirmatively (“yes”), but without additional explanations. There was practically no mention of restrictions on access to education.

4. Arguments in favour of the absence of discrimination

- Direct thesis: "There is no discrimination" — repeated in the responses of a significant part of the respondents.
- Socio-professional context: in the collectives where the respondents worked (railway, mines, industrial enterprises, educational institutions), women made up a significant share of employees.
- Equality of positions: respondents emphasized that women held various positions without visible restrictions.
- Lack of personal experience: "I have no negative experience."



Conclusions

- *General perception:* Most IDPs did not identify gender discrimination in their educational or professional environment. This might indicate both a lack of systemic manifestations within their experience and a low level of awareness of indirect forms of discrimination.
- *Employment context:* Respondents often cited examples of enterprises with a high share of both male and female labour (railways, mines, industrial enterprises), where women worked alongside men without explicit restrictions.
- *Hidden risks:* Despite the prevailing belief that there was no discrimination, individual mentions of the gender pay gap were consistent with official statistics indicating lower incomes for women compared to men in identical positions.
- *The problem of "invisibility":* The subjective experience of most displaced persons did not record manifestations of discrimination, however, individual evidence of lower wages might indicate the existence of latent forms of inequality, invisible to those who did not directly experience them.

18. Conditions under which return home is possible

1. Key trends for return conditions

The most widespread and dominant condition for return, indicated by more than 70% of respondents, was the end of hostilities, Ukraine's victory, the cessation of shelling, and ensuring personal safety. The wording varied: “end of the war”, “deoccupation”, “peace”, “ceasefire”. Security in the responses was associated not only with the absence of military operations, but also with the demining of territories, as well as guarantees that similar threats would not occur again in the future.

The second most important condition was the availability of housing both one's own or restored. Respondents directly noted: “if the apartment remains intact”, “compensation for destroyed housing”, “the city needs to be rebuilt”. Along with housing, elements of basic infrastructure were often mentioned: electricity, water



supply, medical services, functioning of schools. This indicated an awareness of the duration of the recovery processes.

A significant number of respondents emphasized the importance of having work: “jobs in their specialty”, “work and housing”, “jobs”. For some IDPs, the economic prerequisites for return were considered no less critical than security issues.

A significant group of respondents expressed doubts about returning or categorically refused such an opportunity: “I will not return, because my city is destroyed and under occupation”; “I do not plan to do so yet”; “there are no conditions for return”. This indicated the formation of a new identity and integration processes in the host communities.

In isolated responses, intangible conditions were noted: “if people will communicate in Ukrainian”, “availability of start-up capital”. Such responses reflected changes in the worldview of the displaced and the transformation of their social expectations.

Conclusions

- *Security as a basic condition.* It was the main and unchanging priority: no other prerequisite has sounded so massively and emotionally. Even with the availability of housing or work, people were not ready to risk their lives.
- *Housing and infrastructure* as the second level of needs. Reintegration was impossible without state programs for compensation, reconstruction and restoration of communications.
- *Economic conditions.* The availability of jobs and opportunities for self-sufficiency determined the long-term prospect of return.
- *Partial integration of IDPs into new communities.* Refusal to return indicated irreversible demographic and social changes that must be taken into account in state policy.



- *Mental and cultural factors.* Although even isolated mentions of language and social conditions demonstrated that for some of the displaced, return was associated not only with material, but also with value-cultural aspects.

19. Using new knowledge in the future

1. Positive answers

About half of the respondents expressed their willingness or intention to use the acquired knowledge and skills (“yes”, “planning”, “wanting to use”).

Main areas:

- Professional competencies: pedagogy, cosmetology, entrepreneurship, transport, remote work.
- Social and communication skills: effective interaction with people, teamwork, friendliness.
- Personal qualities: resistance to difficult conditions, rethinking life priorities.

Some of the displaced perceived new experience as a resource for the future, but noted that its implementation was possible only if there were favourable conditions (work, rebuilding housing, returning home).

2. Neutral responses

About 20–25% of participants chose vague formulations (“I don’t know”, “I’ll see”, “it depends”).

Factors that determined their position:

- conditions of return (housing, employment, reconstruction);
- opportunity for education or retraining;
- general situation in the country after the end of the war.

These answers indicated widespread uncertainty and psychological fatigue, when planning for the future was difficult.

3. Negative responses



Approximately 25–30% of respondents stated that they did not plan to apply new knowledge (“no”, “I do not plan to”, “I did not receive new knowledge”).

Main reasons:

- desire to return to the previous profession/specialty without changes;
- lack of new knowledge or opportunities to acquire them;
- advanced age (retirees);
- reluctance to return home in general.

4. Important details

- Some respondents clearly linked the application of knowledge to the availability of jobs, emphasizing that without active demand and supply in the labour market, new skills lose their significance.
 - Some answers were ironic or pessimistic (“more silence and not talking about yourself”, “there is nowhere to turn”), which might indicate fatigue from uncertainty.
 - For some IDPs, displacement was an impetus for development in new areas such as cosmetology, entrepreneurship, remote work.

Conclusions

- *Development potential:* some IDPs were ready to integrate new knowledge into the reconstruction processes, but this required conditions such as access to education, employment, housing.
 - *Uncertainty factor:* a significant group of respondents hesitated, which emphasized their need for career counselling and psychological support programs.
 - *Risk of loss of human capital:* In the absence of opportunities to implement new competencies, a significant part of the displaced would either return to their previous professions/specialties or completely abandon their use.
 - *Personal transformation:* Even in the absence of new professional knowledge, respondents noted an increase in social and psychological qualities



(resilience, cohesion, benevolence), which might become the basis for the development of public initiatives in the future.

20. Intentions to start their own business upon return.

1. Predominant answers “no”

The majority of respondents did not plan to start or resume their own business.

Main reasons:

- financial constraints – lack of funds to start;
- age factor – retirement age or related restrictions;
- health condition that makes it impossible to take on additional workload;
- unwillingness to take on responsibility and risks associated with entrepreneurship.

2. Positive answers “yes”

A noticeable, although smaller in number, group expressed a desire to start or resume their own business. Their motivation:

- experience in entrepreneurial activity (hairdressing salons, sole proprietorships, trade);
- desire for financial independence and self-employment;
- development of the agricultural sector and small-scale production;
- service sector and creative industries (creative workshops, bookstores, other cultural initiatives);
- need for additional income due to insufficient basic income.

3. Neutral responses

Some respondents take a wait-and-see attitude ("I don't know", "if possible").

Their plans depend on:

- financial opportunities;
- general stabilization of the economy;
- conditions for returning after the war.

Conclusion



The situation demonstrated that caution and financial insecurity dominated among IDPs, which blocked the development of entrepreneurial initiative. However, there was a noticeable layer of active and motivated people who had experience in running a business and were ready to return to it after the situation stabilizes.

Positive answers were often associated with specific professional skills or experience (hairdressers, sole proprietors, farmers, creative industries).

Negative answers almost always boiled down to a financial barrier and lack of confidence in the future.

All this indicated that state and donor programs to support entrepreneurship among IDPs (grants, microloans, training projects) could become an effective tool for integration and economic recovery.

21. Assessment of IDPs regarding entities responsible for providing key support after return

1. *State and authorities.* The most frequent answer was the state (central, local, regional, self-government bodies). Arguments: the state is responsible by default and bears a moral and legal obligation to protect citizens; people paid taxes, therefore they have the right to support; war victims need help to restore housing and normal life; assistance is expected through state programs, reparations, social support.

2. *Employment services.* Some respondents believed that employment centres are obliged to provide assistance with employment and the restoration of economic activity.

3. *Family and loved ones.* For some people, the most important support was the return of family members from the war, the help of a husband, son or relatives. Emotional support from loved ones was also mentioned.

4. *Society and community.* There were responses about the role of society, local communities, and the social environment in recovery after return.



5. *Armed Forces of Ukraine.* Some respondents noted that the Armed Forces of Ukraine were already a key support, because they provided security and the opportunity to return.

6. *“No one should.”* There were answers that no one was obliged to help, because everyone had to overcome difficulties on their own. Argument: there are people who need help more.

7. *Others.* There were isolated mentions of enterprises, employers and other institutions. Some noted: “The main thing is peace and security, we will overcome the rest.”

Conclusions

- The vast majority of respondents expected the state support (material, housing, program).
- A smaller part relied on family and their own strength.
- There was a group that did not expect help and did not believe that anyone was obliged to support them.

22. Assessment of the feasibility of applying a differentiated approach to supporting IDPs upon return to the region of pre-war residence

The vast majority of respondents answered “yes” – that is, they supported the idea of differentiating IDPs depending on: the scale of destruction of their housing and infrastructure, the degree of property loss, the availability of social, educational and medical services, the region of return. The main arguments “in favour” were:

- this is fair, because people’s situations are very different;
- priority should be given to those who have lost everything;
- assistance should stimulate return and reconstruction of regions;
- an individual approach will allow for more efficient use of state resources.



A smaller part of the respondents answered “no” or “I don’t know”. Motives: “everyone should receive the same”, “people should rely on themselves”, “the state will decide”.

Rare answers: “partially” – that is, assistance should take into account only the most critical cases; “maybe” / “cannot answer” – indicated uncertainty or insufficient understanding of the topic.

Conclusion

The majority of respondents considered the differentiation of IDPs necessary and fair, and the main criterion was the level of destruction of housing and lost property. A minority advocated equality in support or doubted the feasibility of such an approach.

23. Assessment of differences in training and use of labour resources between the region of pre-war residence and the current place of settlement of IDPs.

Most respondents did not feel a significant difference between regions: the most common formulations were “I do not see a difference”, “there is no difference”, “the same”, “I do not know”. This might indicate either a similar level of training in different regions, or insufficient awareness or personal experience of IDPs for objective comparison.

Some respondents noted that in large cities (Kharkiv, Kryvyi Rih) there was a wider choice of educational institutions, a higher impact of education on career growth and more offers from employment centres. This emphasized the urban factor: cities had a greater number of institutions, training programs and opportunities for professional development compared to small communities.

Some responses noted that the differences were not manifested in personnel training, but in the structure of the region's economy: the sectors of industry, the number of jobs, and the demand for professions/specialties. For example, in the pre-



war region, there were vacancies by specialty, while in the new place of residence they might not exist.

It is also noted that in new communities, higher education might be valued lower, which reduced motivation to improve qualifications. The problem was especially relevant in areas where career opportunities were previously closely linked to the level of education (for example, in the city of Kharkiv).

Some respondents emphasized the difficulties in finding employment during the war: "it used to be easier to find a job, but now it's harder." This indicated that changes in the labour market were felt more strongly than differences in the personnel training system.

Conclusions

The main trend is the subjective absence of significant differences between regions. Most IDPs did not identify regional differences in training, which might be a consequence of the unification of educational/professional standards in Ukraine. Wartime problems shifted the focus from training issues to job shortages, instability, and the need for retraining.

Policy recommendations. Developing retraining programs and supporting regions with limited educational resources could partially reduce the imbalances indicated by IDPs.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The survey reflects the complex dynamics of IDP integration. Despite their high level of education and professional skills, IDPs faced economic and social barriers, including a lack of jobs in their field, discriminatory practices, and limited resources. At the same time, there was resilience, a desire for professional and personal development, and adaptation through friends, family ties, and volunteer support.

Analysis of the responses allowed us to identify two main integration strategies: return to pre-war regions of residence after the end of the war or final consolidation



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in new communities. Both scenarios will have long-term consequences for the demographic and socio-economic situation in Ukraine.