



DEPAUL UKRAINE MULTI SECTOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Homelessness has no place

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MULTI SECTOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Introduction

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 disrupted the geopolitical status quo by bringing a crisis previously confined to the eastern-most oblasts to the entire country. The invasion triggered an international humanitarian response unprecedented in both scale and funding level. The response collectively reached close to 16 million people in 2022. The cash response alone reached almost 6 million people: the single largest cash intervention in the history of the sector.

Both the breadth and severity of need is exacerbating as the war continues. UN OCHA reports 18 million people in need of life saving assistance and estimates it will cost \$3.9 billion to support just the 60 percent most in need in 2023¹. There are now an estimated 5.1 million persons internally displaced within Ukraine (IOM, May 2023) and over 49 percent of the population requires humanitarian assistance.

The Depaul Group of charities works across the world with a mission to end

homelessness and change the lives of those affected by it. Depaul International is the parent organisation of the Depaul Group, based in London. Since the start of the conflict in February 2022, Depaul Ukraine (DPU) has expanded and adapted its work with people experiencing homelessness and vulnerable groups in response to the fast changing needs of the humanitarian context. DPU's main operating areas are Kharkiv, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Odesa and Zaporizhzhya oblasts. Since March 2022, DPU and its community-based partners and volunteers have provided integrated services through centres and outreach, including: food and NFI (Non-food items) parcels, shelter repairs, psychological support, cash transfers, legal advice, child friendly spaces and accommodation for displaced people. DPU also operates specialist homelessness services including emergency accommodation and criminal justice programmes. DPU supported over 115,000 affected individuals in 2022.

¹ OCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan Ukraine, February 2023
Ground Truth Solutions, Call for communication, collaboration, and cash: Perceptions of aid in Ukraine, February 2023

Methodology

DPU conducted this multi-sectoral needs assessment with a focus on the situation in Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Mykolaiv and Odesa oblasts in May 2023. The purpose was to identify the priority needs of affected communities and existing clients (Depaul refers to aid recipients as clients) in Depaul's operating areas, and enhance understanding of complex issues and dynamics affecting different groups nationally. The needs assessment blends secondary data analysis with primary analysis of an online survey and interviews in DPU's areas of operation:

- Depaul conducted a quantitative national online survey including priority needs, income status, accommodation and vulnerability factors. The survey received responses from 425 people living across 15 Oblasts. Eighty-six respondents were IDPs; 99 percent of respondents were female and one percent male. Therefore, this data more fully reflects the views of female IDPs than other groups.
- DPU staff conducted 124 semi-structured interviews in Ukrainian with humanitarian clients and conflict affected community members in Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Mykolaiv and Odesa. Seventy-four percent of respondents were female, 26 percent were male and 83 percent were IDPs. Questions concentrated on respondents' priority needs and concerns, and their views on existing assistance.

- DPU staff conducted structured interviews in Ukrainian with 27 clients accessing rough sleeping services in Kharkiv, Kyiv and Odesa to understand the specific experiences and issues affecting this group. Ninety-three percent were male and seven percent were female. This broadly reflects the gender breakdown of the rough sleeping population.
- The secondary data analysis synthesised findings from humanitarian programmes of INGOs and government aid agencies across the thematic areas of: reconstruction, cash assistance, food assistance, education, children's centres, psychosocial support, safeguarding and protection, and employment. Over 100 documents were reviewed, including post-distribution monitoring surveys (PDMs), INGO narrative and budget reports, rapid and periodic needs assessments, joint assessments of specific sectors, and other open-source literature produced by the sector.

The external review paints a portrait of humanitarian assistance at-large in order to identify emerging categories of vulnerability and the strengths and limitations of existing programmes. The online survey and client interviews add granular detail to the big picture trends revealed in the external review.

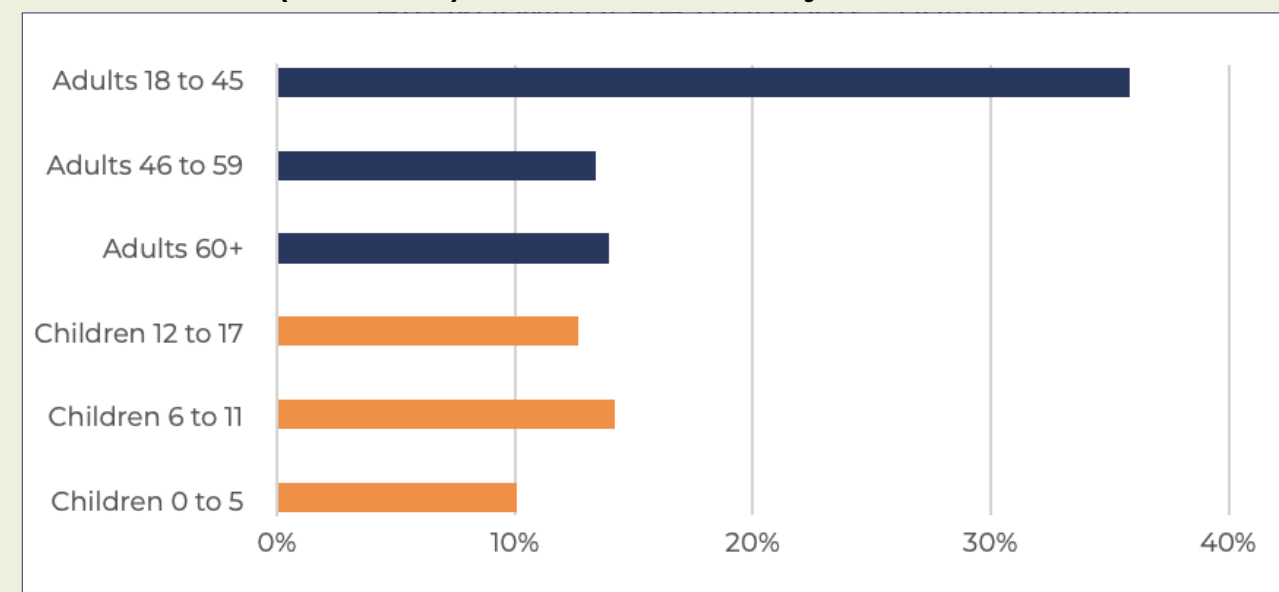
“Both the breadth and severity of need is exacerbating as the war continues. UN OCHA reports 18 million people in need of life saving assistance



Image: Arete / Maciek Musialek / DEC

88 PERCENT OF UKRAINIANS SURVEYED DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO COVER THEIR LIVING EXPENSES

Breakdown of HH (households) members – online survey



3. Demographics

Online survey (national respondents)

Age of respondents: over 60: 9%, 45 to 60: 21%, 18 to 44: 70%, under 18: 1%

Sex of respondent: female 99%, male 1%

Average HH size: 3.3, average no of adults: 2.1, average no of children: 1.2

HHs with children: 77%, HHs with a disability: 22%

Adult HH members: females: 63%, male: 37%

IDP (Internally displaced person) status: IDPs: 86%, non-IDPs 14%

Length of displacement: less than 30 days 1%, 30 to 89 days 5% and over 90 days 94%

Number of times they have been displaced: 1: 52%, 2: 36%, 3: 10%, 4 or more: 2%

Client interviews (in Depaul's operating areas)

Average age of respondent: 47

Age of respondents: over 60: 27%, 45 to 60: 22%, 18 to

44: 48%, under 18: 1%

Sex of respondent: female: 74%, male: 26%

Average HH size: 2.9 people

HHs with children: 56% (average no of children in these HHs: 1.5)

HHs with a disability: 23%

IDP status: IDPs 83%, non-IDPs 17%

Length of displacement: less than 30 days 5%, 30 to 89 days 31% and over 90 days 64%

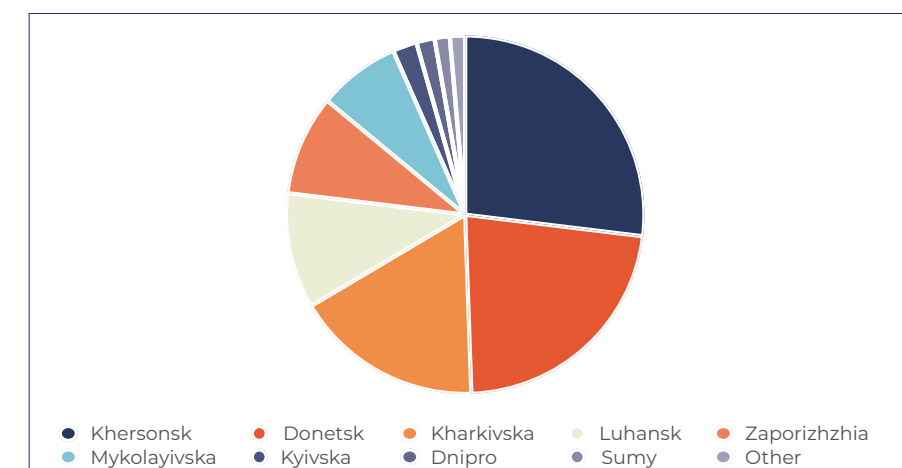
Location of respondents: Kharkiv: 31%, Odessa and Mykolaiv: 37%, Kyiv: 32%

% of clients who would prefer to receive information in-person from staff

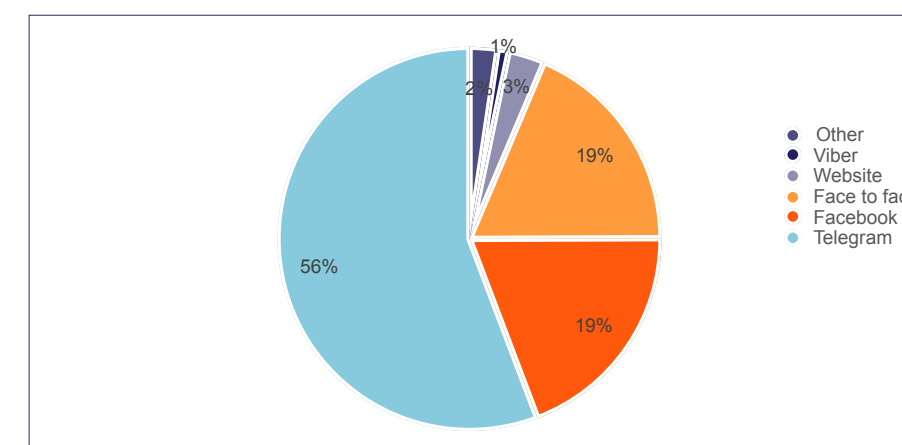
Age 18 to 45: 17%

Age 46 to 59: 20%

Age 60+: 25%



IDPs home Oblast before Feb 22 - online survey



Preferred information channel - online survey

CASH IS OVERWHELMINGLY IDENTIFIED AS A HIGH PRIORITY BY 73 PERCENT OF THE PREDOMINANTLY FEMALE IDP RESPONDENTS.

4. Overview of priority needs

Summary of priority needs identified through Depaul client and community interviews:

1. **Accommodation** and high rent costs are a core concern. Many people cannot afford adequate housing and it is common for people to rent damaged apartments and homes that require repairs, mould treatment, etc.
2. **Cash and food** are a common need across all locations and groups highlighted the challenges people face in covering essential costs. Food and cash are the highest priorities for families with children, IDPs displaced within the last 30 days, 18-44 year olds and interviewees in Kyiv. People face difficulties in meeting food costs alongside rent and other expenses, although food availability is also limited in some frontline areas.
3. **Reconstruction**, including building materials and skilled labour, is a high need/ concern, particularly in de-occupied

areas including Mykolaiv and Kharkiv, among households (HHs) without children, non-IDP HHs and the over 60s. IDPs flag reconstruction as a general concern but do not characterise it as a leading short-term need, focusing more on how to establish housing, find resources and develop community in their current locations.

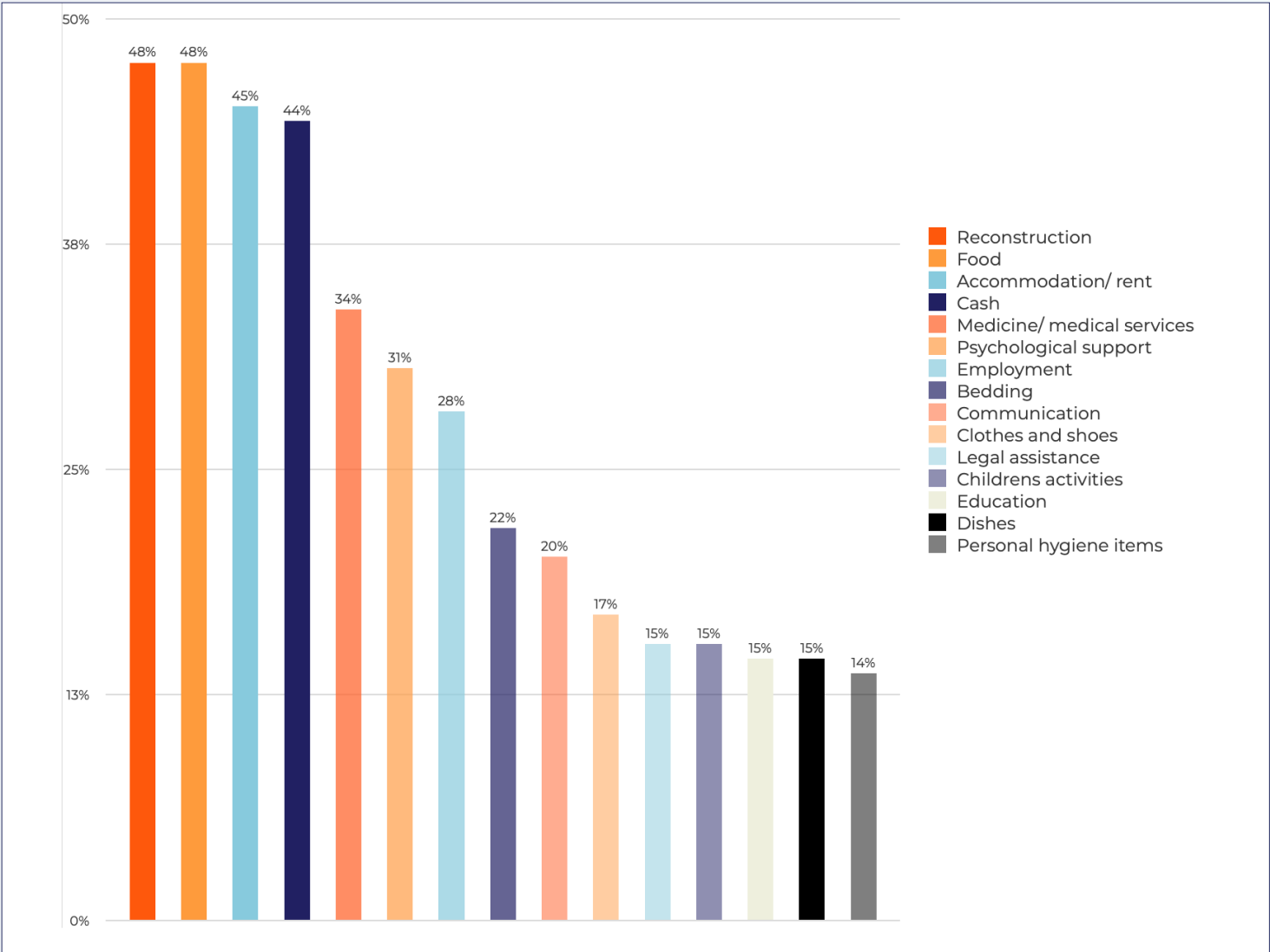
3. **Medicine and medical treatment** are highlighted as core challenges for reasons of accessibility and affordability. These are one of the top two priorities among households with a disability, over 60s, and people living in Kharkiv or Mykolaiv.
5. **Employment** is identified as a concern. A third of respondents request assistance in finding formal employment and skills training due to a scarcity of jobs. IDPs and agricultural workers face compounded barriers to finding formal employment. Caregiving responsibilities limits some women's ability to find formal, regular employment.

6. **Psychosocial wellbeing** is consistently identified as a concern across most groups, particularly in Mykolaiv and Kyiv, IDPs displaced within the last 3 months and non-IDPs.
7. **Concerns for children's welfare** extends to the availability of psychosocial support, space in schools, and the availability of leisure and extracurricular activities.
8. **Household and hygiene items** such as clothing for children, bedding, dishes,

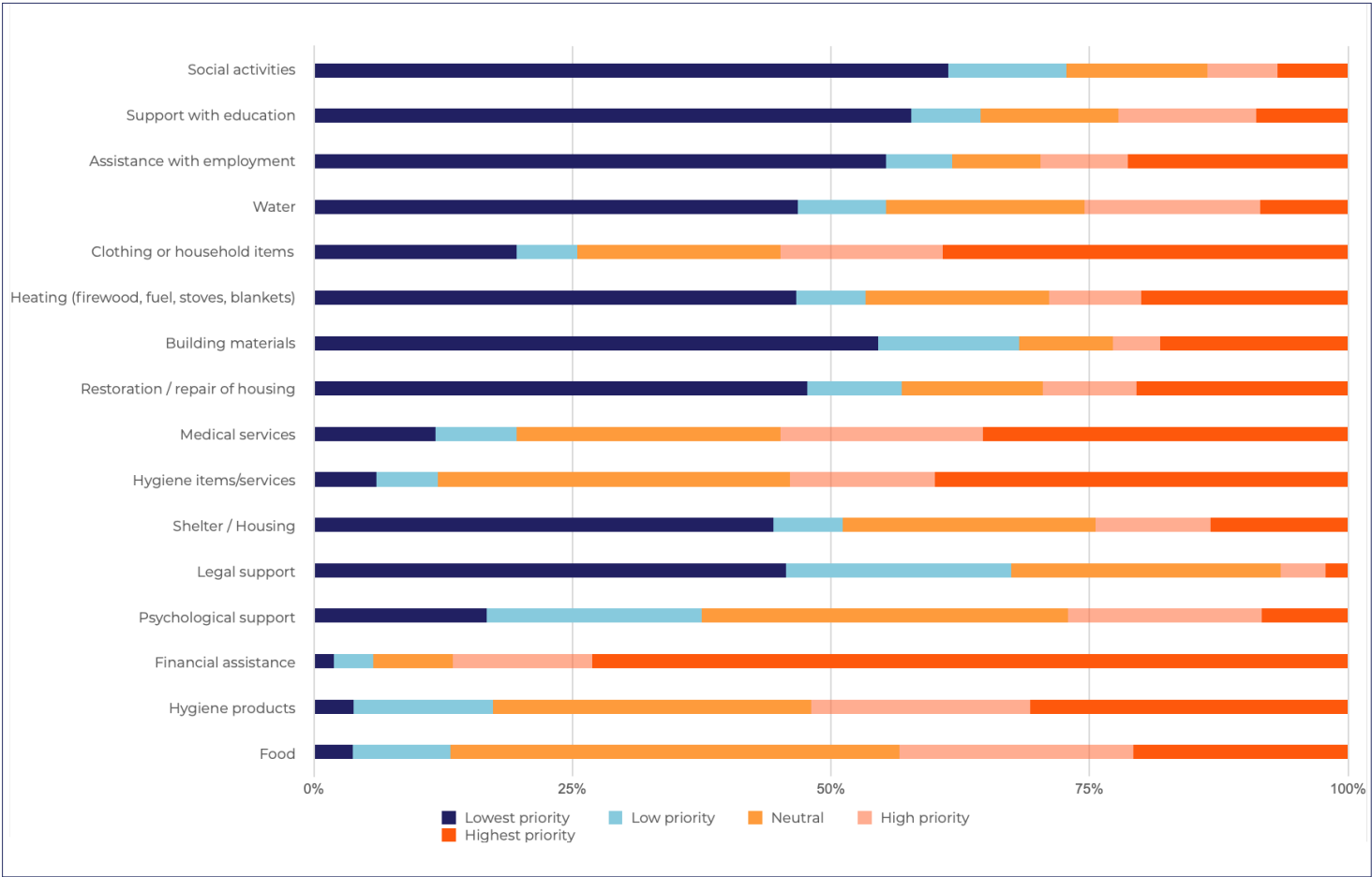
nappies, mattresses and household cleaning products were some of the most requested in-kind support.

The national online survey reveals a more uniform picture of people's priority needs. Cash is overwhelmingly identified as a high priority by 73 percent of the predominantly female IDP respondents. Other high needs are clothing and NFIs, hygiene items, medical items and food.

Percentage of respondents who indicated a certain need



Priority types of support among respondents of online survey



5. Key Findings

Displaced people are focused on establishing themselves in their new locations

The vast majority of displaced people interviewed are focused on making a life for themselves in their new location; priorities include finding accommodation, work, meeting their children’s needs, making friends and establishing a community. Displaced people are generally not planning to return to their communities of origin, at least in the coming year. The intentions of people interviewed to establish themselves in a new location is undermined by the fact that 48 percent of respondents to the online survey have been displaced at least twice. The upheaval of living through war undermines efforts by many Ukrainians to achieve a semblance of stability and normalcy. Keeping

these efforts in mind, useful assistance should address integration concerns such as access to education, healthcare, accommodation, psychosocial support and leisure activities, whilst remaining sensitive to the fact that further displacement is probable in some cases. IDPs frequently cited cash assistance as most useful, as it provides flexibility in this fluid situation.

The decision of IDPs on whether to return to their communities of origin is influenced by the security situation and the availability of employment and other opportunities in the respective locations. The online survey revealed key concerns central to IDPs’ risk assessments are:

- The psychological impact on children.
- The availability of formal, stable employment.
- The condition of housing.

The ability to make friends in one’s host community and to (re)create a social network also influenced IDPs’ short-term plans to return.

Emerging categories of need and vulnerability do not fit with standard targeting criteria

The war in Ukraine is unique. Consequently, there are emerging categories of vulnerability that do not fit cleanly within typical criteria for assessing need. Surveyed clients recommended that aid actors give more attention to these groups. This is in line with other studies of community perception: “Focus on emerging vulnerable groups and people who are missed by eligibility criteria, such as people who are officially registered as employed but lost their income, and relatives of veterans and military.”²

Humanitarian actors across Ukraine use similar vulnerability criteria, which risks excluding several groups with conflict-related needs. This includes: small businesses owners; people officially registered as “employed” but who do not have an income; IDPs displaced before February 2022; rural communities (particularly those in de-occupied or frontline areas); people with unregistered disabilities; LGBTQ+ individuals and couples; and men eligible for conscription who are reticent to register or have contact with the state due to the possibility of being called up.

Depaul’s assessments also identified that 50-60 year olds are excluded from most targeting criteria as they are too young for state pension benefits yet may face age-related discrimination and other barriers in obtaining regular, formal work. Some forms of cash assistance require that families have three or more children, excluding smaller families from support.

Some civil society organisations flagged the exclusion of Roma populations from locally provided assistance. UNDP’s June 2023 Human Impact Assessment reinforced this finding, reporting limited access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and formal employment. Minority Rights cited several core barriers to accessing cash assistance due to the Roma population’s general lack of formal documentation, lower literacy rates, and the lack of registration/feedback materials in the Roma language. It is estimated that there were around 200,000-400,000 Roma living in Ukraine before the war; the majority of documented Roma were living in Odesa and Kharkiv oblasts³.

The conflict is intensifying existing vulnerabilities

According to Depaul’s online survey a high proportion of households are vulnerable. Many households have children and/or elderly people, and people with disabilities. In the survey, common vulnerabilities included members with a chronic health condition (32 percent), a disability (22 percent), and/or an elderly household member (32 percent). Single headed families with children are also common (26 percent), often owing to the deployment of men to the frontline.

There is a tendency to fail to include elderly aid recipients’ views or to establish age-sensitive delivery processes. The aid infrastructure risks reinforcing existing exclusion: Ground Truth Solutions’ autumn 2022 survey suggested that the sector-wide emphasis on digital registration and feedback mechanisms can increase the difficulties that elderly people face in accessing aid⁴. This also applies to communities close to the contact line with no or intermittent connection. HelpAge reported in June 2023 that 70 percent of people over 60 stated that they have not been consulted by any other humanitarian agency about the services provided to them since the crisis began. Elderly people are also less familiar with available feedback mechanisms, reducing

2 Ground Truth Solutions (GTS), Call for communication, collaboration, and cash: Perceptions of aid in Ukraine, February 2023, p5
3 Minority Rights, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/roma-13/>, accessed August 2023
4 GTS, Call for communication, collaboration, and cash: Perceptions of aid in Ukraine, February 2023, p4 Ground Truth Solutions, Perceptions of aid in Ukraine - quantitative findings round 1, December 2022, p7

their capacity to give input on the type of assistance and mode of delivery that best meets their needs⁵.

People who are **elderly or who have a disability** may also face greater barriers to collecting in-kind assistance such as groceries and hygiene products. Reduced mobility may delay or prevent their ability to travel to collection centres. This can generate a reliance upon social workers, friends, family or neighbours to both register and collect assistance, or to act as intermediaries with aid workers. This links receipt of assistance to the existence of a social network. However, limited resources or inability to overcome elderly people's resistance to moving may force people to leave elderly relatives and friends behind when fleeing active conflict.⁶ This can isolate elderly people in conflict-exposed areas. Depaul has provided house to house support through volunteers - including food delivery cyclists and organisations such as Help to Ba and De, a grassroots organisation - and set up a hotline for elderly people to request food and medicine deliveries from volunteers.

The January 2023 REACH WASH assessment found that older people and people with disabilities may spend the majority of their pension and other assistance on medications and assistive devices, leaving insufficient funds to pay for other necessities such as groceries, hygiene products and blankets. High prices and low availability create access issues for everyone who uses incontinence materials⁷. Civil society organisations supporting people with disabilities reported a need for specialised

equipment such as wheelchairs⁸. They also cautioned that the war could further sideline people with disabilities⁹. Seventy-three percent of respondents to a survey on bomb shelters reported the absence of disability-friendly bomb shelters¹⁰.

Rural communities also face compounded vulnerabilities in comparison with urban populations. A February 2023 ACAPS report found that people living in rural communities are more vulnerable to unemployment¹¹. People whose livelihoods depended on the agricultural sector are likely to suffer more pronounced consequences from damaged crops, looted equipment and mined fields. Consequences include unemployment, food insecurity and displacement. By putting financial pressure on households, the decline in agricultural productivity can contribute to alcohol or drug abuse, emotional violence, and/or reduced expenditure on education and healthcare. Rural Ukrainians also face reduced access to social services in comparison to their urban counterparts. IDPs from rural areas report greater difficulties in adapting to urban life, such as accessing the more formalised employment market¹². Interviews were conducted with rural communities in de-occupied areas of Kharkiv and Mykolaiv.

People are struggling to cover their living costs and are highly vulnerable to cuts in benefits and unexpected costs

According to Depaul's data collection, there is a heavy dependency on state social security payments and NGO cash programmes to meet basic needs. The majority of Ukrainians rely upon pension

5 GTS, Perceptions of aid in Ukraine - quantitative findings round 1, December 2022, p7
6 Help Age International, Older people face abandonment and isolation, February 2022
7 REACH, Ukraine WASH needs assessment, January 2023
8 GTS, Call for communication, collaboration, and cash: Perceptions of aid in Ukraine, February 2023, p7
9 Euro News, www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/08/02/a-crisis-within-a-crisis-how-war-is-hitting-the-disabled-in-ukraine, August 2022
10 The National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine, ANALYTIC REPORT on the results of the survey on the access of people with disabilities, August 2022
11 ACAPS, Thematic Report - Impact of conflict on the Ukrainian economy: implications for humanitarian needs, February 2023
12 FAO, The potential impact of the war in Ukraine on rural labour markets, April 2022

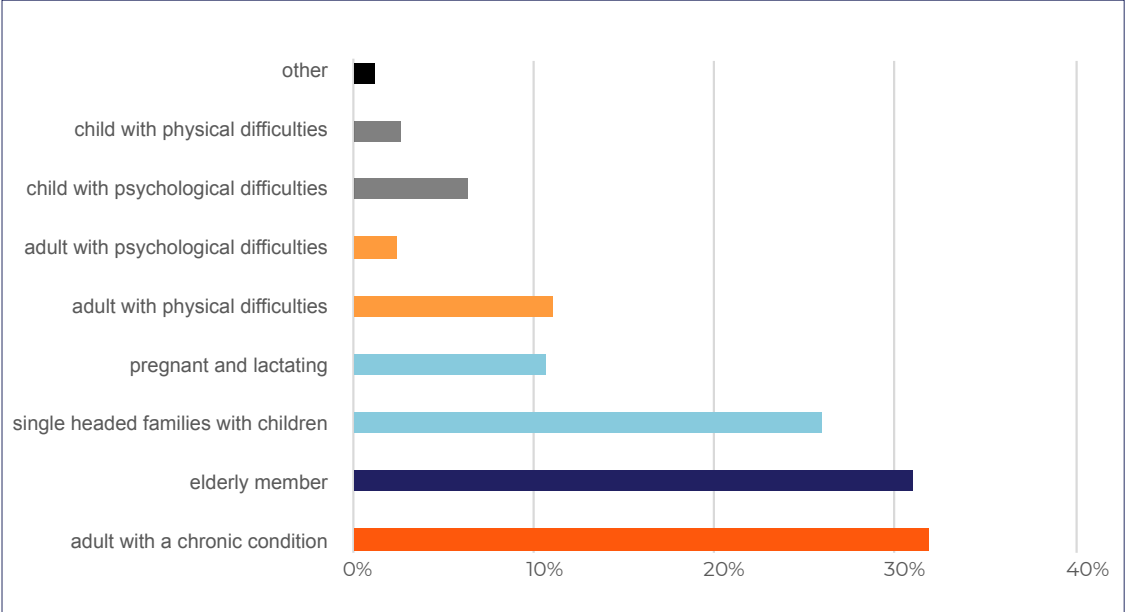


Image: Arete / Maciek Musialek / DEC

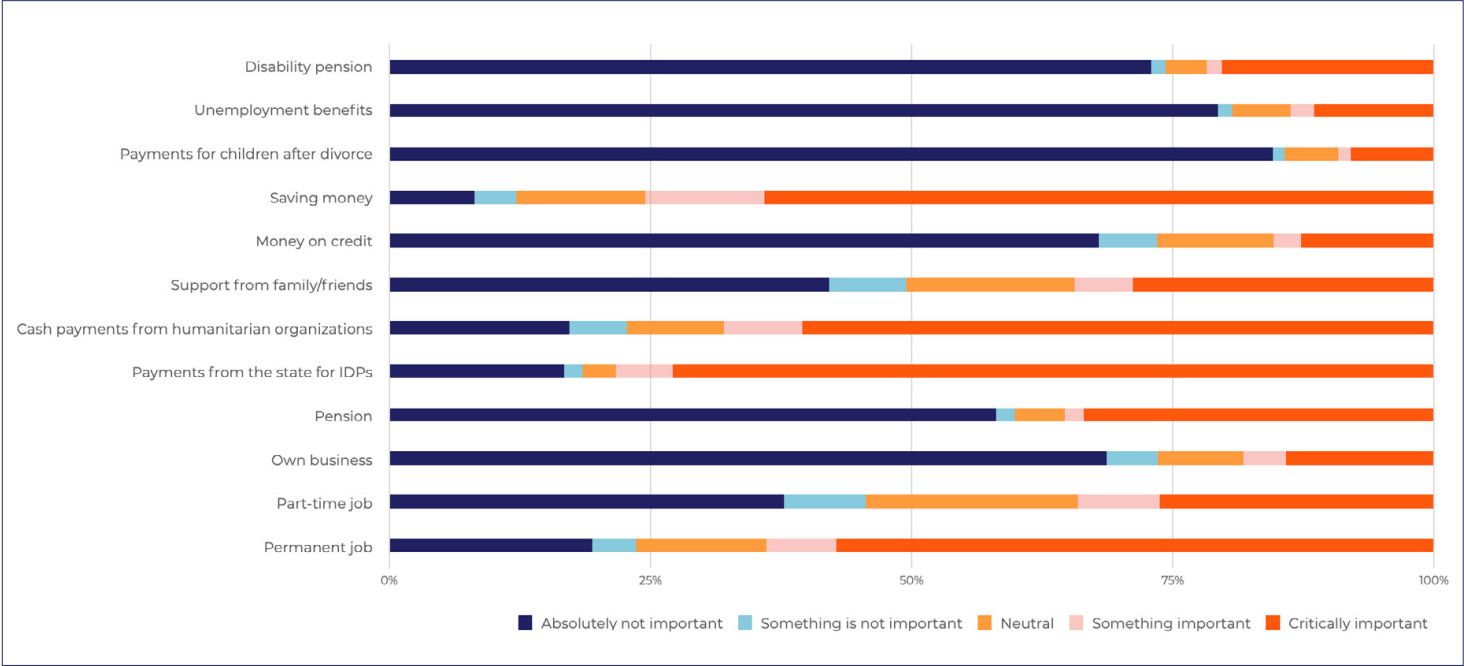


Image: Glazunov Nikolay

% of HHs with a vulnerability - online survey



Importance of different income Sources - online survey



JUST UNDER HALF OF RESPONDENTS STATED THAT THEY HAD BEEN DISPLACED TWICE DURING THE WAR

payments, IDP payments, humanitarian assistance and savings to supplement lost or irregular income. Pension payments are not only the main source of income for 99 percent of people over 60, they are also an important income source for the wider family. Given the low value of pension payments this indicates the paucity of household incomes.

The findings consistently indicate that people live on very limited incomes that constrict their ability to meet their costs of living. This increases their vulnerability to any further cuts or unexpected expenses. According to the online survey, only 12 percent of people can cover their living expenses, 52 percent need to borrow money or use savings to cover living expenses and 52 percent have no funds to repay debts.



The overwhelming majority described “saving” money and humanitarian assistance as their main way of ensuring they have enough to subsist upon. A few also said that they ate less in order to conserve funds. One client in Kharkiv summarised the predicament of many Ukrainians:

“There is less work, less money, the savings have already been spent.”

Yulia and her son at Depaul's hostel in Kharkiv.



ONLY A THIRD REPORTED BEING SATISFIED WITH THEIR CURRENT LIVING CONDITIONS

6. Sectoral Analysis

Accommodation

Only around a third of respondents expressed satisfaction with their current living conditions. The high cost of adequate accommodation poses a core challenge across oblasts. DPU clients report that expensive housing pressures them to rent damaged flats and homes that require repairs, mould treatment, and other renovations. In Depaul's client interviews, accommodation and rent were identified as the highest priority among the following groups: men, 18-44 and 45-60 years olds; IDPs displaced for more than 3 months; and respondents from Kyiv. In Depaul client interviews people also reported overcrowding, chronic anxiety about their ability to continue making rent payments and how long they would be able to stay with relatives.

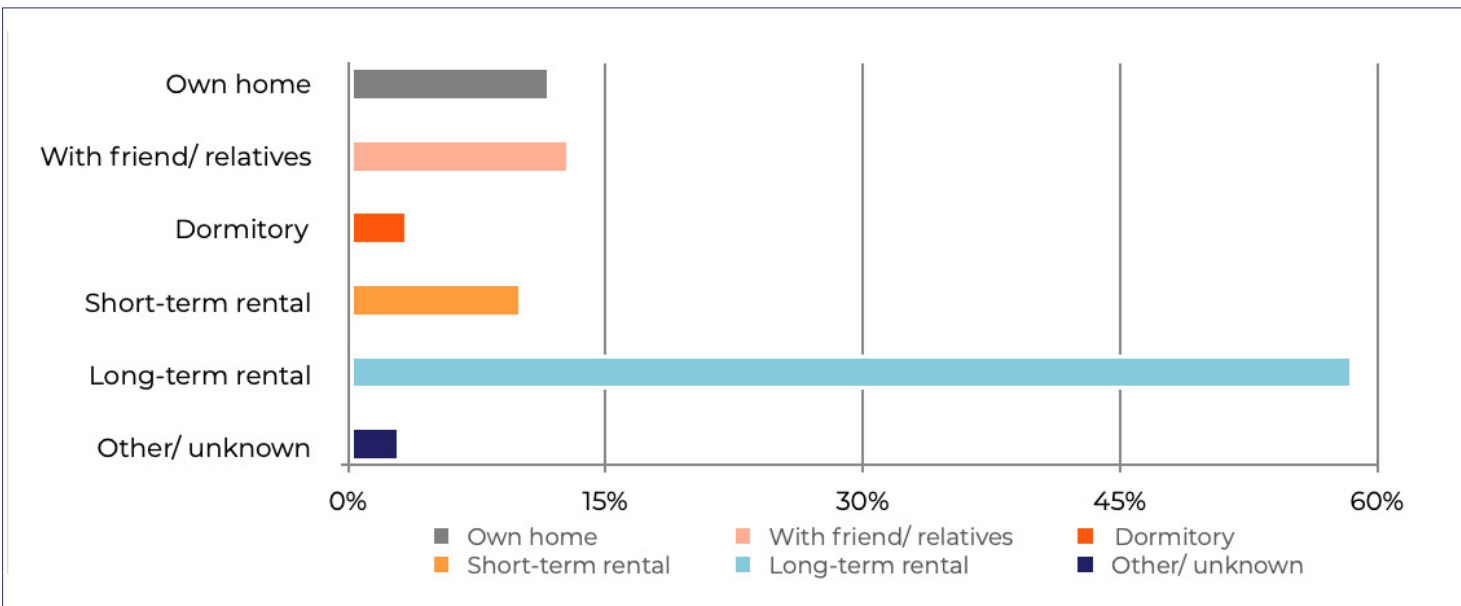
The online survey data reinforces these findings. Twenty-seven percent of respondents' accommodation status is highly insecure, defined as living in short term rentals (for

less than three months), with friends, or in dormitories. However, even those who have secured longer-term rentals may be living in inadequate, crowded conditions and struggling to meet rental costs.

Recommendations

- Provide temporary/supported accommodation to at-risk groups or refer people to other accommodation providers
- Provide flexible one-off emergency cash grants and rental market support to at-risk groups to facilitate access to adequate accommodation and support costs for rental deposits, essential furniture and repairs to improve living conditions
- Link accommodation support with other services and organisations, such as social work, psychological, legal and employment support, to support clients with finding longer-term accommodation options

Current accommodation - online survey



Reconstruction

Law 2923-IX, effective from May 2023, sets eligibility criteria for receiving government compensation for damaged or destroyed housing¹³. Limited funding and administrative capacity will likely prompt restrictive targeting criteria, which could undermine community cohesion. Elderly people, families with fewer than three children, single parents, non-Ukrainian citizens, people who used their own savings to make repairs before the enactment of the law, and people with fully destroyed flats and houses are likely to be excluded in the initial stages of the scheme. The Fund for Liquidation of Consequences of Armed Aggression in Kyiv may prioritise military and municipal administrators at the exclusion of general citizens and people avoiding conscription. The March 2023 LeftBank Analytics needs report cited large delays between submitting applications and receiving financial and in-kind support for home repairs¹⁴. Infrastructure is particularly devastated in rural areas close to the frontline, but many people reported only receiving materials for "Band-Aid" repairs, rather than the wholesale reconstruction that the level of housing damage required.

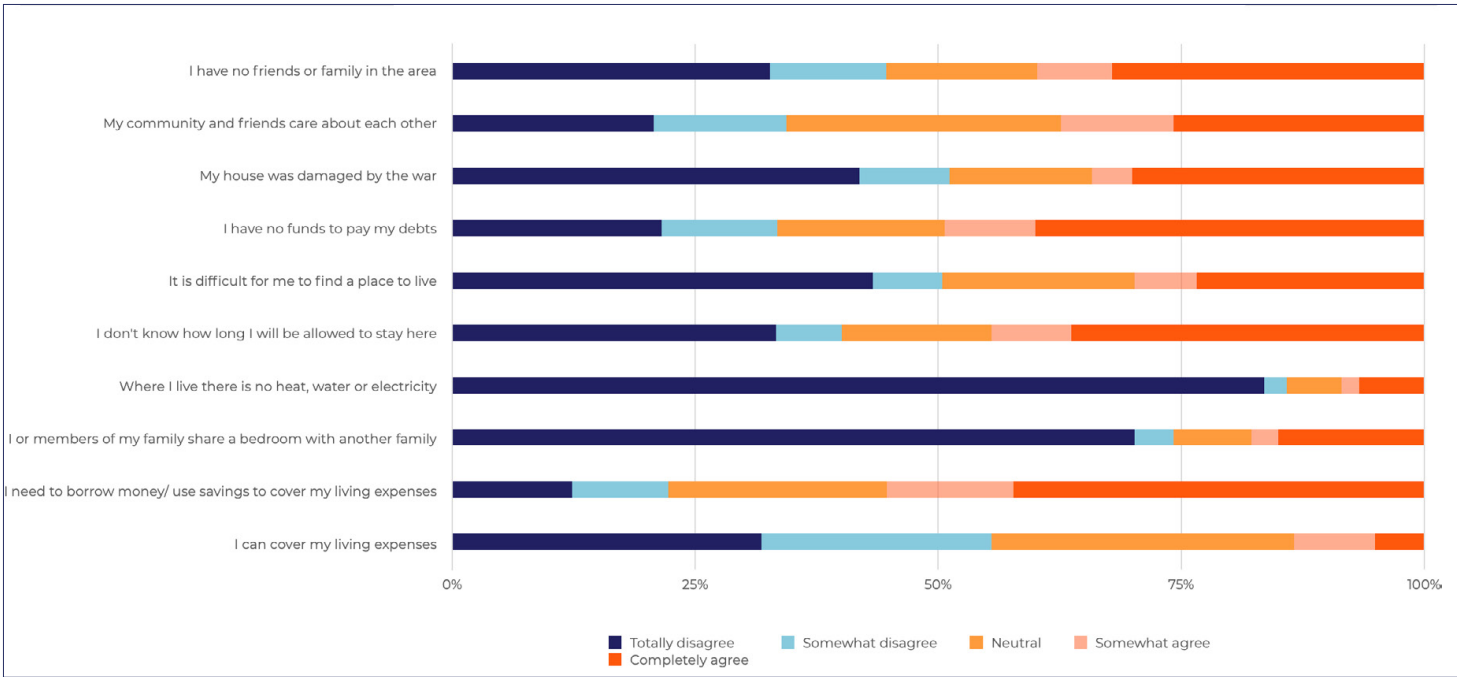
"We need to restore the windows, repair the walls (they moved away from each other), I am waiting for the mayor's decision on what the city will restore, and what I will have to restore," – Kharkiv W23

Client interviews reflected a general uncertainty surrounding the availability of government compensation for rebuilding.

Reconstruction is a high priority for people living in de-occupied or frontline areas. Items for medium to heavy home repairs feature prominently in the assistance requested in de-occupied areas. Interviewees in Kharkiv cited window repairs as one of their most critical short-term needs. Even if exterior damage is minimal, many homes are not connected to gas, electricity, internet or a clean water supply. In Kharkiv three interviewees identified generators as one of the most useful forms of assistance.

Aid organisations take a variety of approaches to meeting reconstruction needs. Some aid agencies provide vouchers for the procurement of materials for light and

Factors influencing accommodation security - online survey



¹³ Legislation of Ukraine, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2923-20#Text>, February 2023

¹⁴ IMPACT, Ukraine Situational Analysis, Feb 2023

medium repairs whilst others provide in-kind assistance. Specific building materials, such as concrete blocks, are not available in all locations. Therefore, a range of in-kind and cash or voucher approaches may be required. Building materials, skilled labour and windows are the highest priority repair needs. In Kharkiv, some people living in damaged apartment blocks received windows without assistance to fit them. Unless repairs are accompanied by skilled labour, those without the necessary strength, skills or community support will be unable to transport materials and conduct repairs themselves. This exacerbates vulnerabilities, leading to dangerous construction and wasted resource. Depaul coordinated with contractors and the local government to install windows, including for households who received materials without installation from other actors.

Following the destruction of the Kakhovka dam in June 2023, 76 percent of IOM community focal points reported roofing materials as a high priority in the region¹⁵. Seventy-one percent of focal points indicated an acute need for more intensive shelter repair items in general. Multiple reports indicate that people are mostly choosing to remain in Kherson and Kherson city in particular. This may reflect a general desire to stay put rather than move elsewhere in Ukraine, which deepens the utility of providing materials or funding for reconstruction.

Recommendations

- Provide assistance for rebuilding through a combination of delivery mechanisms according to local preference and availability, including building materials, vouchers, cash and technical support.
- Coordinate with service providers to ensure availability of utilities.
- Ensure that the targeting criteria for rebuilding includes vulnerable groups not covered by government support schemes as well as verifying that those who are eligible are actually receiving support.

Rough sleeping

Depaul's interviews with 27 clients accessing rough sleeping services found that there were varied reasons which led to an individual's rough sleeping. The most common reported reasons were relationship breakdown (37 percent), followed by eviction/ loss of home (14 percent), addiction (14 percent) and unemployment (11 percent). A significant number of clients interviewed have experience in prison (37 percent) and in the army before 2022 (26 percent). Only 11 percent of rough sleeping clients interviewed are currently in work, although many expressed a desire for support with accessing employment. Over half of clients said they have some form of support network (e.g. family, friends, church community).

The vast majority of interviewees had spent a year or more sleeping rough and/or in Depaul's emergency shelters; some had slept rough for a decade or more and about half had slept rough for multiple periods. These high proportions suggest that many clients are unable to achieve sustained accommodation outcomes and are potentially in a 'revolving door' between accommodation and the street.

It proved challenging to collect data and fully understand client's mental health needs although the interviews showed that this is an area of need. A significant minority of individuals said they experience anxiety; some have a diagnosed mental illness; several clients also expressed a desire for psychosocial support. About half of clients reported a physical health condition, although most are able to access hospital treatment providing they have the necessary personal documentation (which DPU often helps them to obtain). Self-reported issues related to addiction are also high: 44 percent of clients have alcohol misuse needs and 11 percent with drugs.

Priority services for clients are (where at least four-fifths indicated a need):

- basic material assistance such as food, hygiene support.
- legal, employment or psychosocial support.

- accommodation and support with gaining their own home.

A significant number of clients proactively asked for support with services which aid their recovery and this points towards a desire for employment and sustainable accommodation. This feedback demonstrates there is initial evidence that orienting rough sleeping services towards recovery and move-on may be successful in achieving long-term outcomes.

Recommendations

- Develop rough sleeping services to meet client's varied support needs, especially mental health issues, alcohol and drug addiction, such as shelters for people under the influence of alcohol.
- Develop and link with services that support clients with their recovery and long-term aspirations, such as support for addiction and mental health issues, life and job skills and access to employment support and accommodation.
- Explore ways to provide targeted support to veterans and continue links with criminal justice programmes to prevent homelessness (including psychological and employment services). Plan for future increases in rough sleeping as the number of veterans from the current war grows.

Food

Aid recipients more frequently reported challenges of food accessibility than availability. High prices pose a barrier to access for Ukrainians already struggling with high rent. Cash and food were a common need across all locations and groups highlighted the challenges people face in covering essential costs. Food and cash were the highest priorities for families with children and IDPs displaced within the last 30 days. Eighty-nine percent of REACH community focal points indicated that the local population lacked sufficient financial resources to afford basic food items. Foodstuffs and hygiene kits were the most

highly requested forms of in-kind assistance in the aftermath of the Kakhovka dam blast¹⁶.

The majority of those interviewed did not criticise the aid they received; it is difficult to ascertain if this reflects genuine satisfaction with assistance or stems from a reluctance to criticise the activities of agencies on whom people rely. Where criticism was raised, it tended to concentrate on the type of food assistance provided. Interviewees in Kyiv described cereals, groats, rice, and pasta as less relevant, with many voicing desire for dietary diversity. Parents requested foodstuffs that accommodated the dietary needs of young children. Twenty-two percent of client interviews noted a need for more nutritious foodstuffs including fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, milk and eggs. Although it may be logistically difficult for a humanitarian operation to procure and safely transport/store fresh produce, meat, and dairy, cash transfers can empower these families to purchase groceries that better fulfil specific dietary needs, where fresh food markets are operational.

Recommendations

- Discontinue food distributions in areas where food is available locally, prioritising support to frontline and remote locations. Ensure local communities are consulted regarding the contents of food baskets.
- Consider cash support for vulnerable families to enable them to purchase fresh, nutritious foods where markets are operational.
- Consider access to vitamin supplementation for vulnerable groups (elderly, people with chronic conditions, children, pregnant and lactating mothers) during winter months to meet their essential nutritional needs as access to sunlight for Vitamin D and micronutrients for fresh fruit and vegetables is more challenging.

Cash assistance

For years the aid sector has recognised the

¹⁵ IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix, <https://dtm.iom.int/ukraine>

¹⁶ REACH, Ukraine Emergency Brief Novokakhovka Dam breach, June 2023 CALP, The Effectiveness and Efficiency of Cash-Based Approaches in Emergencies: A Systematic Review, 2015
ODI, Doing Cash Differently, 2015

“THE PRICES IN STORES ARE VERY HIGH, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PAY UTILITIES AND BUY GROCERIES WITH A PENSION. I NEED MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BUT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE”

value of cash, as the most useful form of assistance for the largest number of people¹⁷. In client interviews, cash emerged as the highest priority form of assistance for families with children (53 percent). **73 percent of respondents in the online survey identified cash as the highest priority need. IDPs and families most frequently cited cash as the greatest need within client interviews.** Many people noted that cash was the preferred modality of assistance, which could then be allocated to foodstuff, medicines, hygiene kits, or other material items as needed.

“The prices in stores are very high, it is not possible to pay utilities and buy groceries with a pension. I need medical assistance but it is not possible to go to Bashtanka,” – Client Interview, Mykolaiv (L123)

Fifty percent of all cash assistance in Ukraine (including DPU’s programme) is implemented through Cash Working Group members as multi-purpose cash (MPC). Other forms include Cash for Protection (C4P), Cash for Shelter, Cash for Repairs, and group cash transfers. Interviews with Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) members

indicate the current multi-purpose cash minimum expenditure basket (MEB) value of 6,660 UAH per person for three months is too low to address compounded vulnerabilities, particularly for people who are elderly, suffer from a chronic illness or have disabilities¹⁸. This is in line with Depaul’s cash post-distribution monitoring which found that 62 percent of recipients spent the cash within the first month. Ten percent said that the value was not enough to purchase food; 73 percent said that it was not enough to purchase clothes; and 17 percent said that it was not enough for an emergency. Recipients primarily planned to spend cash on food, rent, utilities, clothes and medical treatment.

Although the need for cash support will continue, widespread use of multipurpose cash will not be sustainable as humanitarian funding levels begin to deplete. Alternative, more targeted cash methodologies are therefore required. At least four of the 13 DEC member agencies operating in Ukraine provide C4P, Cash for Shelter, or other forms of cash assistance either as a complement or in place of MPC. These often function as “one-off” payments to reduce the pressure on recipients to meet particularly acute, time-sensitive needs such as covering the costs

of a prescription or purchasing a back brace. This form of assistance is designed to increase the quality of assistance to a select number of vulnerable people rather than increase the number of people reached.

Group Cash Transfers (GCTs), used by ChristianAid, HelpAge, and other humanitarian actors, include recipient communities from project design onwards. Implementing partners coordinate with local actors and individuals to put together microgrants, often within a few thousand U.S. dollars, to address a community-specific need. Sample projects include repairs to evacuation vehicles, construction of a water tower, and rehabilitation of children’s playgrounds. **These alternative cash interventions extend the relevance of cash assistance** and deepen community resilience. This helps interventions withstand declining funding availability for more typical emergency interventions.

Who struggles to access cash assistance?

As of May 2022, almost half of the rural population lacked reliable internet access, although connectivity has likely improved in many locations since this time. Nevertheless, programmes should be cognisant of tying access to cash payments to digital-only distribution through bank accounts¹⁹. Access to cash in rural areas and deoccupied villages is also affected by a lack of electricity, shops or ATM services due to a lack of power or vendors not returning. Many de-occupied areas are still waiting for the restoration of their internet connectivity, as is the case in some Kharkiv communities nine months after de-occupation. Unbanked people may be wary or unable to open a bank account to receive digital cash payments. Only 27 percent of people over 60 and 29 percent of people living in rural communities reported that they received cash assistance despite needs²⁰. This reflects barriers to extending cash assistance to hard-to-reach communities.

Digital registration systems can be exclusionary when not complemented by offline options. Reliance on digital registration can unintentionally exclude some of the most vulnerable. Fifty-nine percent of adults in rural areas have few to no digital skills and the majority of these individuals are over the age of 60²¹. IDPs may also lack access to mobile devices due to looting or other threats during displacement. This raises challenges in registration and collection of cash assistance. Informants from INGOs delivering cash assistance linked inclusivity of cash assistance to the availability of both digital and face-to-face options²².

Recommendations

- Ensure vulnerable groups and people without digital and telephone access are able to access cash through a range of mechanisms, including face to face applications.
- Prioritise cash support to the hard-to-reach including the elderly, people with disabilities, single-parent households, rural/de-occupied communities and emerging vulnerable groups not supported by other actors - whilst ensuring they can use it.
- Establish emergency cash grant schemes to enable vulnerable people on low incomes to cover one-off, unexpected and emergency costs (such as medical care, essential furniture/ household items, rental deposits) to enhance dignity and access to accommodation and medical care. This will also help prevent deteriorating health complications, homelessness, inadequate living conditions and safeguarding issues.

Psychological support

Psychosocial wellbeing is consistently identified as a concern across all ages, genders, vulnerable groups and oblasts. This is consistent with a 2019 Lancet study of multiple conflict areas which found that 22 percent of

17 CALP, The Effectiveness and Efficiency of Cash-Based Approaches in Emergencies: A Systematic Review, 2015 and ODI, Doing Cash Differently, 2015 DEC/CALP, Multipurpose Cash Assistance in Ukraine, May 2023

18 DEC/CALP, Multipurpose Cash Assistance in Ukraine, May 2023 Protection Cluster, GBV Risk Analysis for Cash and Voucher Assistance in Ukraine, August 2022

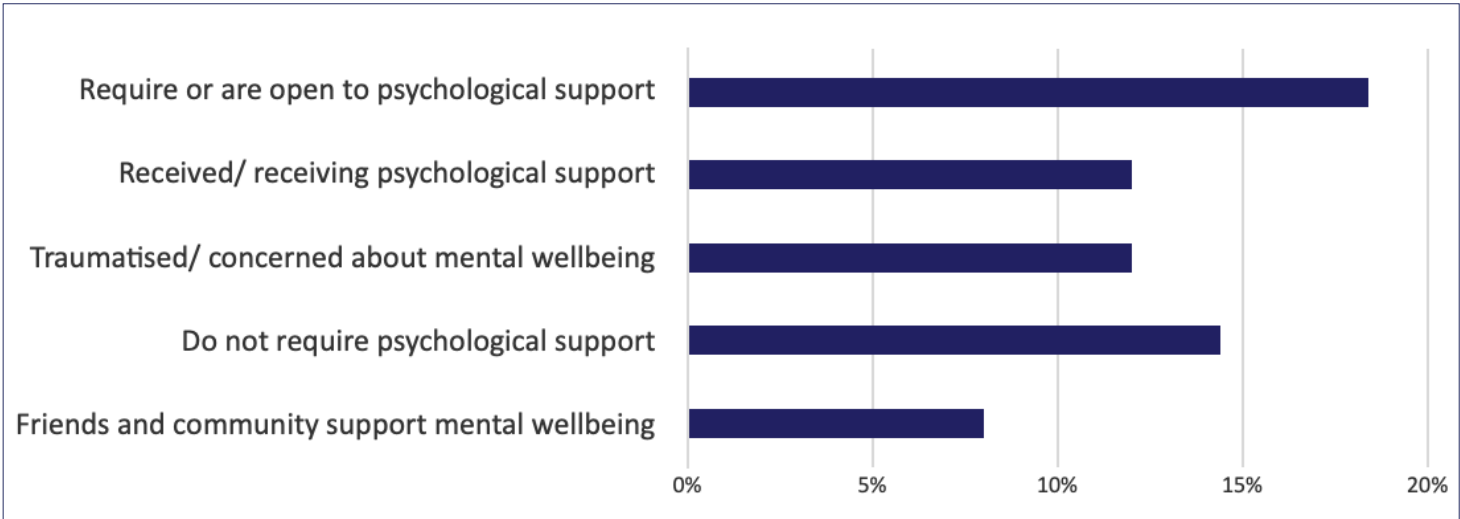
19 Protection Cluster, GBV Risk Analysis for Cash and Voucher Assistance in Ukraine, August 2022

20 GTS, Call for communication, collaboration, and cash: Perceptions of aid in Ukraine, February 2023, p3 CALP, Registration, Targeting and Deduplication: Emergency Response inside Ukraine Thematic paper, September 2022, p5

21 CALP, Registration, Targeting and Deduplication: Emergency Response inside Ukraine, September 2022, p5 DEC/CALP, Multipurpose Cash Assistance in Ukraine, May 2023

22 DEC/CALP, Multipurpose Cash Assistance in Ukraine, May 2023

Interviewee perceptions towards psychological support



conflict-affected people end up with some form of mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder and/or schizophrenia²³. If this trend is realised in Ukraine, over 4.6 million people, including 1.5 million children, will have or develop mental health needs²⁴. Learning from the previous Ukraine conflict and Depaul's rough sleeping programmes highlight that mental health problems can lead to breakdowns in relationships, rough sleeping, domestic violence and addiction. Society-wide psychosocial stress incurs not only a human but a financial cost. Early investment in mental health treatment could save USD 1.6 billion²⁵.

The Lancet study emphasises the importance of increasing the availability of MHPSS services in conflict-affected countries given the high prevalence of mental illness in these contexts. There is a need for improvement and expansion of MHPSS services across the four IASC levels of support which range from family and community based to specialist support. World Vision's Ukraine report highlighted a lack of specialist MHPSS treatment, especially in frontline areas. In Kharkiv, educators raised concerns about parents who fought on the

frontlines developing symptoms of PTSD and the lack of access to specialised diagnosis and treatment for mental health struggles in de-occupied areas²⁶. Teachers requested more systematised MHPSS and psychological first aid training. There is also a lack of awareness of how to access existing psychosocial support. Sixty-four percent of respondents in WarChild's January 2023 needs assessment did not know where to access psychosocial support in their community. This number climbed to 73 percent of people surveyed in Kyiv oblast²⁷.

In Depaul's online survey, 27 percent of respondents identified MHPSS as the 'highest' or a 'high' priority service. Depaul's client interviews also reveal high levels of psychological support needs: 42 percent of people either have concerns about their own or a family member's mental wellbeing, have received psychological support or are open to receiving assistance. Clients interviewed who accessed Depaul's MHPSS services almost universally said they found the services valuable.

However the interviews also highlighted a reticence to engage with professional mental

health services. This may partly be a potential reflection of enduring social stigma around mental health support. However it could also be related to the fact that people have other means of coping. People embrace a variety of coping mechanisms, including community gardening, book clubs, and peer support groups. Teachers in Kharkiv formed peer support groups to share best practices for supporting students and avoiding burnout²⁸. Volunteer groups have helped to deepen community cohesion and provide personal solace. In a war marked by suffering that cuts through every community, people may also downplay their struggles in comparison to what a family member, colleague, friend, or neighbour is enduring.

“There is a need for crisis stabilisation, but due to the fact that there is no widespread culture of visiting a psychologist, he says that he cannot yet dare to contact a specialist,” – DPU Client Interview in Odesa (interview 110).

Those living in occupied places and areas of intense and sustained conflict may be at greatest risk. Psychosocial stresses also rises for groups with pre-existing vulnerabilities. Reduced mobility deepened the aversion some elderly people felt towards leaving their homes, increasing their vulnerability to gunfire, shelling, and social isolation in frontline areas²⁹. Elderly people are also generally less well-versed in articulating feelings of despair and linking them to mental health struggles. An October 2022 HelpAge survey found that 96 percent of elderly people in Ukraine struggle with conflict-related mental issues³⁰. Volunteers with a grassroots-based hotline reported that elderly people tend to stockpile medicines and food supplies to reclaim some sense of security³¹.

Exposure to violent conflict causes distress which can profoundly affect many areas of a child's life and cause long-term health and

developmental problems. Depaul has already seen indications that the stress of the conflict has led to increases in alcohol and drug use among teenagers. World Vision's report highlights that parents' greatest concern for their children was their mental health. This is consistent with Depaul's interviews with parents in Kharkiv who stressed the value of counselling, leisure activities, and other forms of emotional support for their children. Parents whose children have received psychological support highlight the changes they have witnessed in their children's mood and behaviour. In addition to supporting children's psychological needs the centres have also enhanced parent's mental wellbeing, which will also impact their child. Children's centres have alleviated some of the carers' chronic stress by freeing up more time for work, looking for accommodation and employment, errands and rest. They act as an important entry point for carers to build trust in psychological services which may encourage them to seek support for themselves.

“They need the help of a psychologist. The mother got a lot of stress. She is distracted by doing lessons with her son. The child is locked. Grandma finds rest by watching series on her phone. It would be good if there was more communication with society,” – Client Interviewee, Odesa.

Recommendations

- Increase understanding of the issues preventing people from accessing psychological services and develop strategies to address these.
- Ensure psychological services are linked with other providers to minimise confusion about where and how to access support and ensure effective referrals for psychiatric support for people with severe mental health needs.
- Develop initiatives that strengthen family and community support and resilience.

23 Charlson et al., New WHO prevalence estimates of mental disorders in conflict settings, The Lancet, July 2020
24 World Vision, No Peace of Mind: The looming mental health crisis for the children of Ukraine, July 2022
25 World Vision, No Peace of Mind: The looming mental health crisis for the children of Ukraine, July 2022
26 Education Cluster Ukraine, Joint Education Needs Assessment Kharkiv Oblast, January 2023 War Child, Voices of Children & USSF, Ukraine Needs Assessment Report, January 2023
27 War Child, Voices of Children & USSF, Ukraine Needs Assessment Report, January 2023 Education Cluster Ukraine, Joint Education Needs Assessment Kharkiv Oblast, January 2023

28 Education Cluster Ukraine, Joint Education Needs Assessment Kharkiv Oblast, January 2023
29 Amnesty, Ukraine old people confronted with war rely on the support of volunteers, June 2022
30 Help Age International, Older people face abandonment and isolation, February 2022
31 Amnesty, Ukraine old people confronted with war rely on the support of volunteers, June 2022

- Utilise children’s centres as an entry point for psychological services for both children and adults.
- Ensure psychological services address key factors that contribute to homelessness, such as relationship counselling and support to veterans and their families.

Services for children and young people

Only approximately one-third of Ukrainian schools nationwide have been able to offer full-time, in-person learning since September 2022. Schools are closed and learning is online in more insecure areas. Roughly three million children learn through an exclusively remote or a hybrid format. These restrictions come on the back of over two years of Covid-related disruption to education and children’s socialisation. This disadvantages students whose parents work and cannot supervise learning, as well as those living in rural and/or de-occupied areas with unreliable electricity and internet, and children with special learning requirements. According to a January 2023 UNICEF joint needs assessment, between 20-40 percent of students are displaced which reduces their opportunities for face to face learning. Many students reported that limited electricity and internet connection reduced their ability to attend classes regularly and punctually³².

In client interviews, parents reflected that the pivot to remote learning forced many children to sacrifice passions such as music and sport, reducing their opportunities to meet and bond with peers. Carers lamented a lack of playgrounds and regular sporting activities, dances, and other opportunities for their children to socialise and engage with their peers. They advocated for increased opportunities for their children to socialise, whether that be a book club, sports team or swimming. Some interviewees in Kharkiv noted both the scarcity and high cost of entertainment available for children. This corresponded with many parents’ anxiety about their children enduring excessive social isolation and boredom, with little to look forward to within their day to day lives.

Children’s centre staff highlighted difficulties in engaging with teenagers. Ukrainian teens report that a growing number of their peers are turning to illicit substances to cope with the stress of living through war. A February 2023 report published by World Vision found that over half of all surveyed children reported their peers’ reliance on smoking and drinking as coping mechanisms. This number rose to 77 percent for boys aged 14-17³³. Parents often mentioned a smartphone addiction as evidence of children’s need for expanded in-person activities:

“They need school, they are always on their phones, and they don’t want anything more,” – Client Interviewee, Kharkiv oblast (AD31)

Mental health struggles and education gaps can be mutually reinforcing. Both teachers and students are grappling with grief, trauma, the looming or realised threat of displacement, and the latent anxiety of living through an ongoing war. These psychological stresses can intensify the exhaustion felt by both students and teachers, making it difficult to maintain a consistently high quality of education. Some older students interviewed by DPU staff shared their fears that they would be ill-prepared for university without extra tutoring. Teachers are often overstretched and unable to give additional support to students who are struggling, increasing the risk of children being left behind. The demand for both kindergarten and primary school outstrips demand. During client interviews, parents raised concerns about overcrowding and remote learning.

Seventy-two percent of people interviewed through children’s centres identified this as the most useful form of humanitarian assistance. There is a high demand for Depaul’s 12 week children’s programme run by psychologists in Mykolaiv which has over 200 children on the waiting list. The centres provide leisure activities, inspire new friendships, and reduce pressure on parents. Many people also cited the opportunity

for rest as an under-served need which could point to a need for increased funding of kindergartens, secondary schools, and extracurriculars so that parents have the time to search for accommodation and employment, catch up on other demands and have some time for themselves.

Recommendations

- Wider provision of children’s centres, mobile services and a variety of leisure activities and events, especially in areas with the least provision, tailored to the needs of children and young people of different ages.
- Ensure that children’s services include support/ adaptations for children with special needs and learning difficulties.
- Incorporate childcare provision and tutoring into children’s services to support children with remote online learning and to free up carers’ time for other activities.
- Link children’s services with psychosocial support for carers and employment services to enhance access to these.

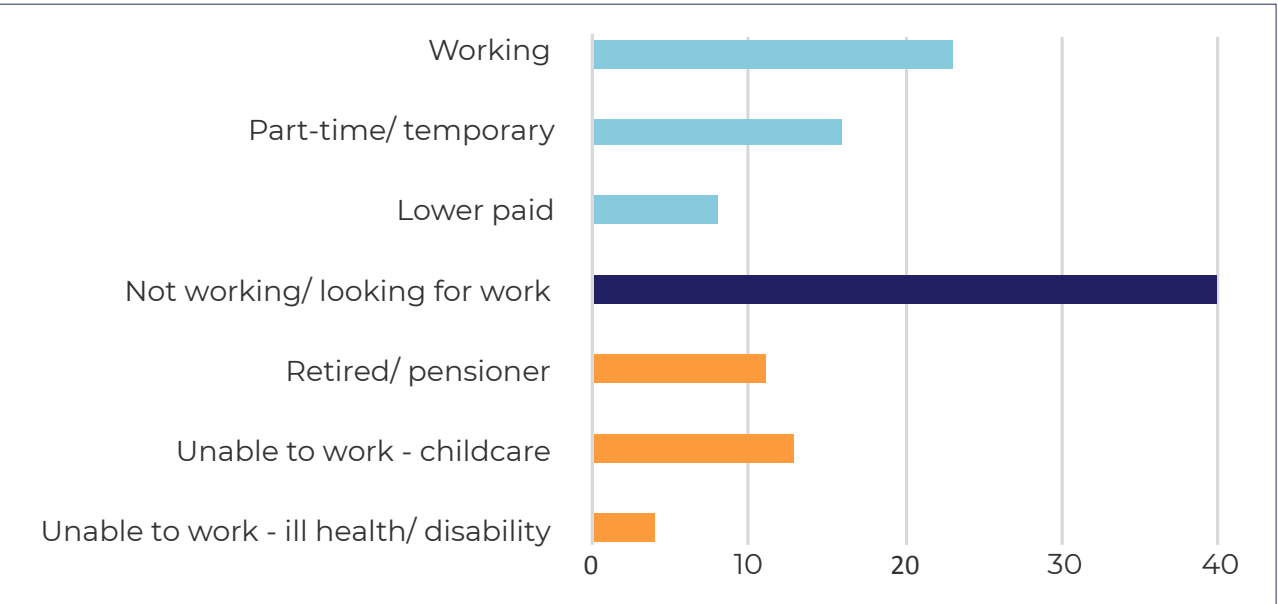
Employment and livelihoods

Scarce and low paid employment opportunities pose a challenge, compounding the difficulty of paying rent or purchasing staple items such as groceries, bedding, clothes, and medicine. Less than a quarter of those interviewed consider themselves fully employed. Two-

thirds of clients interviewed are looking for work and many are dependent on lower paid and temporary work. Old age, ill health and IDP status compound difficulties finding and sustaining employment. Women are also disadvantaged in the search for employment as they shoulder the majority of caring and childcare responsibilities. Women also spoke of their concern about leaving children with others as air raid alerts are frequent and there is a risk of shelling.

The Government of Ukraine provides some unemployment benefits. The benefits terminate after 90 days, often an insufficient timeframe to secure employment in the context. The Government also earmarks benefits for people experienced in “socially useful” work, excluding a broad swathe of professions that cannot be directly linked to the war effort. This compounds the financial precarity faced by people in more artistic vocations. Some interviewees from such vocations struggled with finding stable, formal work and requested professional skills trainings. Government benefits also mandate that men display proof of military registration, which de facto excludes those attempting to avoid conscription. These conditions combine to restrict the number of people eligible for unemployment benefit: only 133,000 received government benefits in the autumn of 2022 (EPravda 08/12/2022; UBN 27/12/2022). Fear of conscription also prevents some men from

Employment status



32 Education Cluster Ukraine, Joint Education Needs Assessment Kharkiv Oblast, January 2023

33 World Vision, Toll of Conflict in Eastern Ukraine, February 2023

seeking support through job centres and applying for formal employment.

Overall, **28 percent of clients interviewed cite employment as a pressing need.** The proportion is significantly higher among people displaced within the last 30 days (80 percent) and those aged 45 to 60 (44 percent). The intensity of demand underscores the utility of sustainable livelihoods programmes and professional skills training. Several interviewees mentioned specialised skills training, such as in language acquisition or IT. People who worked as musicians, photographers, artists, or in other generally volatile or “non-essential” industries particularly struggle to find consistent, full-time, formal employment.

“There is less work, I am a photographer, husband, musician, forced to work outside my profession to survive,” – DPU client in Kharkiv (AD36)

Agriculture formed a core part of Ukrainian economic activity prior to the Russian invasion, generating 10 percent of its GDP, employing 14 percent of its population, and producing 41 percent of its exports³⁴. Agricultural activity reduced significantly following the invasion: one in four farmers reported a complete cessation or dramatic reduction of their agricultural activity³⁵. A May 2023 FAO survey reported that 90 percent of small-scale crop producers reported a decline in revenues, which exceeded 25 percent for over 70 percent of the farmers surveyed. Government of Ukraine data indicates that the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry industries possess the third highest rate of unemployment³⁶. Numerous factors reduced the productivity of agricultural work: inflated fertiliser costs, inflated fuel prices, deflated domestic wheat prices, reduced livestock, unreliable or disrupted energy supply, partial or complete

destruction of agricultural machinery and equipment all reduced both the quality and quantity of crop yields³⁷.

The COAR February 2023 report on Business Environment found that mines disrupted the agricultural and forestry industries in de-occupied areas by exacerbating workers’ risk of injury or death. In de-occupied areas of Bashtanka, communities also highlighted that the risk of UXO makes villages unsuitable for families with children to return. The threat posed by mines is not equal across oblasts. ACAPS recorded a high number of reported mine and UXO incidents in Mykolaiv and Kherson between July and December 2022³⁸.

“There is almost no work, because all the farms do not work, the fields are mined, and it makes no sense to go somewhere to work, because it is very expensive to travel. So we live off agriculture,” – DPU interviewee in Bashtanka, Mykolaiv Oblast

Community members interviewed in de-occupied areas reported needing new agricultural equipment, such as tractors, to resume farming and others requested subsidised fertilisers and seeds. Some aid agencies are attempting to stimulate new economic activity in these regions. FAO and WFP are collaborating on a de-mining initiative in Kharkiv oblast to remove landmines, test soils for contamination by exploded weapons’ discharge of pollutants, and survey small farmers on what they need to resume agricultural production, with an emphasis on providing cash assistance³⁹. However, realistically, widespread demining will not be initiated until the war is over and will then take many years, so these are long-term disruptions.

Recommendations

- Establish clear targeting criteria and

support options for different groups (e.g. unemployed, small business owners, IDPs from rural areas, people in rural areas).

- Offer clients a combination of support options such as:
 - Individualised support on documentation, careers advice and referrals.
 - Group training on CV writing, job searching, interview skills, employee rights etc.
 - Flexible cash grants to enable people to restart small businesses e.g. tools and equipment, marketing, website design, training.
- Establish effective links with the following actors:
 - Job centres to provide access to free training and advice.
 - Local employers to identify employment opportunities for clients and advocate for relaxing restrictions on hiring IDPs.
 - Childcare services to give women with young children the option of working.
 - Demining actors to request UXO/ mine community awareness training and mine clearance in de-occupied areas.

Household and hygiene items

Client interviews highlighted several non-food items that reflect the reality of fleeing home with short notice including mattresses, blankets, bedding, dishes and household cleaning supplies. There is an increased need for household items during the winter months where temperatures can drop to minus 20 degrees celsius. Depaul’s assessment suggests that many homes, particularly those in de-occupied areas and areas hit by rocket attacks do not have access to electricity and gas. In the winter of 2022-2023, Depaul and other humanitarian actors provided winterisation materials, including blankets, beds, winter clothes, generators and fuel. Winterisation

support will be required in 2023, particularly for highly vulnerable people and those in more insecure and remote locations. According to REACH assessments in 2022, winter preparations should begin in the late summer or early fall to allow for complications.

A January 2023 WASH assessment also reported that families faced difficulties procuring incontinence materials. Seventy-two percent of those who used these items stated they could not access them due to both high prices and shortages at markets⁴⁰. In Kharkiv, approximately 80 percent of households with at least one member who used incontinence materials could not access what they needed. This number rose to 86 percent in rural areas. The most highly requested items were disposable pads, although respondents also mentioned tampons and virtually all other mainstream market products. Cost poses the largest barrier, while distance to the market, safety concerns when going to the market, and items not being available at the market were also reported. People encounter similar difficulties accessing menstruation products⁴¹.

Clothes recurred as a need for families with young children. Several respondents noted that their children grew out of their clothes every few months and rely upon donations and gifts from family and friends. Families struggle to regularly replace outgrown clothes due to efforts to save already-limited financial resources. Several proposed either an expansion of clothing provided in humanitarian packages or cash assistance, which can then be allocated towards purchasing new clothes. This underscores the preference towards cash assistance, which helps families stretch their income a bit further to cover necessities beyond groceries and rent. One respondent requested:

“Money - for clothes for the child because the child is growing, and every month considerable expenses are spent on the purchase of clothes for the child,” – Client interview, Odesa AD103

34 World Bank, Ukraine Rapid Damage and Needs assessment, February 2023
35 FAO, <https://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/news-archive/detail-news/en/c/1640738/>, May 2023
36 Ukraine State Employment Centre, <https://www.dcz.gov.ua/analytics/69>
37 World Bank, Ukraine Rapid Damage and Needs assessment, February 2023, p64
38 ACAPS, Impact of conflict on the Ukrainian economy: implications for humanitarian needs, February 2023
39 FAO, WFP <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-fao-and-wfp-join-forces-clear-agricultural-land-remnants-war-and-help-farmers-resume-production-enuk>, June 2023

40 REACH, WASH Needs Assessment, January 2023
41 REACH, WASH Needs Assessment, January 2023

Recommendations

- Discontinue large-scale in-kind distributions of household items in areas where items are available locally, prioritising the supply of items to frontline and remote locations.
- Provide emergency cash grants to highly vulnerable people (including elderly, disabled, chronically sick, families and newly displaced IDPs) with urgent cash needs to enable them to purchase furniture/ household/ winterisation items.
- Procure winterisation items for frontline and remote locations early, in time for colder weather, prioritising support to those in remote and insecure locations and housebound people.
- Link with other actors for the provision of children's clothes, referrals to clothes banks and/or organise clothes swaps events to exchange children's clothes.

Medical assistance

Both the external and internal reviews suggest that medications are short in supply and high in price across oblasts. Many people highlighted access to medicine as a core challenge for reasons of both accessibility and affordability. Needs are particularly acute in de-occupied areas. Fifty-three percent of DPU interviewees in Kharkiv identified medicine as a core need and medicine was the highest priority for disabled interviewees in Mykolaiv. People struggle to access targeted healthcare and medicine, such as post-heart attack or hypertension-related medication. Many pharmacies closed during the occupation and those that remained open are overwhelmed by high demand, compounding difficulties in accessing medication. Although the majority of responses did not elaborate on the type of medicine required, several mentioned medications for joint pain, asthma, nerves, and bronchial conditions. Flexible cash

grants could help the elderly and people with chronic ailments by reducing the financial burden of paying for medication, regular doctor appointments, and other specialist care.

WHO's December 2022 assessment found that people's access to health-care services and medicines has declined, particularly for people in regions close to the frontline and for IDPs. Major barriers to accessing healthcare are cost, time constraints in getting to health facilities and limited transportation⁴². In frontline and de-occupied areas medical care is expensive and often delayed due to the shelling of hospitals and Russian forces' looting of medical equipment and people with chronic diseases struggle to access treatment and medicines⁴³. Medical resources for civilians may also be stretched as the treatment of wounded military personnel may be prioritised. Medicines are often inaccessible and some residents regard the healthcare sector as corrupt. Mykolaiv-based participants in Ground Truth Solutions' focus group discussions specifically mentioned a lack of medication for diabetes, oncological conditions, autoimmune diseases, depression, and elevated blood-pressure⁴⁴.

Limited access to consistent, high quality medical attention and medical shortages also impact groups already marginalised within the healthcare landscape. Pregnant women face diminished access to reproductive and maternal healthcare, raising the risk of maternal mortality. A spring 2023 needs assessment review of 80 healthcare facilities reported an overwhelming lack of SGBV training despite high demand⁴⁵. Disruptions in supply chains into and outside of Ukraine, complicated registration and bureaucratic protocol and limited access to medical monitoring cut off intersex and transgender people's already limited access to vital healthcare⁴⁶.

⁴² WHO, Health Needs Assessment of the Adult Population in Ukraine, March 2023
⁴³ MSF, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/between-enemy-lines-destruction-health-care-ukraine>, March 2023
⁴⁴ GTS, Call for communication, collaboration, and cash: Perceptions of aid in Ukraine, February 2023
⁴⁵ Protection Cluster GBV SC, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-gbv-sc-capacity-enhancement-working-group-meeting-notes-april-27-2023-1100-1230-meeting-minutes>, April 2023
⁴⁶ Regional Gender Task Force, Making the Invisible Visible, October 2022, p39

Recommendations

- Provide emergency cash grants to enable people with urgent medical needs to purchase medicine, medical equipment and seek treatment.
- Link with local organisations with medical expertise to provide services through Depaul centres and for referrals to other healthcare providers.
- Explore ways to link people in remote and frontline areas requiring urgent medical care with pharmacies and healthcare providers.

“THEY NEED SCHOOL, THEY ARE ALWAYS ON THEIR PHONES, AND THEY DON'T WANT ANYTHING MORE”



Image: Maciek Musialek / DEC

7. Conclusion

For many people, life in Ukraine is precarious and insecure. Depaul's assessment has demonstrated a wide range of needs across a diverse population. Many of the findings, as would be expected, corroborate those of other actors. With this in mind, we highlight the following findings with the aim of adding to sector understanding:

1. Inadequate and insecure accommodation: two-thirds of people surveyed are dissatisfied with the conditions of their accommodation and a quarter are in highly insecure accommodation. Globally, housing first and housing-led approaches have proven that secure, adequate accommodation is a prerequisite for recovery and achievement of sustained outcomes among vulnerable populations. People cannot be expected to process trauma and plan for the future if they do not have a certain or adequate roof over their head. The sector should prioritise programmes which include support for households to access adequate, secure and affordable accommodation.

2. Employment and income: whilst cash interventions have been rightly celebrated within the response by both beneficiaries and the sector, there is a widespread dependency on various time-limited state or NGO cash initiatives. These are likely to reduce as funding depletes, and they are not even sufficient at the moment. Already, over half of those surveyed by Depaul report resorting to savings and/or borrowing to pay for everyday expenses. This is not sustainable. Increased attention is required around support for people to develop sustainable incomes, for example through employment support, access to maximise welfare entitlements or money management support. The sector should not underestimate the insecurity of many households: millions are likely only just keeping their head above water. As the war moves beyond its eighteenth month, alongside continued need for flexible emergency programmes in areas by the contact line and under shelling, there should be greater focus in the majority of oblasts

on pivoting to sustainable solutions. This must give consideration to the dual risks of dependency on short-term, low value cash programmes and rising debt for households.

3. Community and integration: programmes must consider the vast population movement in Ukraine and the many associated dynamics. These are complex and to be fully understood and accounted for in design, actors must be embedded in communities. Many IDPs who have moved into a new area asked for support with integration into their new community. Material support is not sufficient on its own. Community and social networks are vital to providing a sustainable support structure around a household, and facilitating the development of such networks can be provided at relatively low cost. There are other dynamics to be considered. For example, people displaced from rural into urban areas may need additional support adjusting to the new environment. More formal market practices tend to be in operation in cities and, for example, this may require people for the first time to compose a CV to obtain employment, or to review contracts to access fair rental accommodation.

4. Rough sleeping and veterans: A quarter of clients accessing Depaul's rough sleeping services are veterans of pre-2022 conflicts. It is well established in the homelessness sector globally that veterans are among the groups most at risk of sleeping rough. Ukraine must be prepared. Over the coming years, hundreds of thousands of (predominantly) men will return to civilian life. Communities have started to request reintegration related support for men already discharged back into family and community life. The provision of mental health and other support programmes are vital preventative measures to mitigate risks such as family breakdown and development of severe mental illness. Unfortunately, prevention will not be sufficient. Planning must take place for a steep rise in demand for rough sleeping, addiction, mental health, physical health, domestic violence⁴⁷ and rehabilitative criminal

justice services to ensure Ukrainian society is prepared for the lasting impact of war on those who fought and their communities.

5. Flexible, personalised, longer-term support:

Moreover, the findings of this needs assessment show the vital importance of long-term support for Ukrainian communities to respond to the ongoing devastation and begin recovery from the impact of war and displacement away from frontline locations. The overall situation remains fluid, and organisations must be sensitive to the differences in each community's local context; for example, the disparities in urban and rural locations, or the needs of IDPs versus people living in de-occupied areas. Similarly, organisations need to consider the complex nature of additional risk factors, potential vulnerabilities and barriers to accessing support that may be faced by individuals. When designing programmes, careful thought should be given to the influence of gender dynamics, the needs of families, as well as existing capacities and resilience within communities. The flexibility offered by

cash assistance should continue to form part of the solution, given its popularity among beneficiaries and evidenced efficacy.

The most vulnerable have multiple and complex needs which require holistic, accessible support. Building trust with clients and communities is critical to understand and address psychological impacts and sensitive issues that can remain hidden, such as domestic and sexual abuse and fears about conscription. It is critical for programmes to take a flexible and individualised approach, where possible. This will require different actors and sectors to improve coordination and ensure that at-risk individuals are supported to navigate an increasingly complex network of support options. This will include establishing clear referral mechanisms and designing a range of accessible routes to receive support, which do not rely solely on digital means. By designing services in a way that considers accessibility at the outset, there will be an improved likelihood that communities (particularly those who may otherwise be at greater risk of exclusion) are able to access the support they need.



Image: Maciek Musialek / DEC

⁴⁷ Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/rising-domestic-violence-is-hidden-front-ukraines-war-2023-08-03/>, August 2023

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