

# How should Ukraine's strategy of reintegration of temporarily displaced people look?

By Roman Vlasenko, Senior Fellow at Ukraine and Eastern Europe Programme

Due to the war, millions of people have been forced to leave their homes due to life-threatening conditions, the destruction of civil infrastructure, and the loss of their main income for more secure places and the chance to earn a living again. They fled from war to both relatively peaceful regions of Ukraine and abroad – e.g. become temporarily displaced persons (TDPs).

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)<sup>1</sup>, more than 8 million Ukrainians are now recorded as refugees residing in different parts of the world, mainly in Europe, in addition to 7.1 million more internally displaced, according to International Organization for Migration (IOM)<sup>2</sup>. A sudden dramatic change to Ukrainian people's standard of living of this magnitude renders the situation a severe humanitarian crisis in Europe.

The composition and direction of migration flows during the war in Ukraine have constantly been changing. As the war wages on, the civilian population's evacuation also continues. Forced migration within the country will continue with the obligatory evacuation of people from combat zones in the East and South of Ukraine. Nonetheless, due to the liberation of parts of occupied territories from Russia, some displaced persons have been able to return to their homes. Moreover, according to the latest UN opinion poll, 81% of refugees abroad plan to return to Ukraine eventually<sup>3</sup>.

There is a contradiction in the possible future return of people to their previous places of living or in Ukraine in general. On the one hand, Ukraine's future restoration will need qualified people to renew the

human capital; on the other hand, this will increase the pressure on the labour market and social infrastructure of different regions and might spark more emigration abroad as people seek out security and economic well-being. For example, today's labour market is not ready to regain many TDPs. Due to the significant destruction of infrastructure, the disruption of logistics chains, and the decrease in the population's purchasing power, a large share of enterprises can no longer offer jobs to able-bodied people.

This means Ukraine's authorities and society must put their efforts and elaborate the policies to ensure safe conditions for either the return of people to their previous places of residence or support in settling in new towns. Along with security issues, the main causes preventing people from returning are concerns about a lack of access to basic services and adequate living conditions<sup>4</sup>.

The resolution of the above-mentioned problems needs a systematic approach, which might be aggregated into a **reintegration strategy**. The framework of the strategy is the following:

1 <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>  
2 <https://ukraine.iom.int/crisis-response>  
3 <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/95767>  
4 <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/95767>

## General policy approach

- Establish mechanisms to obtain reliable information on the number and composition of refugees and IDPs and ensure the restoration and issuance of lost national documents with an assessment of their needs as well as possibilities of returning to their previous places of residence or possibilities of setting up life in the host communities;
- Support for local communities that have received a large number of displaced persons;
- A permanent monitoring of communities' needs related to the social support of citizens, primarily TDPs. This initiative must involve the host countries and international organizations in its development, implementation, and financial support;
- Establish closer ties with the Ukrainian diaspora to get actual information on refugees, their needs, and possibilities;

## Social infrastructure development

- Elaborate non-bureaucratic and simplified system of compensation for lost and damaged property;
- Implement an interinstitutional mechanism for the restoration of destroyed housing and civil infrastructure, which allows the maximum use of local production facilities to provide partner financing and to attract international aid funds based on bilateral relations between communities and donors;
- Implementation of a program providing access to housing and the introduction of a programme aimed at the integration of veterans.
- Implementation of projects to increase the energy efficiency of residential buildings, the construction of new buildings, and the repair of damaged buildings;
- Modernization of social facilities in accordance with the principles of energy efficiency and accessibility, restoration of destroyed facilities, and construction of industrial parks;

- Rebuilding secondary and high education facilities;
- Restoration of destroyed cultural institutions, museums, memorials, and cultural centres;
- Elaborate on the framework of e-government tools for the accounting of free or cheap housing, which can be temporarily provided to TDPs.

## Labour market

- Stimulation of private entrepreneurship, particularly concerning the provision of preferential lending and the lifting of administrative and tax barriers to doing business, and to consider the possibility of duty-free importation of personal property and goods for production purposes for small businesses started by returnees;
- Short-term reprofiling of the specialists in those fields where there is a shortage of labour and which will be relevant in the post-war recovery;
- social entrepreneurship development on the basis of public-private partnership;
- Favourable conditions for labour mobility in order to ensure demand for the labour associated with overcoming the consequences of the destruction of the economy, reconstruction of territories, production and housing stock: in the areas of housing, informing about demand and supply in the labour market, operational retraining, etc.;
- Expand the powers and capabilities of communities to create conditions for effective employee engagement, including the number of TDPs;
- Appropriate tax and credit policies to promote the revival and creation of small businesses by returnees, in particular, consider the possibility of duty-free importation of their personal property and industrial goods.

## Healthcare

- Efficient tools for determining current and projected health care needs (in particular, collection of data and medical statistics in the regions) with appropriate reallocation of resources;
- Broad development of services supporting the mental health of people affected by the war;
- Restoration of infrastructure and relocation of health care facilities (including the conversion of existing facilities), the creation of a list of priority nosologies caused by warfare, with further prioritization of their funding;
- Development of a network of specialized health care facilities, the creation of digital services, including telemedicine;
- restoration and adjustment of logistic chains of medical care at various levels, expansion of access to the pharmacy network, the adaptation of personnel support in the industry, taking into account the scale of internal displacement by involving specialists among TDPs, the adaptation of the health care system to the specific needs of the military and post-war periods.