співпраця з німеччиною
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Co-funded by the European Union

Polish aid

estdev
From the people of Estonia

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

Roadmap for the Activation and Reintegration of Vulnerable Groups in the Labor Market

Implemented by

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Solidarity Fund PL

Partner

UKRAINIAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION

The project “Roadmap for the Activation and Reintegration of Vulnerable Groups in the Labour Market” is being implemented by the NGO “Ukrainian Marketing Association” within the framework of the Multi Donor Initiative Skills4Recovery, which is jointly co-financed by the European Union, Germany, Poland, Estonia, Denmark, and is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the Solidarity Fund PL (SFPL).

ROADMAP DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Iryna Shumik, Director General of the Directorate of Vocational Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Iryna Prylutska, Policy Advisor on Vocational Education Programme "Skills4Recovery" GIZ Ukraine

Yuriy BALANYUK, Chairperson of National Qualifications Agency

Vasyl FEDIUK, member of National Qualifications Agency

Tetiana ISHCHENKO, director of State institution "Scientific and Methodological Center for Higher and Pre-Higher Education"

Iryna LYLYK, President of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Natalia FESUN, Head of the Municipal Institution of Professional (Vocational) Education "Kyiv Professional College of Technologies and Design"

Yuriy SHCHYRIN, veteran, CEO and founder of the company "Agency of Industrial Marketing"

Mykola PANCHUK, Head of Hoshcha Town Council

Pavlo YARMIY, Head of the Board of the NGO "Agency of Regional Development of the Tavria Association of Territorial Communities"

Bohdan MATVIYCHUK, Director of the Employment Department of the Ministry of Economy and Environment of Ukraine

Alena TANASIYCHUK, head of the NGO "Network of Public Organizations Supporting IDPs in Ukraine" and the Vinnytsia separate unit of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Denys VASYLIEV, Deputy Director of the Employment Department – Head of the Employment Policy Division of the Ministry of Economy and Environment of Ukraine

Lilia GRABOVSKA, Deputy Director of the Department of International Cooperation and Partnership in Education of the State Employment Service

Iryna ISMAKAIEVA, Head of the main department of professional education of the Directorate of Professional Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Yuliya MARTYN, Head of the secretariat of National Qualifications Agency

Margarita POLISHCHUK, Head of the Project Department of the Secretariat of the National Qualifications Agency

Yulia HRYTSKU, Head of the Recovery and Reform Support Team at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Iryna PEREVOZOVA, head of the Ivano-Frankivsk regional office of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Kateryna PILOVA, head of the Dnipro separate unit of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Tetiana BORYSOVA, head of the Ternopil separate unit of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Nataliia VASYLENKO, Head of the Professional Development Department of the Employment Department of the Ministry of Economy and Environment of Ukraine

Liudmyla HARMASH, Head of the Department of Educational Content and Organization of the Educational Process of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Alla CHAIKOVSKA, head of the professional development and adult education unit of the State institution "Scientific and Methodological Center for Higher and Pre-Higher Education"

Inna KOLODKO, Head of the International cooperation department of general division of the secretariat of National Qualifications Agency

Svitlana LISCHYNSKA, Chief Specialist, Department for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, Combating Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence, Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine

Iryna PAVLYUK, Chief Specialist, Department of Educational Content and Organization of the Educational Process of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Anna BONDAR, Project manager - content of distance education, The Recovery and Reform Support Team at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Snezhana LEU-SEVERINENKO, expert of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Olena BUCHYNSKA, expert of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Tetiana TYMOSHENKO, expert of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Anna TASHCHENKO, expert of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Ivan TERESHCHENKO, expert of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Nataliia PYSARENKO, University of Exeter, UK

CONTENTS

Introduction	6
1. Preconditions, stages, and barriers in the implementation of government strategies and programs for employment activation and inclusion	10
2. Effectiveness of pathways of employment activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labor market	25
3. Recommendations and cases of overcoming problems of activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labor market	43
4. Cross-sectoral interactions in scaling effective practices	76
Conclusions	81
Acknowledgments	83
Annexes	85

INTRODUCTION

The full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation has significantly destabilised the functioning of Ukraine's labour market, worsening employment and the well-being of the population. In the conditions of war, thousands of Ukrainians are compelled to seek new jobs, change career paths or professions. This becomes particularly relevant for internally displaced persons (IDPs), veterans, women, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons – those vulnerable to social isolation and economic instability.

Under difficult socio-economic conditions and labour shortages in Ukraine, the realisation of the potential of people of working age who are currently outside the labour force and the activation of employment of vulnerable groups are considered a priority reserve for improving the current situation in the country's economy and a strategic resource for recovery. When employed, these groups will provide a positive synergy of expanding the labour supply and reducing pressure on social protection and assistance systems.

Therefore, issues related to the activation and reintegration of people facing barriers in the labour market must constantly remain in the focus of the state and private sectors of Ukraine's economy, as well as the public and international partners. The effectiveness of initiatives to support employment activation and the success of their scaling depend on the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the implementation of personalised and flexible solutions.

The main purpose of the Roadmap for the activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labour market (hereinafter – the Roadmap) is the development of recommendations, promotion and initiation of specific measures for the activation of target groups in the labour market through the improvement of their vocational training and career guidance, as well as support for inclusive employment in sectors related to the recovery of Ukraine's economy.

The proposed Roadmap is based on the results of research that made it possible to identify the most pressing problems faced by vulnerable groups of the population in education, employment and self-employment, as well as to identify the most successful practices for overcoming them.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Roadmap are based on a comprehensive study conducted by the NGO "Ukrainian Marketing Association" in February–May 2026 commissioned by project partners. The evidence base includes:

- desk research – analysis of Ukrainian statistical and analytical data for 2021–2025 and international experience in wartime and post-war contexts (reports of the NBU, State Statistics Service, Pension Fund, State Employment Service, IOM, OECD, World Bank);
- stakeholder mapping – as of March 2026, more than 100 entities, 62 state initiatives and 81 international projects were identified within a five-level ecosystem of support for the employment of vulnerable groups;
- field research – round tables in 4 regions (Kyiv, Dnipro, Ivano-Frankivsk, Vinnytsia) with the participation of 244 representatives of target groups and stakeholders; 30 in-depth interviews in 8 regions (Kyiv region, Vinnytsia region, Kharkiv region, Sumy region, Mykolaiv region, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ternopil region, Poltava region); focus groups in 3 regions (Mykolaiv region, Ternopil region, Poltava region);
- analysis of more than 100 successful cases of business, state enterprises, vocational education institutions and public organisations, systematised by factors of effectiveness.

As informants and participants in discussions, representatives of enterprises-employers (large, medium and small businesses), public organisations and associations, vocational education

institutions, representatives of executive and local authorities, employment services, HR consultants and independent experts were involved.

The Roadmap was developed based on broad consultations with project stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MES), the Ministry of Economy and Environment of Ukraine, the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine, the State Employment Service of Ukraine, regional state/military administrations, providers of vocational education services, employment organisations, representatives of employers, public organisa¬tions of IDPs, veterans, persons with disabilities, etc.

The Roadmap is a strategic and practical document that answers three key questions: what systemic barriers prevent vulnerable groups from finding and retaining decent employment? Which solutions have proven effective in Ukrainian conditions? And how to integrate the efforts of the state, business and civil society to scale these solutions?

This document is addressed to state authorities in the fields of education and employment at the national and regional levels, public associations supporting vulnerable groups of the population, as well as international partners who aim to assist Ukraine in this direction. The definition of target social groups, in particular IDPs, persons with disabilities and older persons, veterans and former combatants, is based on the Law of Ukraine "On social services." The term "vulnerable groups" is used as a general concept in accordance with the regulatory framework. At the same time, the authors recognise the internal diversity of these groups and focus on specific barriers that people may face in access to education and employment.

The provisions and recommendations of the Roadmap are aligned with current policies of education and employment in Ukraine and with key regulatory documents specified in the first section – in particular decrees of the President of Ukraine, strategies and operational plans of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in the fields of gender equality, internal displacement, veteran policy, SME development and deinstitutionalisation. According to target orientations and the level of complexity of support measures, taking into account the requirements of the main strategic documents for achieving political association and economic integration between Ukraine and the EU, the Roadmap most closely correlates with the Employment Strategy 2030 and specifies mechanisms for the implementation of its provisions. The document is of a recommendatory nature and may be used for the development of programme materials and initiatives of state management bodies, as well as other stakeholders.

Key challenges addressed by the Roadmap:

- deepening imbalances of demand and supply in the labour market – simultaneously in professional and regional dimensions, complicating the employment of vulnerable groups even with high employer demand for staff;
- mismatch of the education and retraining system with current and projected needs of employers, weak practical orientation of training;
- insufficient inclusiveness and a set of hidden barriers to employment activation of vulnerable groups – informational, psychological, financial and institutional, including the risk of losing social benefits upon official employment;
- limited institutional capacity of the support system and challenges related to European integration processes and the need for harmonisation with the EU acquis.

Key recommendations of the Roadmap are:

- A seven-stage algorithm for the activation of employment of vulnerable groups to increase effectiveness, overcome insufficient client-orientation and fragmentation of support in employment, education and self-employment.

- Proposals: 1) targeted consideration of the specifics of employment activation of particular vulnerable groups of the population; 2) reorientation from departmental specialisation of assistance provision to targeted satisfaction of the needs of target audiences; 3) prioritisation of stable high-productivity employment and increasing competitiveness of enterprises – in order to eliminate systemic traps (social benefits, ineffective and informal employment, etc.).
- Specific solutions based on the systematisation of more than a hundred successful cases of Ukrainian enterprises, educational institutions, state institutions and public organisations regarding the activation of employment of vulnerable groups and activation of the inactive population in the labour market.
- A practical mechanism for the integration of stakeholder efforts and control elements for determining the effectiveness of initiatives to support employment activation of vulnerable groups and inclusion. This toolkit will be particularly useful for organisations with little experience in promoting the employment of people facing barriers in the labour market, and will help to better understand the opportunities and challenges of implementing special initiatives, as well as to establish effective cooperation with partners.
- For the practical implementation of the Roadmap, a set of complementary tools has also been developed, specifying mechanisms for the implementation of its solutions. These documents are applied components of the Roadmap and serve as "local implementation roadmaps," ensuring step-by-step implementation of its recommendations and achievement of strategic goals of employment activation. They include: the Roadmap for the implementation of dual education in vocational institutions, which provides step-by-step instructions and tools for its implementation; the educational-methodological manual "Care and inclusive learning in vocational and professional pre-higher education institutions," which contains practical solutions for creating a friendly educational environment for vulnerable groups of the population; and the "Guide for effective communication with different target groups in the field of employment, vocational training and human capital development," which defines algorithms for informing vulnerable groups about opportunities for training, retraining and employment.

The Roadmap implements a holistic approach to the activation of inclusive employment, combining universal strategies with targeted support measures for IDPs, veterans, persons with disabilities and older persons, and other target groups. Only through such a dynamic and adapted combination can the effectiveness, inclusiveness, flexibility and responsiveness of the ecosystem of support for the activation of education, employment and self-employment of vulnerable categories of the population be ensured.

The approaches and recommendations proposed in the Roadmap contribute to the consistent formation of an integrated and comprehensive system that effectively combines specific targeted solutions for supporting inclusive employment and tested "practical" tools that need to be introduced to ensure effective implementation of policies and projects of stakeholders, ensuring sustainable positive changes in the ecosystem of activation of all strata of the population in the labour market and for the recovery of Ukraine's economy.

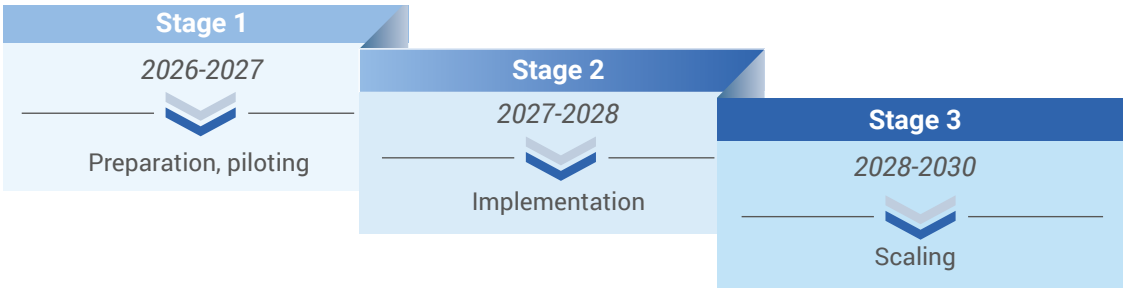
.

1 PRECONDITIONS, STAGES, AND BARRIERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS FOR EMPLOYMENT ACTIVATION AND INCLUSION

The Roadmap is oriented, first and foremost, toward providing practical recommendations for achieving the goals of the Employment Strategy of the Population of Ukraine for the period until 2030, with a focus on the activation of employment among vulnerable groups. The provisions and proposals of this Roadmap are harmonized with the following normative legal acts and international obligations of Ukraine: Decrees of the President of Ukraine "On the sustainable development goals of Ukraine for the period until 2030"; "On the national strategy in the field of human rights"; "On urgent measures to support war veterans, members of their families, family members of deceased (dead) war veterans, family members of deceased (dead) defenders of Ukraine"; orders and resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "Issues of data collection for monitoring gender equality", "On approval of the national strategy for creating a barrier-free space in Ukraine for the period until 2030", "On approval of the strategy for the development of higher education in Ukraine for 2022–2032", "On approval of the state strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period until 2030 and approval of the operational plan for its implementation for 2025–2027", "On approval of the strategy for implementing gender equality in the field of education until 2030 and approval of the operational plan of measures for its implementation for 2025–2027", "On approval of the strategy for implementing gender equality in the field of education until 2030 and approval of the operational plan of measures for its implementation for 2022–2024", "On approval of the state policy strategy on internal displacement for the period until 2025 and approval of the operational plan of measures for its implementation in 2023–2025", "On approval of the national strategy for overcoming the gender pay gap for the period until 2030 and approval of the operational plan of measures for its implementation in 2023–2025", "On approval of the plan of Ukraine", "On approval of the strategy for recovery, sustainable development, and digital transformation of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship for the period until 2027 and approval of the operational plan of measures for its implementation in 2024–2027", "On approval of the strategy for demographic development of Ukraine for the period until 2040", "On approval of the plan of measures for preparation for accession to the European employment services network (EURES)", "Certain issues of ensuring the achievement of the sustainable development goals in Ukraine", "On approval of the strategy of veteran policy for the period until 2030 and approval of the operational plan of measures for its implementation in 2024–2027", "On approval of the strategy for reforming psychoneurological and other residential institutions and deinstitutionalization of care for adults with disabilities and older persons until 2034 and approval of the operational plan of measures for its implementation in 2025–2027", "On approval of the strategy for forming a system of return from military service to civilian life for the period until 2033 and approval of the operational plan of measures for its implementation in 2025–2027", "On approval of the plan of measures for preparation for the introduction of the European professional card", "On approval of the national economic strategy for the period until 2030."

Summarizing the totality of the Government's strategic guidelines regarding the activation of employment among vulnerable groups, three stages of systemic change implementation can be distinguished (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Staging of the implementation of strategic changes in employment activation and inclusion in Ukraine



The successful implementation of the goals and objectives of the Strategy is associated with overcoming sufficiently large-scale problems and barriers:

- imbalances between demand and supply in the labor market;
- mismatch of labor supply with the needs of the economy;
- insufficient inclusiveness and other limitations of employment activation among vulnerable groups;
- limited institutional capacity and challenges related to European integration processes.

Addressing these challenges allows for a better assessment of the potential and systemic constraints of the effectiveness of changes in the implementation of government strategies in Ukraine.

Imbalances between demand and supply in the labor market

The factors and problems of labor market imbalances in Ukraine have traditionally caused significant negative socio-economic consequences and have been the object of constant and increased attention of state employment policy. The full-scale invasion of Russia has significantly exacerbated the problems and negative consequences of the shortage of qualified personnel and other labor market imbalances.

According to the NBU Inflation Report, the lack of workers, the need to raise wages, as well as security issues remain the main problems of business (Fig. 2)[1].

Fig. 2. Indices of the difficulty of finding qualified and unqualified workers, % of responses, employer survey

1 Inflation report. NBU. 2025

The noted imbalances between demand and supply in the labor market deepen simultaneously in two dimensions – professional and regional – which creates additional difficulties for vulnerable groups in obtaining employment and improving their well-being.

The number of employed persons in industrial sectors decreased by 37% during 2023–2025, while in the social sphere and healthcare it fell by only 11%, which reflects a critical decline in overall economic productivity in practically all branches of the economy.

Trade and logistics remain the largest employers, but lost more than 1.2 million workers in 2021–2024, which increases constraints on the development of activity[2].

It should be noted that the importance and relevance for Ukrainian employers of the problems and opportunities of paying competitive wages to employees are caused not only by the difficult conditions of enterprise functioning, but also by the fact that their business often does not generate highly competitive results for the market, is not oriented toward high technological complexity and the creation of high added value – raw materials, products of their primary processing, intermediation in the sale of goods, etc., dominate.

Indeed, the increase in labor productivity directly determines the possibilities of improving the quality of jobs and increasing the participation of qualified personnel in the labor market[3]. Conversely, under conditions of low labor productivity, a larger number of workers receive low wages (to reduce costs and dumping), doomed to poverty and limited consumption, and in the long term (under pressure from more productive importers or domestic competitors) – unemployment.

Such a situation signals not only current lagging but also the risk of slowing down integration into the European economic space, which directly restrains the growth of household incomes, business competitiveness, and the potential speed of post-war recovery.

Additionally, the situation is complicated by changes in the structure of demand for labor and limited opportunities for stable employment for Ukrainians (Fig. 3). As a consequence, many people are forced to agree to work that does not correspond to their qualifications and does not utilize their existing competencies.

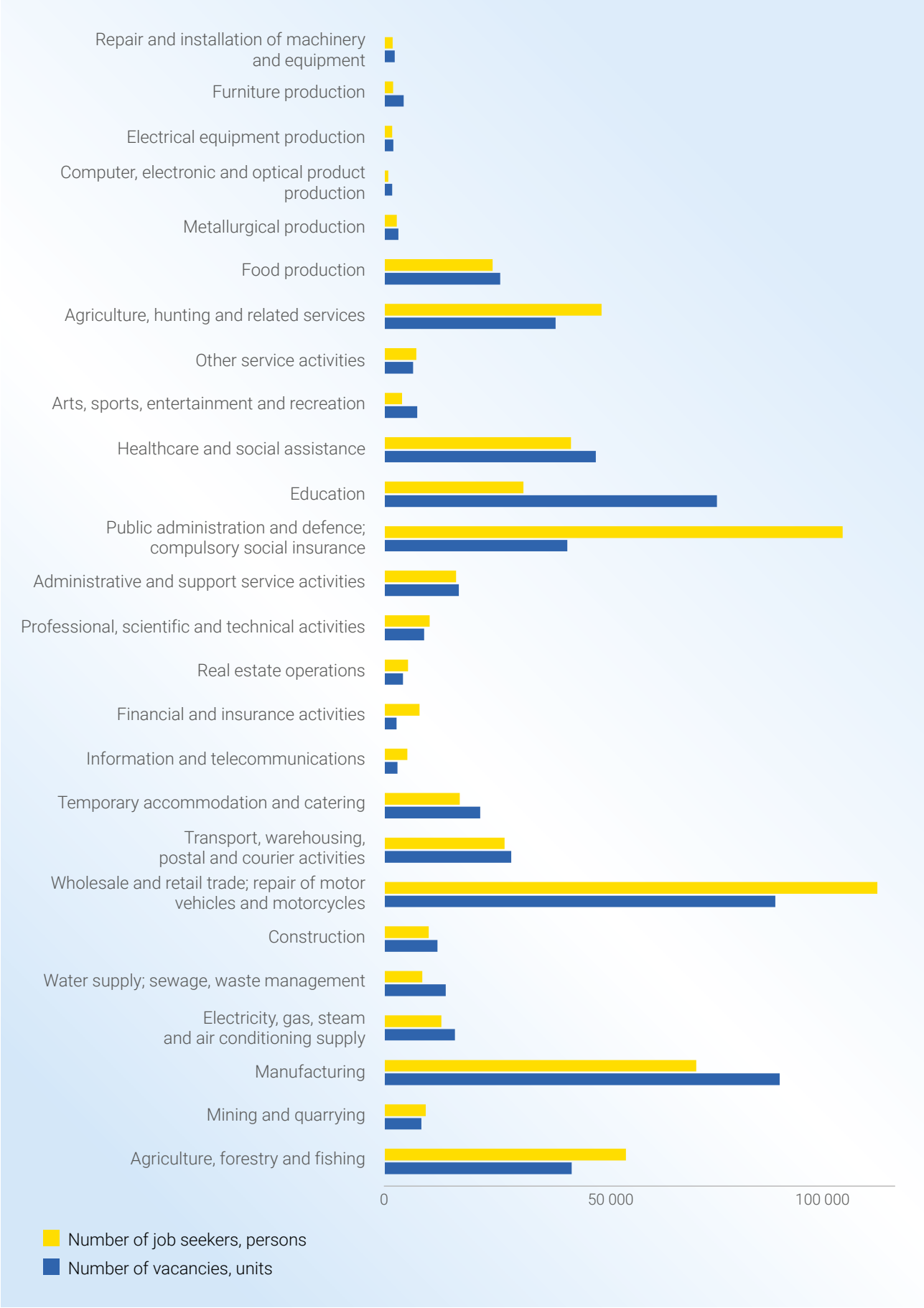
Today's employment by sectors and the system of personnel training increasingly poorly correspond to the real needs of the economy, especially in the context of the challenges of future recovery, technological progress, etc. The situation is aggravated by the preservation at many Ukrainian enterprises of an outdated technological base, due to which structural distortions are "conserved," and the professional-qualification structure of the labor market reacts to changes far too slowly. Employers' demand remains predominantly concentrated on working professions (in the spheres of industry and physical labor), which are characterized by a relatively low level of wages. Not only, but also as a consequence of this, the level of employment of youth and other vulnerable groups of the population in the labor market remains relatively low, and the popularity and prestige of vocational education suffer.

The war has radically changed the regional structure of the distribution of economic activity. As a result of critical destruction, stoppages, relocations of enterprises, especially large-scale ones for the most affected regions, significant flows of refugees, internally displaced persons, established economic ties between regions have been broken, and the balance between labor demand and supply has been disrupted – both in frontline and in rear regions.

2 Inflation report. NBU. 2025

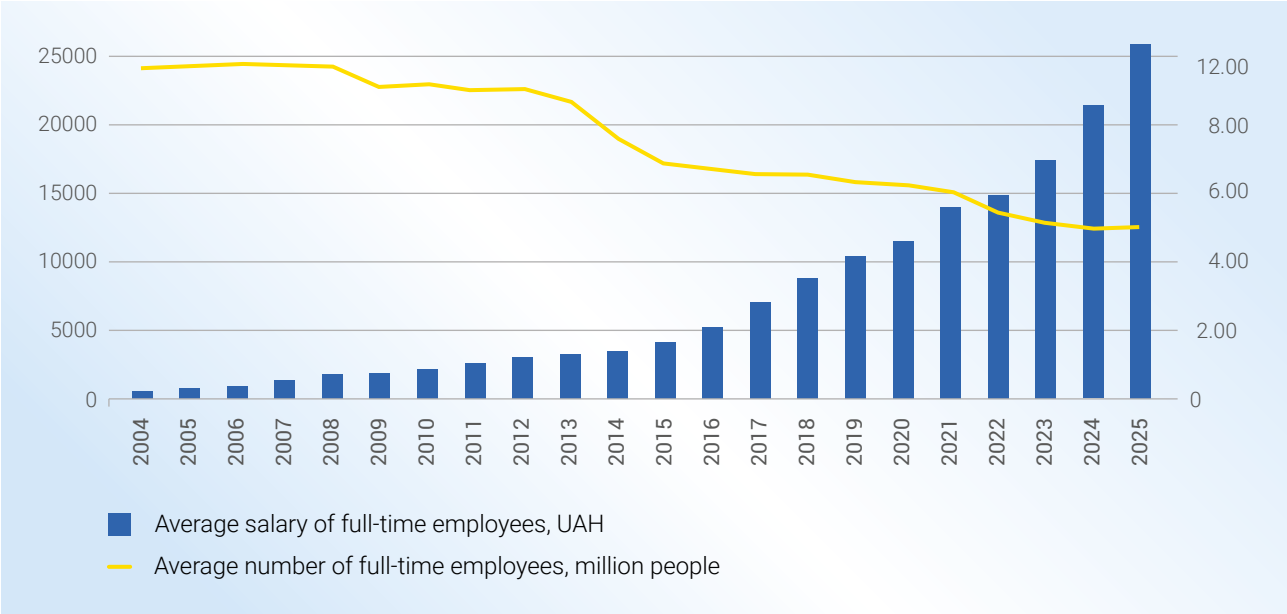
3 Quality Jobs Roadmap. European Commission. 2025

Fig. 3. Number of job seekers and vacancies in the fields where they previously worked, 2025[4]



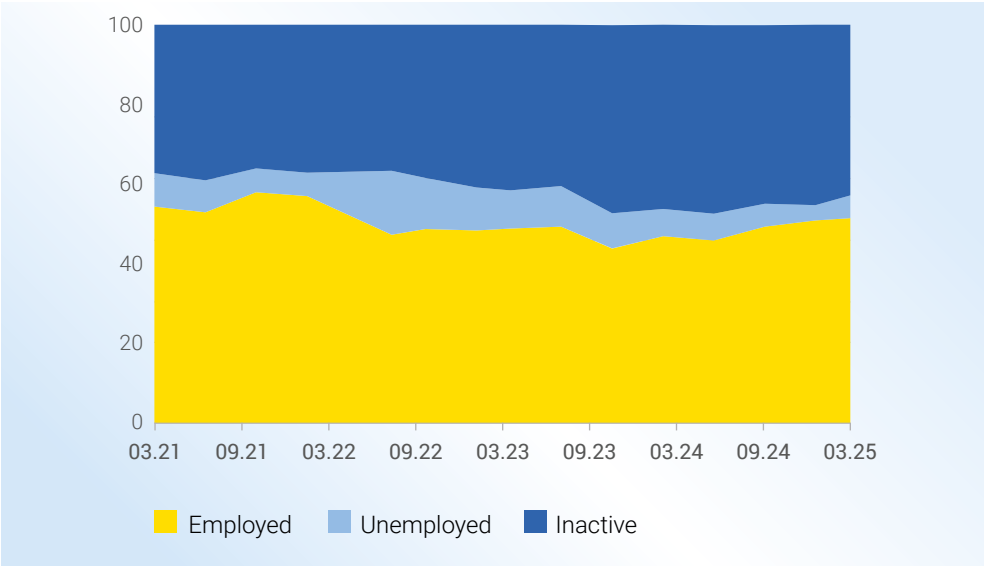
4 Statistics of the State Employment Service. 2025

Fig. 4. Changes in the number and wages of regular employees in 2004–2025[5]



In addition to regional and sectoral asymmetries in employment, which determine the shortage of labor in Ukraine, there is a high share of inactive population in the labor market (Fig. 5)[6] [7].

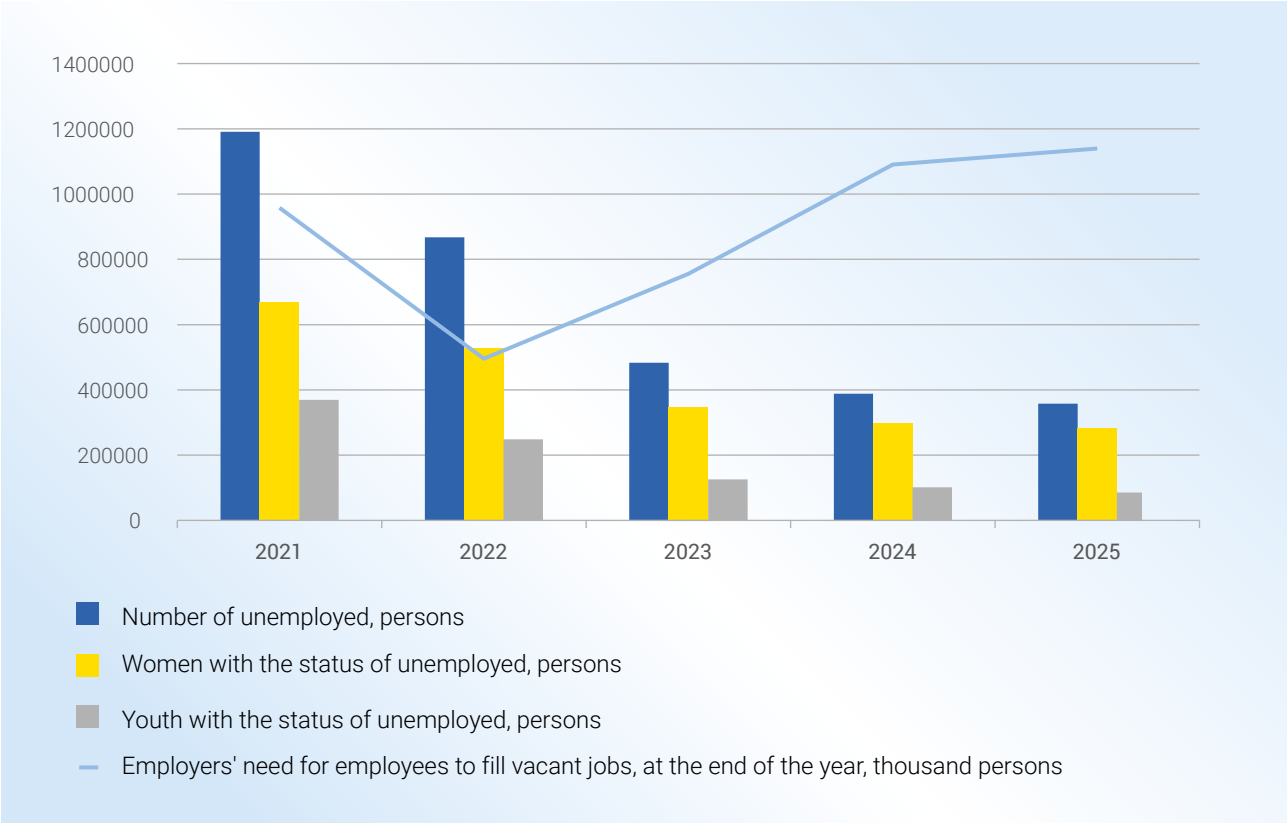
Fig. 5. Structure of labor force participation according to surveys, % of responses[8]



Within the structure of the labor force contingent in Ukraine, it is possible to distinguish groups of the population without objective (legally established) limitations of working capacity, but whose potential is not fully utilized, in particular women and youth, including as a result of unemployment (Fig. 6).

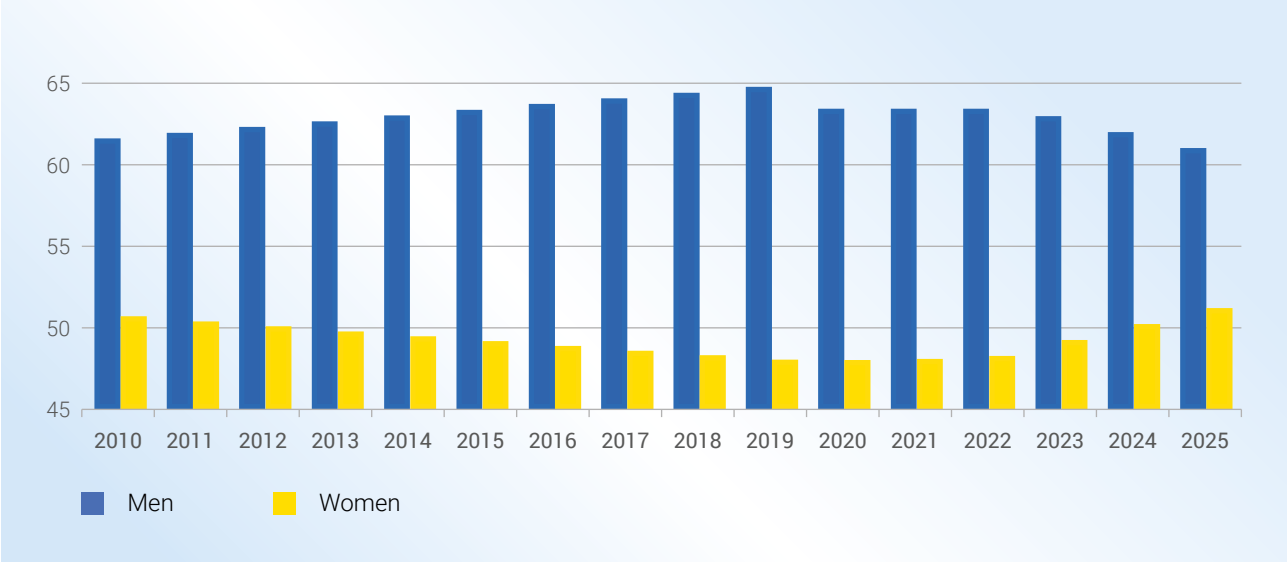
5 Draft budget of Ukraine.
6 Employment strategy of the population of Ukraine until 2030. CMU. 2026.
7 Macroeconomic and monetary review. NBU. 2026
8 Inflation report. NBU. 2025

Fig. 6. Share of women and youth in the number of registered unemployed[9]



Before the war, women were insufficiently represented in the labor force: in 2021 their share amounted to less than 48%, while the average indicator across EU countries equaled 55% (Fig. 7). In parallel, Ukraine had a larger gender pay gap than the EU average (about 19%).

Fig. 7. Level of participation of women and men in the labor force in Ukraine, %



To a large extent, this is explained by professional segregation (the concentration of women in lower-paid types of employment and in lower positions), as well as by the fact that legislation does not establish a sufficiently strict requirement of "equal pay for equal work."

9 Statistics of the State Employment Service. 2025

Despite the fact that the war requires changing the position regarding the involvement of women in so-called "conditionally male" professions, about 57% of employers[10], according to surveys, demonstrate low readiness to employ women. The latter is partially confirmed by the preservation in Ukraine of a comparatively greater shortage of labor in traditionally male sectors of employment.

The outlined risks acquire critical significance taking into account the regional differentiation of employment development and differences in the socio-economic potential of different territories, which are exacerbated during the war.

Among youth in Ukraine, a high level of unemployment and economic inactivity traditionally persists. Before the change in accounting methodology in 2021, more than 19% of young people aged 15–24 was considered unemployed. After 2022, the situation was further complicated by forced migration and the reduction of employment opportunities. At the same time, precisely the absence of prospects for decent and stable work remains one of the key factors of migration sentiments among youth.

An important problem of the labor market of Ukraine remains the significant scale of undeclared and improperly formalized employment. Alongside the challenges of financing, organization of work, and client orientation of the State Employment Service, it is precisely the spread of informal labor that significantly limits the effectiveness of state employment policy. Part of such workers do not apply to the employment service at all and do not enter official statistics.

The consequences of informal employment are the deterioration of working conditions, lower income levels, loss of social protection and pension rights, as well as the narrowing of opportunities for the development of human capital. The highest level of undeclared labor is observed in the sphere of temporary accommodation and food services (40.4%), security activities (40.0%), repair of motor vehicles (38.9%), construction (38.2%), and trade (32.2%). Among men, the level of informal employment is about 28%, among women – 19%; in the structure of unregistered workers, men constitute about 60%, women – 40%. The phenomenon is equally widespread in urban (56.7%) and rural areas (53.6%). About 40% of all informally employed work for individual entrepreneurs[11].

In the conditions of war, rising costs, and high competition, business often has limited opportunities to support employment. At the same time, both employers and employees are often interested in informal employment schemes that allow reducing current expenses or increasing actual income. That is why reducing the scale of undeclared labor requires not only control but also the creation of economic incentives for legal employment and the development of small and medium-sized business.

The quality of employment and labor relations is a strategic task of complex systemic work and interactions of all participants in the labor market. Systemic problems and "traps" of reforms characteristic of Ukraine remain relevant and require comprehensive solutions at a new level of socially oriented and industrially developed economies.

Mismatch of labor supply with the needs of the economy

The reduction of the working-age population has become one of the key restraining factors of economic growth during the war, carrying risks for future recovery in Ukraine[12]. By October 2023, the shortage of both qualified employees and unqualified workers entered the top three main obstacles to enterprise activity. The population of Ukraine as of December 2025 is estimated at

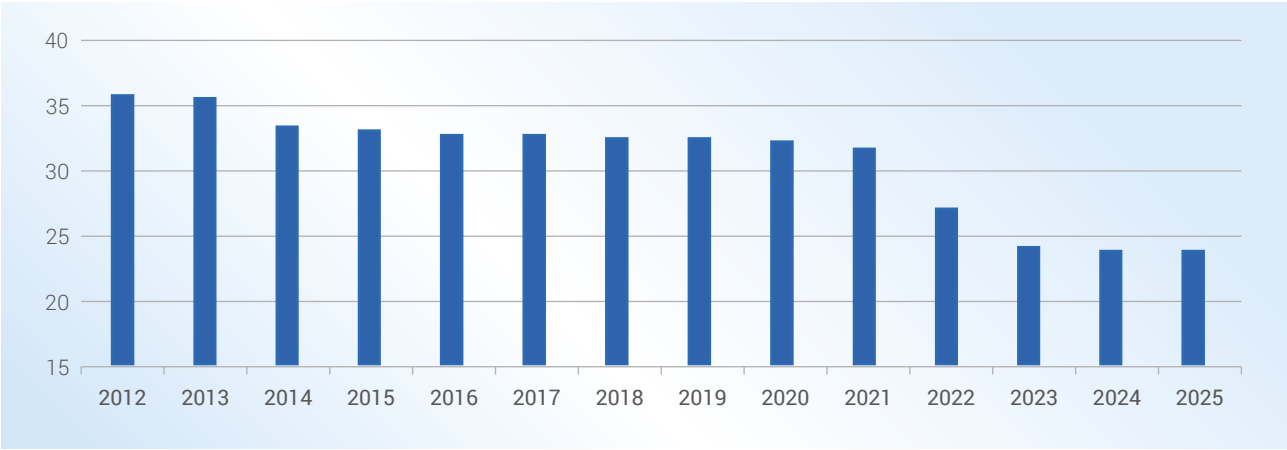
10 Labor market research 2024–2025: business demand, challenges and impact strategy. Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. 2025

11 State Statistics Service of Ukraine

12 Demographic Development Strategy of Ukraine until 2040. CMU. 2024

approximately 38.9 million persons (Fig. 8), including 10.2 million pensioners, 3.4 million persons with disabilities, more than 3.7 million internally displaced persons (de facto), and about 1.4 million veterans[13].

Fig. 8. Working-age population (15–74 years)[14], million persons



In the conditions of rapid socio-economic and technological changes, the competence of workers is a key factor of the competitiveness of Ukrainian industry and the economy as a whole. Stable employment, household incomes, and the development of the labor market are largely determined by the level of education and professional training of the population.

Low readiness of the population for learning, skills upgrading, and professional retraining throughout life exacerbates problems embedded already at the initial stages of education and negatively affects the quality of labor potential.

An additional restraining factor is the small difference in wages between more and less qualified workers. This reduces motivation to acquire new competencies, improve qualifications, and master new professions, and also indicates the deep and systemic nature of professional-qualification imbalances in the labor market.

Despite the updating of educational standards, the quality of vocational education and training programs is limited by the lack of modern equipment, shortage of practitioner-teachers, and insufficient development of practice-oriented formats of learning, in particular internships, workplace training, and dual forms of education. These problems are especially acute outside large cities, where educational institutions often lack adequate material and technical bases and face difficulties in attracting specialists with relevant practical experience.

At the same time, employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, do not have sufficient incentives and resources for organizing quality practical training. Issues of state support, tax incentives, preparation of mentors at enterprises, and conditions of their reservation remain unresolved. The situation was further complicated after 2022 due to the reduction of activity or closure of many enterprises, which led to the loss of a significant part of opportunities for internships and practical training.

Employers are also often not ready to accept learners for long-term internships due to additional costs, liability risks, lack of established mechanisms of cooperation with educational institutions, and fears of losing trained personnel.

13 Report on Population Return in Ukraine. IOM. 2026

14 OECD Economic Surveys: Ukraine 2025. OECD. 2025.

As a result, the mismatch between graduates' skills and employers' needs intensifies, and problems of developing the system of lifelong learning and updating professional competencies deepen.

As of July 2024, only about 15% of school graduates chose vocational education, about 20% – professional pre-higher education, while the majority entered higher education institutions or did not continue education at all. Data from admission campaigns also indicate a steady shift of educational demand toward non-production specialties[15].

It is important that investments in the quality of education, development of modern competencies, science, innovation, and technological modernization of industries can become that "window of opportunity" which will allow Ukraine to somewhat compensate for the losses of human capital, as well as to make a structural breakthrough toward Economy 5.0, where innovation, labor productivity, interdisciplinary skills, and inclusion will play a key role, increasing employment and well-being of the population, and the activity of vulnerable groups in the labor market.

Insufficient inclusiveness and other limitations of employment activation of vulnerable groups

Strategically, Ukraine envisages a transition to a more technological, productive, transparent, and inclusive model of employment. The experience of EU countries and Ukraine demonstrates that effective social policy of the state must simultaneously ensure humanitarian support and well-being of the population, especially its vulnerable groups, and stimulate its economic activity.

As a result of the war, the number of internally displaced persons, veterans, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable categories of the population is increasing. These groups face heightened humanitarian risks and require enhanced measures of social assistance, in particular to support their reintegration into the labor market.

Under conditions of reduced volumes of international assistance, the activation and integration of efforts of all stakeholders for strategically oriented scaling of effective programs and practices in increasing employment and inclusion in the economy of Ukraine is critically significant. The maximum volumes of international humanitarian assistance to Ukraine were provided at the beginning of the war in 2022 – more than 10.5 billion euros (5.4% of GDP), after which they gradually decreased to 4.1 billion euros in 2024 (2.4% of GDP).

Financing and implementation by the Government of the country of measures of social support (cash payments, housing assistance, access to essential goods) allowed reducing humanitarian pressure for all strata of the population, but in real terms after 2022 these expenditures also decreased due to the priority of defense needs.

The increase in military expenditures with the beginning of the war in 2022 caused a reduction in opportunities for social protection, mainly due to maintaining a low subsistence minimum. In 2024 it was almost three times lower than actual needs (73 USD versus 199 USD). This situationally reduces budget expenditures in favor of military demands and capital investments, but causes a mismatch of state assistance with the real needs of the population, especially vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons, veterans, and persons with disabilities. Persons belonging to several vulnerable categories (veterans with disabilities, etc.) may face double barriers in employment.

Activation of vulnerable groups of the population in the labor market envisages not only overcoming unemployment but also creating conditions for productive and decently paid employment. These problems and challenges require systemic solutions at the level of cultural attitudes, socio-economic interactions, specific and targeted initiatives.

15 On the Road to Recovery: Addressing Ukraine's Transport Labor Shortages. The World Bank. 2025

Research results in Ukraine and EU countries demonstrate that perceiving unemployment or belonging to vulnerable groups of the population as direct signs and causes of poverty is a simplification and limitation of the interdependence of these phenomena.

It is indicative and important that the growth of nominal and real incomes in recent years in Ukraine did not lead to a significant reduction of poverty. In May 2022, 30% of the population reported the need to economize on food, compared to 15% in January 2022. Food prices increased by 40% in the period from January 2022 to June 2023, after which the growth rates decreased to 20–25% in 2023–2024.

The level of poverty was higher among large households, single-parent families, as well as in small settlements. A particularly vulnerable group remains internally displaced persons who lost assets and live in regions with worse employment opportunities.

Internally displaced persons, former combatants, persons with disabilities, and elderly persons have special status in legislation and priorities of state policy in Ukraine, with significant potential for activation and increased participation in the labor market.

Internally displaced persons

According to IOM estimates, Ukraine has 3.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)[16]. Many of them arrived from territories under occupation or constant threat. They often need rapid support for inclusion in the economy and reduction of risks of further emigration. A significant part of IDPs lost housing, jobs, or access to education and moved to places where it was easier to obtain housing or social assistance, rather than where there were more vacancies and educational opportunities. Accordingly, in such cases, job search in host communities is complicated by the limited number of vacancies and competition for jobs.

The central barrier is the mismatch of competencies with the requirements of the local labor market, which is reinforced by practical problems – loss of documents, complicated access to registries, difficulties with recognition of qualifications, and unsettled labor relations with previous employers. In addition, socio-behavioral factors operate: employers often demonstrate caution regarding the hiring of IDPs, which narrows employment opportunities even in the presence of relevant experience.

Although the social policy of the state and communities has largely been reoriented toward supporting IDPs, unemployment and poverty levels in this group remain high. Most internally displaced persons continue to experience prolonged displacement: 71 percent of them have been in a state of displacement for more than two years[17].

Persons with disabilities

If before 2022 Ukraine had 2.7 million registered persons with disabilities, then by mid-2024 this number increased to 3 million[18]. Importantly, about 50% of persons with disabilities belong to Group 3 and do not require costly adaptation of workplaces (Fig. 9).

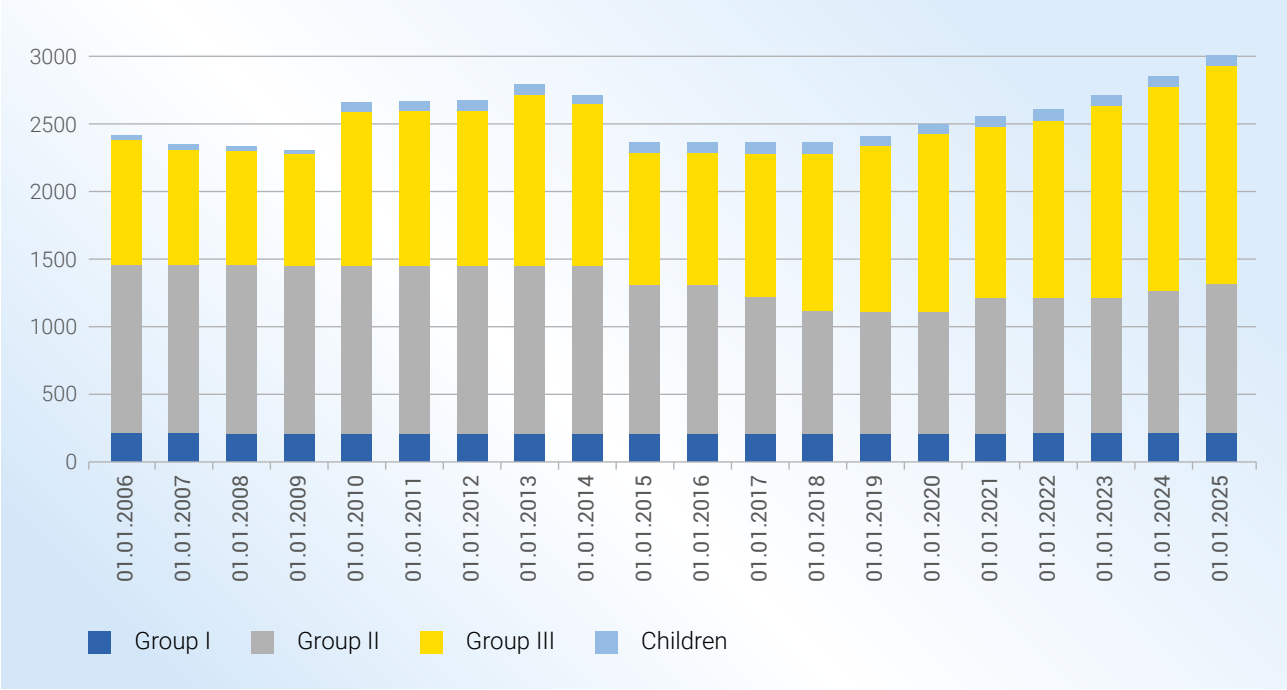
International practice shows that the integration of veterans with disabilities is complex even for countries with strong economies and developed social protection: in particular, veterans with polytraumas or traumatic brain injuries often face barriers in employment and have a higher risk of unemployment.

16 Report on Population Return in Ukraine. IOM. 2026

17 Internal Displacement Report. IOM. 2026.

18 How many people became disabled during the full-scale war? Word and Deed. 2026

Fig. 9. Distribution of the number of persons with disabilities[19]



The level of official employment of persons with disabilities of Groups 2 and 3 in Ukraine is less than 20%, in the EU – about 50%[20]. That is why the evaluation of the effectiveness of employment policies for vulnerable groups, especially persons with disabilities, is important to expand beyond purely financial indicators, since decisions regarding their participation in the labor market are influenced by environmental barriers, institutional risks, and parameters of related additional costs. Job search and stable employment for a significant part of persons with disabilities are in fact blocked by the inaccessibility of urban, educational, and other spaces, public transport, etc. Employment of persons with disabilities is often accompanied by additional current expenses (medical and rehabilitation, transport, etc.), which can significantly change the real "return" from labor.

Partly because of this, systemic shortcomings of training programs for persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses inactive in the labor market are manifested, with a relatively low level of participation in training by representatives of this vulnerable group.

A separate block of restraining factors is associated with the risk of overestimation and potential loss of state social assistance in the case of stable employment and income increase. For many people this forms a rational strategy of "better lower or unofficial earnings and payments," since the loss of low-income status can trigger chain consequences – from termination of support and increased expenses to loss of part of family income[21]. Demotivation for official employment and stable work can form a systemic "trap" in optimizing the balance of assistance payments and incentives for employment.

Important for consideration in the activation of employment of vulnerable groups are intersections and conflicts of statuses, and accordingly, available types of support (disability assistance, unemployment assistance, or for low-income households, etc.) – the need to improve systems of their differentiation and targeting.

19 Social protection of the population of Ukraine. Ukrstat. 2025

20 People with disabilities will have new opportunities in the labor market and a decent life. MSP. 2025

21 Certain issues of introducing assessment of daily functioning of a person. Ministry of Health of Ukraine. 2025

It should be particularly noted that all aspects, limitations, and problematic issues of activation in the labor market of persons with disabilities are often relevant and concern a larger number of people who are to varying degrees involved in long-term care. Indeed, outside the labor market may remain not only persons with disabilities but also those who provide care for them. The average monthly amount of care assistance in 2025 was 944 UAH, while the minimum wage was 8000 UAH. The average monthly number of recipients of care assistance was 47 thousand persons.

Increasing efficiency, modernization, and scaling for new challenges of the system of support for persons with disabilities and categories close to them (complex conditions but without defined support status, etc.) is critically important and relevant to the needs and livelihoods of a wide circle of citizens (family members, etc.).

For realistic evaluation of the potential of employment activation of persons with disabilities, it is important that only approximately one-third of persons with disabilities receive rehabilitation services. The main reasons are the inaccessibility of infrastructure (for 42% access is in fact absent) and lack of information: more than half of persons with disabilities do not know about rehabilitation opportunities.

Accordingly, the level of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labor market remains low.

War veterans

According to Government representatives, as of April 2026, 1.8 million war veterans were officially registered in Ukraine[22], although the actual number is significantly higher. According to IOM data, 21% of veterans report having a disability[23], and according to the survey of the Ukrainian Veterans Fund – almost every second veteran indicates that they have a disability.

It is expected that after the end of the war, the number of veterans, including family members and other representatives of the category, will grow to 5–6 million persons.

In official Government documents[24] war veterans are considered not as a separate social group requiring protection, but primarily as an integral component of human capital and the defense capability of the state, since their experience and knowledge form the basis of the personnel reserve for the security and defense sector and make a significant contribution to strengthening the resilience of the state under martial law and after its termination or cancellation, with high potential for activation and neutralization of disproportions in the labor market[25].

At the same time, it is emphasized that the gap between the demand for veterans' labor and the actual level of their employment reflects insufficient effectiveness of current policy instruments and leads to the loss for the labor market of a significant part of prepared and motivated human capital.

The return of veterans and demobilized servicemen to civilian life requires large-scale and comprehensive solutions in three key directions: rehabilitation, training and retraining in those specialties most in demand in the labor market, as well as support directly at the stage of employment and adaptation for stable work.

Research results of the Ukrainian Veterans Fund show that more than 21% of veterans note limited opportunities to acquire a new profession[26], more than 57% face difficulties during employ-

22 There are already 1.8 million veterans in Ukraine. CMU. 2026
23 Veteran Profiles and Reintegration Challenges in Ukraine. IOM. 2025
24 On approval of the concept of the state target program "Veteran. Work" for 2026—2027. CMU. 2025
25 Svyrydenko reported how many veterans there will be in Ukraine after the end of the war. TSN. 2025
26 Employment of veterans – barriers and adaptation challenges. Ukrainian Veterans Fund. 2025.

ment after release from military service (only 13% satisfied employment needs[27]), and about 30% of respondents cannot find work at all, even despite increased demand for personnel in most sectors of the economy. 39% note a lack of adaptation mechanisms in the workplace, more than 27% – insufficient support in the team. Such factors increase socio-economic risks – from losses of stable employment and reduced labor productivity to emigration of veterans and marginalization of able-bodied representatives of this important social group who could not integrate into civilian life.

Since 2023, approaches and emphases of state veteran policy in Ukraine have gradually been transforming – from a model of lifelong benefits to a system oriented toward a complex of incentives for reintegration of veterans into active civilian life and stable employment.

Among the priorities of the Government, implemented by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, are grants for veterans to create and develop small enterprises, with employment of former combatants envisaged. Despite existing positive results, these initiatives have not yet acquired significant scale and systemic impact on the situation of activation of veterans in the labor market and indicators of their self-employment. The level of participation of representatives of the group in state programs remains relatively low, and assessments of stability and long-term effectiveness of business projects are uncertain.

The latter demonstrates the need to improve the system of monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions by the state and other stakeholders for maximally effective use and proper direction of limited resources. Problems of trust, coverage, and interest of veterans in state support services are relevant also in the spheres of education, career guidance, and employment. The change of priorities and models must not leave without protection those who need real assistance in difficult life situations of critical states of physical and mental health, etc. Almost 60% of veterans indicate insufficient income levels to cover basic needs.

The obstacles faced by veterans are both directly related to the consequences of mobilization and general for the labor market. The most frequently mentioned problems:

- mismatch of wages with expectations (37%);
- health problems (36%);
- psycho-emotional difficulties (25%);
- discrimination (23%);
- lack of civilian experience or loss of professional skills during service (respectively, 14% for each option)[28].

International experience demonstrates that loss of balance in priorities and application of instruments of assistance and support for veterans' self-realization, as well as regarding parity of benefits and conditions of official employment compared to other options of organizing life with guaranteed small payments (pensions, social or other types of assistance, etc.), forms systemic "traps" critical in the scale of negative consequences.

In Ukraine, new mechanisms are gradually developing that should simplify access of war veterans and their family members, including persons with disabilities due to war, to state services and assistance programs within an integrated digital ecosystem. Receiving assistance and support by former combatants in reintegration into education and employment should become faster, clearer, more targeted, and effective.

27 Portrait of a veteran 2025. Ukrainian Veterans Fund. 2025.

28 Employment of veterans – barriers and adaptation challenges. Ukrainian Veterans Fund. 2025.

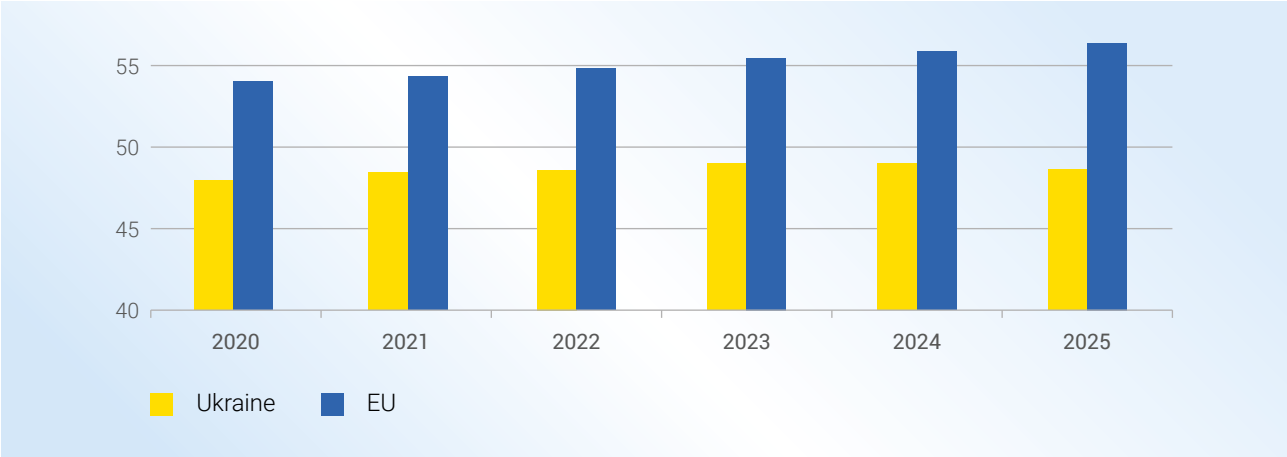
Older persons

Older persons, in particular pensioners, are a significant reserve for increasing the number of employed, including qualified workers. According to the Pension Fund of Ukraine, the number of pension recipients in Ukraine decreased by almost 700 thousand persons, from 10.88 million in 2021 to 10.17 million persons at the beginning of 2026[29].

As a result of the negative impact of the war on working capacity and other characteristics of the population of Ukraine, many workers are forced to leave the labor market prematurely, the ratio of workers to pensioners has nearly equalized, at a proportion of 1:1[30], against the background of negative changes in the number of citizens of working age (Fig. 10)[31].

Although, thanks to international financial assistance, the pension system demonstrated some resilience, its financial base is limited, and the level of payments is low. Incomes of the majority of pensioners remain low. Due to the low level of pensions, the share of working pensioners increased, but only from 24% to 27%. On January 1, 2022, out of 10.8 million pensioners, 2.7 million persons were working; on January 1, 2026, the number of the latter amounted to about 2.8 million persons.

Fig. 10. Changes in the ratios of persons of working and non-working age in Ukraine and the EU in 2020–2025, %



Despite the preservation of payments during the war, inflation reduced their real purchasing power, which increases the vulnerability of elderly people. At the same time, in Ukraine the situation persists where workers retire earlier than on average in EU countries and other economically more developed ones. Life expectancy after 60 years in Ukraine is relatively shorter due to lower average life expectancy.

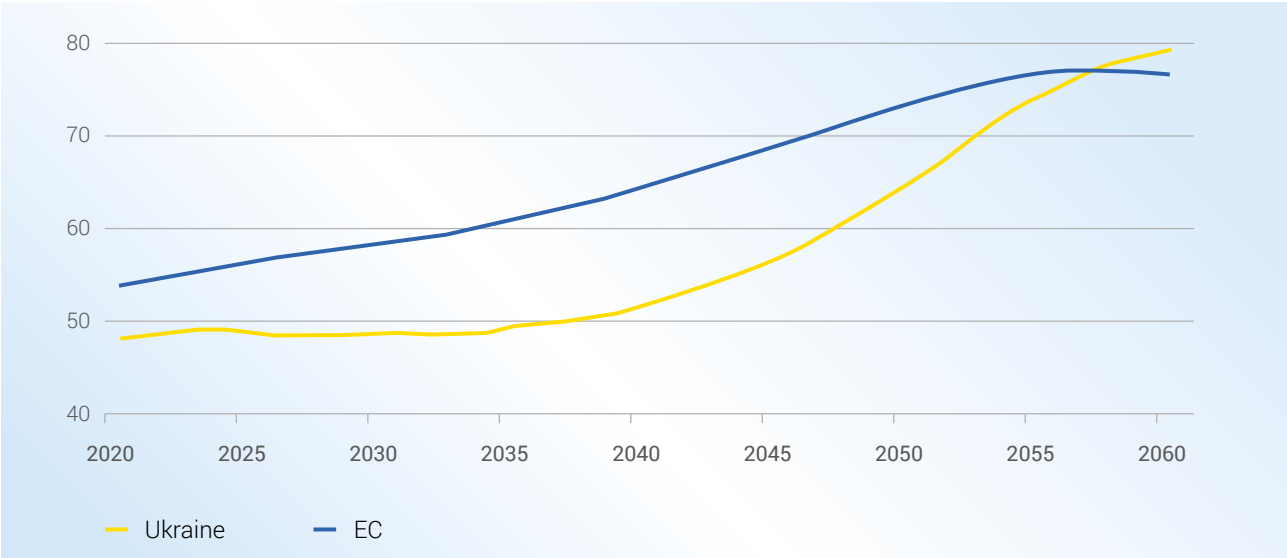
More than 20% of pension recipients can be directly attributed to particularly vulnerable groups. More than half of pensioners (55%) receive up to 5,000 UAH per month, 3% – amounts less than or equal to the subsistence minimum.

Activation of employment of older people is restrained by a combination of employer prejudices regarding adaptability and productivity with the real gap between existing competencies and the requirements of modern jobs, where digital and technological skills are increasingly important.

29 Statistics of the Pension Fund of Ukraine. PFU. 2025
30 Pension Fund of Ukraine. 2025
31 OECD Economic Surveys: Ukraine 2025. OECD. 2025

The critically significant problem today of the shortage of qualified workers in Ukraine and the increase of employment efficiency of older people will remain relevant also at the stage of recovery (Fig. 11)[32].

Fig. 11. Forecast of changes in the ratios of total age to working age in Ukraine and the EU in 2026–2060, %



Experts forecast in the near future a strengthening of trends of outflow from the labor market of a significant number of workers reaching retirement age. This will necessitate large-scale involvement of new personnel, even under the condition that the total number of jobs will not increase.

The issue of unused labor potential in Ukraine has a systemic character and requires consideration of institutional, social, and economic factors in assessments and decisions of employment policy. Targeted, comprehensive policies and initiatives – from reforms in the spheres of care, pensions, and education to improvement of tax-social mechanisms – can not only expand the participation of vulnerable groups in the labor force but also increase the long-term resilience and readiness for recovery of the national economy.

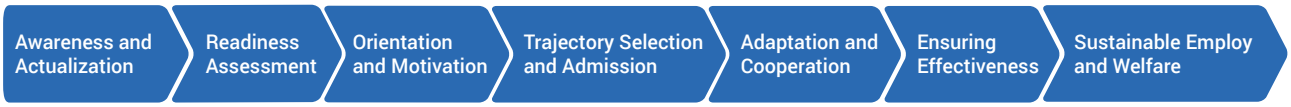
32 OECD Economic Surveys: Ukraine 2025. OECD. 2025.

2 EFFECTIVENESS OF PATHWAYS OF EMPLOYMENT ACTIVATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN THE LABOR MARKET

Important for the improvement of support systems is the consideration of the peculiarities of the staging and passage of each of them by specific representatives of vulnerable groups. Client-orientation is one of the key principles of truly effective modern strategies and programs for activation of population employment and assistance to citizens affected by the war.

The generalization of the results of a complex of studies, assessments of experts, and target audiences of the project made it possible to distinguish key stages and the most significant problems/barriers of the process of employment activation of vulnerable groups, as well as individual scenarios of its passage (see figure).

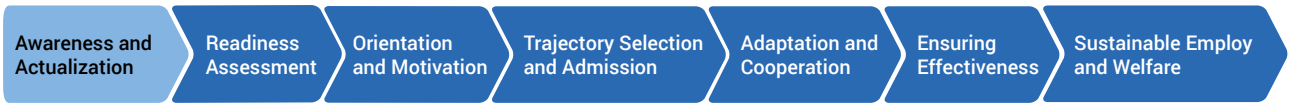
The chain of stages is non-linear: part of the people overcome them in different sequences or return to previous steps. At the same time, each subsequent stage becomes significantly more difficult if the previous one was passed without proper support. That is why the analysis of barriers and recommendations must be addressed to each stage separately.



Each of the components of the chain reflects relevant directions of change for increasing the effectiveness of processes/the system of activation of vulnerable groups in the labor market.

Data analysis showed that in the vast majority of regions the transition between stages is the weakest link: a person may successfully complete training but not receive support in job search; or find a vacancy but encounter an unprepared team and leave the workplace within the first month. Fragmentation of support is a cross-cutting problem that repeats in all regions of the study regardless of the level of development of local infrastructure.

> *"We have instruments – training, grants, vacancies. But there is no bridge between them. A person falls into the gap between them.[33]"*



Low awareness of the population about available employment and training opportunities forms a critically significant information barrier. A significant part of representatives of target audiences do not use retraining and support programs not because of lack of opportunities, but because of lack of information or trust in institutions.

This especially concerns internally displaced persons, veterans, persons with disabilities, and youth. Information provision often has a formal, non-targeted character and does not reach (does not attract the attention of) those who most need support. The problem has a systemic character and is related to communication channels, trust, and social isolation.

> *"Many people simply do not know that retraining programs exist."*
>
> *"There are opportunities, but people do not know about them." "People simply do not apply."*

33 Here and below are the results of UAM research, February-May 2026.

> *"Many do not even know that grants exist without the need to invest their own funds... Awareness is very low."*
>
> *"Where to search and how to reach the target audience – this is always a matter of communication."*
>
> *"Information about educational opportunities must be maximally clear and accessible."*

Research results prove that increasing the general level of awareness of vulnerable groups of the population regarding opportunities of activation in the labor market is critically significant, but insufficient for effective and sustainable improvement of their employment situation. Barriers of trust and negative stereotypes require explanatory work with active use of social networks and the potential of civil society organizations, professional elaboration, and client orientation in the development of information-communication programs of support for state and public initiatives of support for vulnerable groups in employment.

Even when a message technically reaches the target audience, it is often ignored due to skepticism regarding state institutions or previous negative experience of interaction with them. Research showed that the highest level of trust is held by informal channels: civil society organizations, veteran communities, social networks, and "word of mouth."

> *"If a program is spoken about by a CSO or a veteran organization – people believe. If a state structure – immediately skepticism."*
>
> *"The best channel of information dissemination is a person who has already used the program and told about it."*

An important aspect is also linguistic and digital accessibility of information. Part of the target audience – especially older IDPs or persons with low digital literacy – cannot use online resources. This means that any information strategy must foresee offline channels: announcements in medical institutions, churches, markets, as well as live information provision through social workers and administrative service centers.

> *"My target audience does not sit in Facebook. They must be found in queues in hospitals or at the post office."*

The complex character of the problem and the impact of low awareness and readiness in the activation of employment of vulnerable groups especially manifests in considering options of starting one's own business.

In the development of self-employment and entrepreneurship, representatives of vulnerable groups often do not understand where to start, where to search for opportunities, how to write a business plan, and what a realistic business model is. Distrust, fear of mistakes, low motivation, and expectations of "easy grants" dominate.

A separate aspect of the problem of awareness in the sphere of entrepreneurship is misunderstanding of the real content of entrepreneurial activity. People often idealize entrepreneurship or, conversely, consider it too risky without any practical acquaintance. Both extremes hinder making a reasoned choice.

> *"People do not know how to start their own business, do not know where to search for ideas... We start with a map of community needs."*
>
> *"Uniqueness is lacking, people copy popular services... It is necessary to teach competitiveness and creativity."*
>
> *"People do not want to participate, do not believe. They think: if they do not get a grant – it is useless. They do not understand that knowledge is also capital."*

> *"Financial instruments must be accessible and understandable for small business."*
>
> *"Banking products often do not take into account the specifics of micro-entrepreneurship."*
>
> *"A combination of grants, loans, and local programs could create a more sustainable system of support."*

With the expansion of options of active programs and incentives for activation of vulnerable groups in the labor market or self-employment (grants from eRobota, Own Business, donor programs), a significant part of people does not believe that they can obtain financing or are afraid of failure.

Fear of bureaucracy and complexity of application procedures is an independent barrier – regardless of the level of awareness. Even those who know about a program and would like to use it often refuse due to expectations of a complicated process. Simplification and a "human-centered" administrative procedure are as important a condition as the very existence of the program.

> *"People do not believe that they can get a grant. Fear and distrust – a serious barrier."*
>
> *"A person learned about a grant, became interested – and then saw the list of documents and closed the page."*
>
> *"There are programs where from idea to money – 14 steps. This is not for a person in crisis."*
>
> *"The program 'Own Business' gives up to 250,000 UAH, but people do not know that opportunities are available – and that these are non-repayable funds under the condition of job creation."*
>
> *"People do not believe that programs are real, do not want to spend 3 days on training. They say: 'I would rather go get humanitarian aid.'"*
>
> *"For many people the main barrier remains start-up capital."*

Communications must be oriented not only toward providing technical information, but also toward offering solutions to typical yet concrete problematic situations, neutralizing prejudice and myths.

The key principle of effective communications about opportunities of training and employment is concreteness and linkage to real result. "You can learn to be a welder in 3 months and earn 25,000 UAH" works better than "register for a retraining course." Targeted, situation-specific messages significantly increase conversion from awareness to action.

In particular, this concerns the popularization of the concept of lifelong learning.

> *"In the modern economy one education for life no longer works."*
>
> *"Many people simply do not imagine that they can change profession in adulthood."*
>
> *"It is necessary to popularize adult learning at the state level."*
>
> *"Society must get used to the idea that retraining is a normal stage of professional development."*
>
> *"Learning must become a natural part of a professional career."*

Demonstrations of successful stories of real people who are representatives of vulnerable groups of the population increase trust and attention to information messages.

It is important that "successful cases" be maximally close to the audience in social characteristics. A veteran will be convinced not by an abstract "person with disability who found a job," but by a concrete veteran, of similar age, with a similar specialty and similar experience of return – precisely this forms the feeling "if he could, then I can too."

> *"People are inspired not by heroes from posters – they are inspired by those just like them."*
>
> *"I would never have dared if there were no examples of women truck drivers in social networks"; "Lifelong learning – few speak about it."*
>
> *"When an employer has positive experience of cooperation with a person with disability, stereotypes disappear very quickly."*
>
> *"It is necessary to have more practical examples showing that an inclusive team works effectively."*

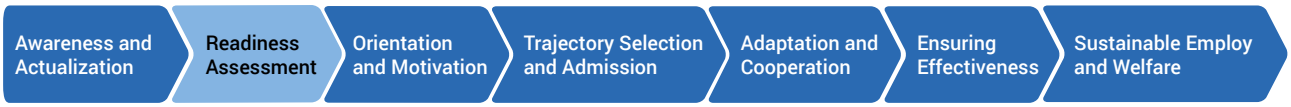
The Ministry of Social Policy involves veterans with acquired disabilities as ambassadors in communication campaigns – and records a qualitatively different level of perception by society of the topic of disability compared to traditional social videos:

> *"Effective, yes. They, without fear, without embarrassment, without complexes about their peculiarities, convey to people that life has not stopped, but continues."*

Inter-institutional integration of services; points of entry to employment activation programs can ensure increased awareness and involvement of target audiences. In particular, more active use of the information-communication potential of centers of administrative services provision as points of primary contact with veterans, internally displaced persons, and other vulnerable categories is advisable. Many people apply there for certificates, registration, compensations, etc., and could receive information (consultations) about employment or training opportunities.

A practical solution is the introduction of a "warm referral" protocol between institutions: when an administrator of an administrative service center, a medical worker, or a social worker not only gives a leaflet but personally contacts the relevant specialist and schedules a meeting. Research recorded several local examples of such practice, where it gave noticeably higher results than passive information provision.

> *"We introduced a rule: if a client fits a program – you do not give a flyer, but call and arrange. Attendance tripled."*
>
> *"A person comes for a certificate – this is a chance to talk about work"; "This is a point of entry we underuse."*
>
> *"Career consultation often becomes the first step toward professional changes."*



Reasons for refusal of employment by representatives of vulnerable groups may include unmet basic needs (housing, security, stability), fear of losing social benefits and compensations (in particular for housing), combination of assistance with informal employment, and psychological unpreparedness for work.

A structural paradox identified in the research – the number of vacancies exceeds the number of registered unemployed, but a significant part of people do not become employed – is explained precisely by this complex of hidden barriers. For some people, the status of unemployed is not an instrument of active job search, but a mechanism of access to housing compensation. There is no mechanism of smooth transition from social support to legal employment without a sharp decrease in household income.

> *"I cannot hire a person because they will lose the subsidy and be worse off. Who is to blame for this?"*

> *"The system seems to penalize legal employment. This must be changed systemically, not pointwise."*
>
> *"As long as basic needs – housing, security, stability – are not ensured, the issue of employment cannot be a priority."*
>
> *"After difficult life events a person is not always ready to immediately enter the work rhythm."*
>
> *"Career support must begin with understanding the person's condition, not only with analysis of their resume."*
>
> *"If social and psychological barriers are not considered, a person with disability, a veteran will simply not reach the stage of employment."*
>
> *"We see two parallel realities: employers are searching for workers, and part of the people cannot make the step to the labor market."*
>
> *"Not always does the status of unemployed mean that a person is actively searching for work."*
>
> *"Veterans and parents of children with disabilities often do not know where to start. They must retrain and reintegrate into new work which they do not fully accept... They feel normal only in their own space..."*
>
> *"It is necessary to start not from a vacancy, but from assessment of the person's readiness for work."*
>
> *"Even if a person fits a vacancy, a medical commission may not allow them."*

Accordingly, under certain scenarios readiness for change and activation in the labor market is possible only with availability of options of gradual entry into employment with partial preservation of support for a transitional period; integrated offers "work + housing," etc.

For IDPs, a specific additional barrier is "temporariness": a significant part of displaced persons are not ready to invest effort in a new career in the place of temporary residence, counting on return home. This "waiting" strategy blocks activation even with all formal conditions present. Support programs that take into account this psychological state and offer "temporary" or "portable" employment options (remote work, freelance, mobile skills) have significantly higher levels of involvement.

> *"They say: 'Why should we return – we will return soon.' And 'soon' stretches into years."*
>
> *"IDPs have limited access to stable employment due to lack of information and difficulties of adaptation – local programs and paid internships are needed."*
>
> *"Work exists, but people are often not ready for quick return into the work environment."*
>
> *"...support must begin not from a vacancy, but from assessment of the person's readiness – physical, psychological, and professional – with subsequent gradual entry..."*

Formal availability of programs of education or retraining does not guarantee their effectiveness without prior psychological stabilization after difficult experiences of representatives of vulnerable or inactive groups in the labor market. This especially concerns veterans after treatment and internally displaced persons after loss of housing, but is important and acquires specific features for each vulnerable group:

> *"A person may have access to training but not be ready"; "Adaptation may last up to a year."*
>
> *"Often self-management is lacking: people overestimate time and strength, begin – and break down due to circumstances."*

> *"After 7–12 years in maternity leave mothers lose self-esteem and confidence – even Olympic champions and holders of several honors diplomas. Without prior psychological support training is ineffective. After the course 80% of mothers find work."*
>
> *"Before starting training, a person often needs time for internal stabilization."*
>
> *"Education can be effective only when it considers the psychological state of learners."*
>
> *"Training programs must be sufficiently flexible so that people can enter the process gradually."*

In overcoming barriers, systemic solutions are necessary that form an integrated model of gradual transition from social stabilization to employment of vulnerable or inactive groups in the labor market. Effective practices include integration of psychological support into programs of gradual training or retraining, as well as integration with support services for veterans, IDPs, and other target groups of the population.

Effective practices of psychological support recorded in the research have several common features: they are embedded in educational or labor programs (and do not exist as separate services to which one must come); they start simultaneously with the first step toward employment, not after; and they foresee support for at least 6–12 months after employment. One-time consultations without subsequent support generally do not give sustainable results.

> *"A psychologist at the first session – this is good. But a veteran need support even after half a year, when the 'honeymoon' of new work ends."*
>
> *"Veterans have serious problems with psychological readiness. Rehabilitation is insufficient... For everyone to receive at least one course, one must wait 15 years."*
>
> *"It takes 8–18 months for the nervous system to return to normal mode."*
>
> *"A person returns – after three weeks disappears from work because there is no systemic support."*
>
> *"Veterans often fall into a closed circle: they cannot sustain old work; new work is hard to master. Relatives turn away... Isolation begins."*

As at the stage of ensuring awareness, in assessments and formation of readiness of representatives of vulnerable groups for employment activation it is important to consider current/widespread myths and stereotypes. In particular, not every veteran must/wants/is ready to become an entrepreneur, but with romanticization of veteran entrepreneurship there exists a societal expectation that entrepreneurship is the "right" path of reintegration, and for part of veterans this creates additional pressure and overload.

Equally significant is the gender dimension of readiness. Women from vulnerable categories – mothers of children with disabilities, widows of the deceased, women veterans – face double burden: their own psychological state and responsibility for relatives. Their readiness for activation is often higher than men's, but realization is hindered by absence of care services and flexible formats of employment.

> *"A woman wants to work. But there is no one to leave a child with special needs. And all her motivation breaks against this wall."*
>
> *"We trained 40 women. All wanted to work. But 12 of them could not go to work – problem of care for children or elderly parents."*
>
> *"Business – this is a heavy burden"; "Not every veteran must be an entrepreneur." Entrepreneurship must not be considered as a universal model of reintegration.*
>
> *"To create jobs – this is responsibility"; "After receiving a grant a person remains alone with problems"; "Not all who received a grant are ready to run a business"; "A grant – this is a beginning, but not a guarantee of success."*

> *"There is a trap: it seems that grants are easy money. People start and stop, become disappointed. Others – wait for someone to come and do everything for them."*

At the stage of assessing readiness for activation, professional diagnostics of inclinations and competencies, availability of alternative trajectories of employment, and support of their individual choice without imposition of stereotypical or unacceptable options for a specific person are important.

For veterans and IDPs, especially significant is recognition and portability of competencies acquired in previous life: at the front, in entrepreneurship, in previous career. Research recorded cases when veterans with significant managerial experience refused formal retraining programs, feeling that "starting from zero" humiliates their experience. Recognition of these competencies and inclusion of them in a new trajectory is critically important.

> *"He commanded 200 people under shelling. And he is offered to take a basic course 'How to behave in a team.' This is offensive."*

Successful completion of previous stages forms the basis for successful employment activation or reintegration into the labor market of representatives of vulnerable groups, but they must believe in themselves, prospects, and result.

Motivation for learning and career change is inseparably linked with the vision of the final result. Research confirmed: programs that from the beginning demonstrate a concrete "output" – a specific vacancy, a specific salary, a specific employer – have a significantly higher level of completion. Abstract "acquire a new qualification" does not motivate as much as "after this course enterprise X is ready to hire you."

> *"We signed a memorandum with three employers even before the course launch. Each participant knew: there is a place for those who complete. Dropout – minimal."*
>
> *"Sometimes the most important step is restoring faith in one's own capabilities."*
>
> *"Women from vulnerable categories lose work and income, have limited access to training and support, and low self-confidence"; "Free training programs and women's hubs are needed, with comprehensive career, legal, and business support."*
>
> *"The problem is not only vacancies – sometimes people need a bridge between life situation and work."*

In particular, retraining programs are often oriented mainly toward technical provision of knowledge and do not always consider the motivational component. For veterans, internally displaced persons, and youth, motivation to change profession is often weak due to uncertainty in the final result or absence of a clear vision of the future.

The gap between educational programs and labor market needs is one of the most systemic barriers identified in the research. Employers state that after course completion they have to "retrain" most of the specialists they hire. This is especially acute in technical and production spheres. The answer is the development of dual education, where learning takes place in parallel with real work at an enterprise.

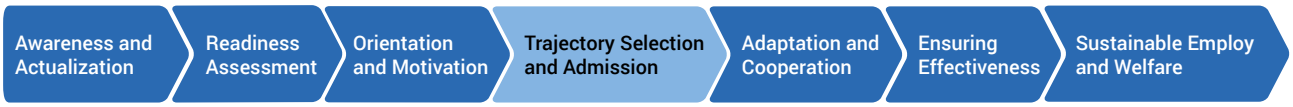
> *"There is demand, there are those willing to learn, but vocational education does not provide such opportunities. Theoretical knowledge exists, but practical almost none."*

> *"No educational institution or private entrepreneur applied for a course on installation of solar panels. And demand in the market – colossal."*
>
> *"Training exists, but people do not see prospects for themselves"; "It is necessary to work with motivation, not only with skills."*
>
> *"Combining work and learning is difficult – also emotional burnout... People do not believe that after the course there will be guaranteed work."*
>
> *"In the agro-sector there is money and programs, but no specialists: youth leave, few willing – preparation must be built differently motivationally."*
>
> *"Motivation appears when a person sees real work prospects after training."*
>
> *"When a student sees the real work environment already during training, transition to employment occurs much more easily."*
>
> *"The best advertisement for education – stories of those who changed their lives thanks to training."*

Accordingly, to increase motivation for learning and career change it is advisable to combine professional training with real internships or work, with career counseling and mentoring, involvement of employers in demonstrating career prospects, real success stories. Necessary is the popularization of adult learning (lifelong) and professional mobility.

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal education is a separate, often ignored, component of the system. A significant part of veterans and IDPs acquired practical skills – technical, managerial, medical – outside official educational institutions. The official mechanism of recognition of learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal education – qualification centers. Problems of official confirmation of learning outcomes block access to corresponding positions even with real competence of the person.

> *"He knows how to repair equipment – learned in the army. But without a certificate he is not taken to the plant. It takes years to confirm what he already knows."*



Among the key trajectories of activation and reintegration in the labor market of vulnerable groups, education, employment, and self-employment are primarily distinguished, the inclusion into which acquires specificity and is not always effective and stable.

The choice between trajectories – wage employment, entrepreneurship, self-employment – is not a one-time decision. People may move between them depending on circumstances. Therefore, the support system must be sufficiently flexible to accompany a person in changing trajectory, rather than binding them to the initial choice. The rigid logic of "one person – one program" does not correspond to the real diversity of individual paths.

Assessment of prerequisites and choice of individual trajectories of activation in employment, education or retraining, self-employment requires consideration of specific barriers for each vulnerable category of the population (for IDPs – temporariness of residence, uncertainty of the future, broken ties, etc.; for veterans – physical and psychological consequences of participation in combat, long interruption of labor activity, etc.; insufficient accessibility of the educational environment, even with retraining programs available – infrastructural, communicational, or format-related barriers – for persons with disabilities).

> *"Individual, psychologically sensitive routes are needed for veterans, including entrepreneurship."*
>
> *"Return to civilian life is a separate stage that requires support and understanding."*

Another side of the problem at this stage is stigmatization, discrimination, and limited accessibility of choice options (absence, infrastructural or artificial restrictions).

Stigmatization manifests at two levels: external (attitudes of employers and society) and internal (self-perception of the person). Internal stigma is often a stronger barrier: a person does not submit a resume because they are convinced that they will be rejected. Work with internal stigma requires long-term psychological support and confirmation through successful examples.

> *"He did not apply to any employer because he decided in advance: they will not take him. I asked: 'How do you know?' – 'Well, it's obvious.' This 'obviousness' keeps people at home."*
>
> *"Sometimes the barrier is created not by the physical condition of the person, but by the perception of it."*
>
> *"A veteran is not a vulnerable category; it is a category with extremely powerful experience."*
>
> *"Experience gained in military service is often underestimated in the civilian sector."*
>
> *"Command competencies are managerial skills that must be considered by employers."*
>
> *"The infrastructure of the workplace is often not designed for diversity of workers."*
>
> *"Inclusiveness is not only architecture, but also flexibility of work organization"; "As soon as an enterprise begins to think about accessibility, it becomes more convenient for all workers."*
>
> *"A veteran in a wheelchair – very few opportunities to obtain decent work"; "Most rehabilitation centers in Ukraine are not inclusive"; "Social taxi ceased to exist – cars exist, drivers do not."*
>
> *"KFC offers 15,000 UAH – veterans are not interested"; "People risked their lives – they deserve decent pay"; "Veteran officers – these are top managers; they will not go to lower positions."*

Retraining for modern professions requires long-term learning and often knowledge of foreign languages, but veterans and other vulnerable groups cannot afford a period without income, which blocks access to new professions. High competition in the market additionally complicates their entry into promising spheres of employment.

The financial barrier to access to training is structural: a person cannot afford 3–6 months without income for full retraining. Voucher programs partially solve the issue of course payment, but do not cover the issue of income during the training period. Scholarships and compensations during retraining are absent or insignificant elements of the current system, although they are key incentives for real involvement.

> *"Voucher covers the course. But who covers utilities while I study? No one counted this."*
>
> *"IDPs face difficulties of integration, instability, limited access to employment."*
>
> *"...many mothers (IDPs) cannot work... children were in distance learning... families did not want to transfer children to local schools..."*
>
> *"Individual, psychologically sensitive routes are needed for veterans, including entrepreneurship."*
>
> *"The main barrier (for employment in promising sphere) – English. Then – long training. And third – lack of funds, because people need to support family, they cannot wait 3 months."*
>
> *"A person with disability formally may enter training, but the environment does not accept them"; "Adaptation is needed to possibilities, not formal admission."*
>
> *"We designed programs in several formats – online, offline, external – for a specific worker, so that training could be combined with work."*

> *"While the child studies at school, parents are employed. When the child finishes school, then they often remain at home. Parents continue to work. The young person gets used to staying at home. Parents also get used. And when later the question is raised about employment – parents in fact must leave their own work." "People lack time: they must combine work and training; often interrupt due to circumstances of service."*

In overcoming barriers at this stage of employment activation of vulnerable groups, the development of short-term practically oriented training programs for specific employment opportunities, with income during retraining and mentoring that help complete training and ensure recognition of qualifications, is in demand.

A promising format is so-called "training labor markets" – controlled production environments where persons with disabilities or veterans can obtain real work experience and official wages, being under supervision and support of a curator.

> *"A social workshop – this is not charity. A person really works, really earns, really feels part of the team. This changes everything."*

A separate block of issues at this stage of employment activation of vulnerable groups is training and acquisition of competencies by all segments of the population regarding building effective interaction with representatives of vulnerable groups (more broadly – those affected by the consequences of war).

Employer stereotypes about vulnerable groups are often formed due to lack of information, not actual negative experience. Targeted training of managers and HR specialists, supplemented by "live" meetings with representatives of target groups – veterans, persons with disabilities, IDPs – changes attitudes more effectively than any regulatory obligations.

> *"I thought that a person with a prosthesis would not be able to. I spoke with one veteran at a seminar – and hired him the next week. He is my best manager now."*
>
> *"There is no trauma-informed assistance at enterprises. HRs do not even know what it is."*
>
> *"HR services need new knowledge and practical tools for working with veterans, persons with disabilities."*
>
> *"Employers want to support veterans, but often do not know how to properly organize the adaptation process."*
>
> *"It is necessary to develop a culture of mutual understanding in labor collectives, an inclusive culture."*

Inseparably connected with the concept of micro-qualifications is the idea of early career guidance, especially for persons with disabilities. Research revealed a systemic gap: career guidance for persons with mental disorders occurs too late and too formally. For effective career guidance of this category, not a consultative conversation is needed, but a long practical program of "trying different roles." Choosing between two specialties – a task that for most people is solved in a few minutes – for a person with mental disorders requires months of practical "living through" each option.

A parallel gap is the lack of specialized teachers and tutors capable of accompanying persons with mental disorders on the path of career guidance. In the vast majority of vocational education institutions, resources and competencies for working with this category are absent, which in fact excludes them from the system. Preparation of teachers and assistants is a necessary prerequisite for implementing early career guidance on a large scale.

> *"The director of the technical school said: 'Bring them.' But no teacher knew what to do with them. After a month the child was tactfully 'asked to leave.'"*
>
> *"For persons with mental disorders, career guidance must begin at age 14. To choose even between two professions, they need first to 'live through' one, and then the other. If this happens after ninth grade, the person will be confused."*

Equally important is the choice of sequence of steps in activation for other target audiences. Of particular importance and institutional support in the context of post-war recovery and modernization of Ukraine's economy is targeting the launch and development of entrepreneurial initiatives of veterans and other target groups of the project. In particular, representatives of the latter emphasized that in many communities, people do not know which services/businesses are needed specifically there; often they open what has no demand, copy popular models that do not work locally. Absence of community needs maps and niche analysis leads to erroneous decisions, disappointment, loss of resources and grants. Availability of market analytics and assistance of experts or experienced mentors is the key to effective self-employment.

For older IDPs and persons aged 50+, especially important is the possibility of a "soft start" – partial or volunteer employment before full entry into the labor market. Such a format allows restoring the sense of rhythm, social ties, and self-confidence without the risk of "failure" in a full position. Absence of such transitional formats in the system is a significant gap.

> *"They do not need a large salary immediately. They need to feel that they are still needed, that their experience has value."*
>
> *"Volunteering became her first step. After three months she was already ready for full work."*
>
> *"Entrepreneurship requires preparation – not every person who opened a sole proprietorship automatically becomes an entrepreneur."*
>
> *"For many veterans, their own business becomes a way to return to active life."*
>
> *"Veteran business requires specific support at the start."*
>
> *"The principle 'veteran helps veteran' can be very effective in the business environment."*
>
> *"Entrepreneurial initiatives of veterans can become an important resource for community development."*
>
> *"In agro there is land and money – but no people who want to work. There is no market analysis and understanding of which niche is empty."*
>
> *"...We start with a map of community needs. Where there is a problem – there is demand. There a business can be born."*

Representatives of target groups and experts drew attention to the need for special trajectories and formation of a culture of lifelong learning for people aged 50+ (mentorship – transforming experience into a resource for younger ones, etc.). They are ready to improve existing skills, not radically change specialty, raised in a society where they planned and expected retirement.

> *"50+ were preparing for retirement – breaking this in a year is very difficult"; "They want: I will learn new technologies and continue doing what I did."*

In overcoming outdated ageist, gender, and other stereotypes, productive is social advertising based on cases of successful stories, in particular participants of the program "Self-Made Master" for women, etc.

Effectiveness of the stage of ensuring adaptation and cooperation for successful and sustainable employment of vulnerable groups depends both on the objective capabilities of host organizations (educational institutions, enterprises, etc.) and on the preparation and willingness of their employees to establish effective interactions.

Practice shows that the key is not only the legal formalization of inclusive hiring, but the quality of initial inclusion into the collective. The first week and the first month at a new place are critical: it is precisely during this period that early dismissals most often occur – both voluntary and forced. A structured adaptation plan (onboarding), adapted to the needs of the vulnerable category, significantly reduces this risk.

> *"In the first week he came twice and disappeared. No one followed up. No one called. He simply – vanished."*
>
> *"People need a flexible schedule"; "One position can be divided between two."*
>
> *"We saw a huge problem and solution... when mothers were engaged, their children were engaged in art therapy, and this gave those women the opportunity to complete training and then become employed."*
>
> *"In our project a comprehensive approach: a psychologist works with the person, a career counselor, we provide courses and can pay for a nanny and transport for mothers who have children with disabilities."*
>
> *"There must be centers where a mother can bring her child and then go to work. Then she will be super effective, because this is very important also for the psychological state of the mother."*
>
> *"It is necessary to help employers see veterans not as a problem, but as a resource."*
>
> *"Veterans have unique experience of management, responsibility, and decision-making in complex conditions – this potential is not yet fully utilized."*
>
> *"After return it is very difficult to find work that corresponds to possibilities"; "Psychological support and accompaniment in employment are needed."*
>
> *"Often the problem is not absence of vacancies, but absence of systemic accompaniment of the person on the path to work."*
>
> *"As long as there is no accompaniment of the person, the vacancy itself does not solve the employment problem."*

Analysis of all successful cases of employment of veterans and persons with disabilities recorded in the research shows one common feature in most cases: the collective was prepared – either consciously, through trainings, or organically, through previous experience and corporate culture. Conversely, most painful cases are connected with situations when a veteran or person with disability appeared in an unprepared environment – and both the collective and the new person found themselves in a situation of mutual misunderstanding.

Preparation of the collective is not a one-time training and not a safety briefing. It is the formation of a new norm: "in our organization people with different experiences and different needs can work, and we know how to behave with respect toward each." Most enterprises came to this understanding not through theory, but through practice – and often through painful experience, constructive consideration and reflection of which becomes a catalyst of qualitative change.

> *"At first, when we only began this path, people did not really understand why it was needed. Then we had a situation with a veteran who showed some aggression. People did not understand how to behave. After that they themselves began to reach out and ask."*

The most systemic approach to preparation of collectives is demonstrated by enterprises where HR managers or leaders have a personal connection with the topic of war. This personal involvement forms sincerity and authenticity, which the collective feels and accepts.

> *"When we know that a veteran is returning to us, we always prepare the collective. People know how to communicate with him, which phrases or words may be triggering. He arrives and we send him on vacation so that he can adapt a little."*

Importantly, support must begin not when the person has already appeared at the doorstep, but when they are still on the way home. This is the systemic approach – as opposed to the reactive "we will figure it out when they arrive."

> *"Our work on the return of the worker begins long before their return – even when they are only going to war. We really say that foresters are one big family. People know that they are awaited here. There is motivation to return. They are not cut off at the moment of service – they have communication with the employer, targeted assistance. And then they already know where to return."*

Preparation of the collective must include at least three elements: cognitive (understanding what the person has gone through and what to expect), communicative (specific recommendations regarding language, topics to avoid, and how to react to non-standard behavior), and emotional (formation of empathy and readiness to support, not to condemn).

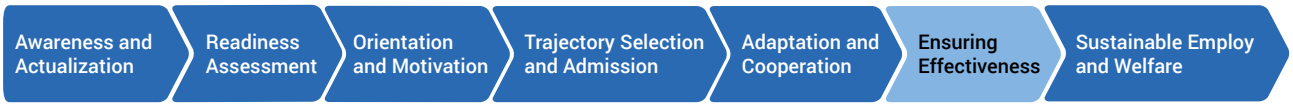
For effective adaptation of persons with disabilities in workplaces and education, additionally needed are barrier-free spaces, adapted communication (hearing/vision), and readiness of those around to work with inclusive tools.

> *"Accessibility of education – this is not only a ramp at the entrance, but also an adapted learning process."*
>
> *"Inclusive learning means that each person has a real opportunity to acquire a new profession."*
>
> *"For persons with hearing impairment online is often impossible – offline spaces, adapted communication, and accessible classrooms are needed."*
>
> *"A person formally may enroll, but the environment does not accept them"; "Adaptation is needed to possibilities, not formal admission."*
>
> *"Spaces are needed in CSOs and universities that would be barrier-free... and educators must know how to use inclusive tools."*
>
> *"Vocational training cannot be remote – for professions such as welder or electrician classrooms and workshops are needed."*

The stage of adaptation and establishing cooperation in self-employment acquires specificity but retains its importance. Potential entrepreneurs and beginners from vulnerable categories of the population mostly do not orient themselves in opening sole proprietorships, reporting, taxes, etc. The process seems complicated, unclear, and risky. Representatives of all vulnerable groups lack entrepreneurial skills, understanding of procedures of opening sole proprietorships, support in accounting and taxes. Motivation is low, fear of failure high, and distrust of grant programs restrains participation. Without mentorship, simple support tools, and clear entry paths, business remains a closed opportunity.

Critical for sustainable self-employment is the first year after launch: it is precisely then that most beginner entrepreneurs from vulnerable groups face first crises – operational, financial, or motivational. Absence of an accessible mentor or accompanying structure during this period is the main reason for early closure of business. Post-grant accompaniment is not an additional option, but a necessary condition of effectiveness of any entrepreneurial program.

> *"Money ran out after 8 months. Not because the idea was bad – simply he did not know how to plan cash flow. No one taught him."*
>
> *"It is necessary to simplify sole proprietorship management and provide assistance, because people do not understand how to deal with it."*
>
> *"A grant helps to start, but does not guarantee that the business will survive the first year."*
>
> *"The greatest difficulties begin after opening the business, when first operational challenges appear."*
>
> *"Entrepreneurs often lack not finances, but management experience."*
>
> *"Mentorship after business launch can be no less important than financial support itself."*
>
> *"Self-employment can be a strong instrument of economic activity if supported by training and mentorship."*



Effectiveness of programs and incentives supporting employment activation of vulnerable groups is one of the defining factors both for participant motivation and for systemic resolution of urgent economic problems.

Absence of systemic monitoring of program results is one of the most acute structural problems. Neither employment centers, nor civil society organizations, nor local self-government bodies have complete data on how many program participants found jobs, how long they retained them, and whether they were satisfied with the result. Without these data it is impossible either to compare the effectiveness of different approaches or to make reasoned decisions about scaling or closing programs.

> *"We spent 2 million on training. How many people after it actually work? Nobody knows. The report was submitted – and that's all."*
>
> *"Monitoring is not bureaucracy. It is feedback. Without it you are simply spending money in the dark."*

Lack of client orientation in the development of programs and initiatives of employment activation of vulnerable groups, as well as absence of comprehensive monitoring of program results after their completion, significantly reduces effectiveness and possibilities of improving support systems for educational projects and employment of vulnerable groups of the population. The state measures "inputs" – number of participants, volume of financing, number of vouchers issued – but does not measure "outputs": how many people actually found jobs, how many retained them after 3, 6, 12 months, what is the quality of this employment, whether participants' expectations coincide with the obtained result, whether programs provide real value for employers.

> *"We have no statistics. The employment center has long been issuing business grants... But there is no monitoring. I tried to find out everywhere – nobody has it. We repeat: there is a grant, there is training – but what next? No answer."*

> *"Monitoring and surveys are a must-have. We do not ask veterans already working at enterprises: what did they expect, what did they get, does it coincide. We do not ask employers what they fear. A program for the sake of a program, for the sake of a grant, but it does not really solve the problem."*
>
> *"Combining work and training is difficult – also emotional burnout... People do not believe that after the course there will be guaranteed work."*
>
> *"The main problem – gap between training and real needs of the regional labor market; solution – integrated models with guaranteed employment channels."*
>
> *"Existing training instruments (courses, vouchers) often do not give quick results. For example, in IT full retraining requires at least 2 years, and the market almost does not need entry-level specialists ('juniors'). Additionally, mechanisms of accompaniment and adaptation after training are absent, which reduces program effectiveness."*
>
> *"If we speak about grant funds, nowhere is such a thing as accompaniment and adaptation of the worker after training envisaged. This lies on the shoulders of each company... The person must still be retained at that place."*

Research results demonstrate the interconnection of the negative impact of barriers of insufficient support for individualized business trajectories, mentorship, and low effectiveness of state initiatives and incentives for activation of representatives of vulnerable groups and directly their entrepreneurial projects.

Cross-sectoral coordination between authorities, employment services, educational institutions, employers, and civil society organizations remains the largest systemic gap in all studied regions. Each actor operates within its own mandate and financing, without incentives or mechanisms for jointly managing the "case" of one person from first contact to stable employment. The result is the "hot potato" effect: the person is passed between institutions, and no one bears responsibility for the final result.

> *"The employment service referred to a CSO. The CSO referred back. The person went through three circles and returned to zero point."*
>
> *"We need a single case manager for each vulnerable person. Someone who leads them from beginning to end."*

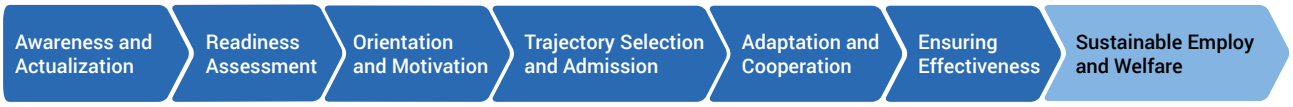
Entrepreneurs from vulnerable groups lack not only finances, but a mentor who helps to go through the path from idea to implementation. Many do not bring the matter to completion precisely due to absence of accompaniment. Support for startups proves insufficient. Micro-grants of the Employment Service are a real and demanded instrument, but one year of support is insufficient. Most "grant" businesses do not survive without further mentorship, legal and accounting support.

> *"Many entrepreneurs start business intuitively, without sufficient consultative support."*
>
> *"Information is needed about centers/institutions/firms where a person from a vulnerable category can obtain practical consultation on business development."*
>
> *"Entrepreneurship requires not only financing, but also knowledge."*
>
> *"Our know-how – entrepreneurs share not successes, but problems. People must see reality and have someone nearby who has already gone through this path."*
>
> *"One piece of advice from an experienced entrepreneur can sometimes save months of mistakes."*
>
> *"Ideas often remain ideas if there is no environment for their development."*
>
> *"Startups need space for experiments and support at early stages."*
>
> *"Entrepreneurial incubators help turn ideas into real businesses."*

Ensuring effective results requires network and inter-institutional integration of efforts to support vulnerable groups and realization of the potential of social dialogue and partnerships, in particular between communities, employment services, business, and civil society organizations.

Experience of successful partnerships recorded in the research shows: the most effective of them arose not thanks to formal agreements, but thanks to personal connections between specific people in different organizations. Institutionalization of these informal networks – transforming them into stable structures functioning independently of specific individuals – is a key task for sustainable scaling.

> *"Each sector has its own resources, but they do not always combine."*
>
> *"This cooperation rests on the fact that I personally know the director. If one of us leaves – everything may collapse."*
>
> *"When enterprises become partners of educational programs, training acquires completely different meaning."*
>
> *"Joint programs of education and business allow preparing specialists for specific needs of the economy."*
>
> *"The labor market changes much faster than educational programs, and this creates a gap between training and real jobs."*
>
> *"Education must respond to business needs almost in real time."*
>
> *"When an employer participates in forming a training program, graduates find jobs much faster."*
>
> *"Workplace training is often the best way to master a profession."*
>
> *"When business, community, and civil society organizations work together, new opportunities for entrepreneurship development arise."*
>
> *"The employment center has instruments for supporting self-employment, but interaction with communities and CSOs is needed."*
>
> *"Partnership can significantly strengthen local economic initiatives."*
>
> *"Platforms are needed where different stakeholders can regularly interact."*
>
> *"Business networks allow exchanging knowledge and finding partners."*
>
> *"Entrepreneur communities can become a source of support and development."*
>
> *"When entrepreneurs unite, they find solutions for complex situations more quickly."*



Employment and stable work do not guarantee vulnerable groups of the population well-being, which creates preconditions for a new quality of life and is a strategic goal of government programs and initiatives.

The level of wages remains one of the most acute unresolved issues. Even a successfully employed person may remain in a state of "working poverty," which does not form either financial stability or sufficient motivation to retain employment. Research recorded that veterans and persons with disabilities often receive offers below the market level – allegedly "taking circumstances into account." This is a form of hidden discrimination.

> *"Offer for a veteran: 12 thousand per month. For an ordinary candidate for the same position – 22 thousand. Explanation: 'Well, he could not work normally all this time.' This is discrimination."*
>
> *"The main problem faced by IDPs is, first of all, work. And second, or perhaps first, is housing. And if work does not allow the IDP to rent housing, then he will not take that job."*
>
> *"KFC offers 15 thousand UAH – veterans are not interested"; "People risked their lives – they deserve decent pay"; "Veteran officers – these are top managers; they will not go to lower positions."*
>
> *"When they were told what the salary at the enterprise was, they simply burst out. The salary they have in the army – one, the salary at the enterprise – another. And they will not go. They, even knowing about vacancies, even under conditions of labor shortage, do not consider these salaries."*
>
> *"Existing training instruments (courses, vouchers) often do not give quick results. For example, in IT full retraining requires at least 2 years, and the market almost does not need entry-level specialists ('juniors'). Additionally, mechanisms of accompaniment and adaptation after training are absent, which reduces program effectiveness."*
>
> *"People start their own business not always because they want to be entrepreneurs, but because they do not see other options of employment."*

High level of well-being of citizens, development of their entrepreneurial initiatives is the basis of rapid recovery and progress of regional and national economy.

Entrepreneurial initiatives of vulnerable groups have additional social value: a successful veteran entrepreneur or IDP entrepreneur not only solves their own employment problem, but also becomes a visible example for their community, reduces stigma, and increases the general level of motivation for activation. Support of such "anchor" entrepreneurs is a strategically justified investment.

> *"One successful veteran business in a community does more for reintegration than dozens of brochures. People see – and go to him to ask how."*
>
> *"A woman IDP opened a coffee shop. Today she has 6 employees – all IDPs. She herself became a point of support for her own."*
>
> *"Large businesses understood that veterans are a driving force in Ukraine."*
>
> *"Entrepreneurship must be integrated into community development strategies."*
>
> *"Local programs of business support can create new economic opportunities."*
>
> *"When a community invests in entrepreneurship development, it invests in its own economic resilience."*
>
> *"Support of small business must become part of local economic policy."*
>
> *"Innovative projects can become new points of economic growth of communities."*
>
> *"Business, not government, changes territory"; "85–90% of our project managers – women"; "Local Activity Groups are needed at the community level."*

None of the described stages – from awareness to stable employment – is self-sufficient. Effectiveness of the system is determined not by the quality of individual programs, but by the quality of transitions between them: how seamlessly a person moves from first contact with an institution to a stable place in the labor market. Precisely these transitions are the most vulnerable points of the existing system and at the same time zones with the highest potential for change.

Vulnerable groups are internally diverse: a veteran with acquired disability and a veteran without physical consequences of injuries need different support; an IDP with small children and an IDP of retirement age have different barriers and different motivations. A roadmap that envisages one approach for all is doomed to partial effectiveness. Individualization of accompaniment is not a luxury, but a condition of effectiveness.

Where the employer is an active participant in the reintegration process – participates in forming training programs, prepares the collective, appoints a mentor – results are sustainable. Where the employer is a passive "end consumer" of a ready candidate, results are unstable. Involvement of business in designing and implementing support programs is not a wish, but a structural necessity.

Sustainability of achieved results requires a system of monitoring and feedback, which today is in fact absent. Without understanding what worked, for whom, and under what conditions, any scaling is risky. Introduction of a unified system of tracking results – from the moment of initial application to confirmed employment after 6 and 12 months – is a necessary condition for transforming individual successful practices into a sustainable nationwide system.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CASES OF OVERCOMING PROBLEMS OF ACTIVATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN THE LABOR MARKET

The development of the Roadmap is oriented toward overcoming key barriers in achieving the goals of Government strategies and programs regarding activation of employment of vulnerable groups and activation of the inactive population in the labor market. The corresponding proposals and solutions take into account current problems and needs of the project's target audiences, in particular veterans, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, as well as assessments and recommendations of representatives of key stakeholders, whose participation is decisive in ensuring support for activation of vulnerable groups of the population in education, employment, or self-employment.

Deep understanding of problems and effective solutions in overcoming current strategic challenges and barriers on the path to positive change in these three directions must become the foundation for effective integration of stakeholder efforts and for scaling successful practices and initiatives of employment activation of vulnerable groups of the population.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS BY AREA	SOLUTIONS AND STEPS
EMPLOYMENT OF VULNERABLE GROUPS	
CSTRATEGIC GOAL 1. ENSURING TIMELY SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYER DEMAND FOR LABOR AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE LABOR MARKET[34]	
1.1 Shortage of personnel and inactivity of vulnerable groups	• Model of gradual entry into employment with preservation of support during transition • Differentiated individual activation plans for each group • Integration of housing/social instruments with employment programs • Elimination of conflict between official employment of IDPs and loss of social benefits (alignment of social support system with employment conditions) • Reorientation of support programs from "completion of training" to result – actual employment

SUCCESSFUL CASES
State Enterprise "Forests of Ukraine" The enterprise accepts back on average 15–19 demobilized persons monthly. As of early 2025, 569 veterans work at the enterprise. More than 90% of demobilized foresters return and remain. Key principle: each mobilized worker's job is preserved for the entire period of service. If the unit is liquidated during this time, another position is selected for the person.
Metinvest According to the company, 80% of demobilized employees return to work – twice the national average. Additionally, 10% of veterans are new hires for Metinvest from the open market. The corporate reintegration ecosystem includes: preservation of workplace and income during service, gradual return to work with a careful workload regime, medical examination and psychological support before the first working day.

34 Employment strategies of the population of Ukraine until 2030

Interpipe

The company's patronage service has existed since 2014 – the oldest such structure among large enterprises in Ukraine. Over 1,300 mobilized employees are under its care. Of 165 veterans who returned, 75% remained at the enterprise – significantly above the national average (~50%). The service continuously tracks each person from the first day of mobilization, assists with equipment at the front, and after demobilization organizes medical examination, appoints a mentor, and builds a return-to-work plan together with the veteran.

MHP

The program "MHP Nearby" – corporate support service for veterans and their families. As of late 2025, more than 900 veterans returned and remained. 40 regional coordinators accompany each beneficiary individually. Additionally, MHP engages vulnerable groups through production practices: 2,300+ trainees gained work experience at holding enterprises, about 60% of them IDPs. There is also a teenage practice: 159 minors completed internships, 18 remained employed.

Ukrzaliznytsia

The company preserves jobs for mobilized employees for the entire period of service and introduced a program of gradual return – the veteran resumes work step by step, not immediately at full load.

1.2 Excessive bureaucratization of access of veterans and servicemen to retraining programs

- Simplification of procedures of access to retraining programs for servicemen and veterans
- Digitalization of approval procedures
- Adaptation of training programs to service conditions (distance theory + in-person practice)

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Metinvest

If a veteran physically cannot return to their previous position (e.g., due to amputation or other injury), Metinvest does not dismiss but offers retraining and another position with an adapted workplace.

DTEK "ProVeteran"

The course "Specialist in Solar Energy Facilities" is designed so that the participant knows from the first day: after completion they will return to a specific enterprise in a specific role. This removes the main motivational barrier – uncertainty of result. Not "maybe I will find a job," but "I know where I will work after the last session."

1.3 Instability of residence of IDPs during training and employment (repeated relocations)

- Development of flexible training formats with distance components for IDPs
- Individual educational trajectories and employment considering risk of repeated relocation
- Integration of housing support with employment programs for IDPs
- Increasing competitiveness of employers: improving working conditions (housing, transport, social package, reservation) to attract personnel

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Association "Consort"

A machine-building company (production of conveyor lines, automation of production) with over 600 employees across all regions of Ukraine. Features include its own English school, car wash network, kaizen management system, and unusually developed corporate culture.

In 2024 the company received a grant from Helvetas and trained IDP women as welders. Training took place in parallel with work at the enterprise, with wages paid during training.

Through the Employment Center, the company retrained an IDP woman from hairdresser to CNC machine operator. Training was conducted online (theory) and practically at the enterprise simultaneously.

For design engineers among IDPs, the company partially compensated rent – solving a key barrier for attracting qualified displaced persons.

Unique practice: "Consort Taxi" system – an internal app-platform where employees with cars drive colleagues to work, receiving fuel cost compensation from the company. This solved transport accessibility for IDPs and persons without cars.

Some women trained as welders remained at the company. The referral system continues to ensure a stable flow of new employees – in several departments entire family "clans" work.

"Steel Dream Bakhmut-Hoshcha"

Construction of the "Revival" residential quarter for IDPs of the Bakhmut community. The main idea – creation of the first resilient, innovative, comfortable district in Ukraine as a symbol of hope and revival for Bakhmut residents.

The concept – not just housing, but a real community where residents can preserve identity, revive traditions, and start new life, integrating elements of Hoshcha culture and traditions into design.

Private Enterprise "Promavtomatyka"

Vinnytsia company with ~850 employees specializing in installation and maintenance of solar power plants, engineering equipment, and industrial solutions. After the full-scale war began, the company faced a critical shortage of installers – men went to the Armed Forces, while demand for solar energy sharply increased.

"Promavtomatyka" developed its own one-week course on solar installation and launched a fundamentally new idea – training women, including IDPs, to work in installation brigades.

First cohort (pilot): completely free for participants, with payment of 10,000 UAH to each for successful completion – to motivate and test demand. Result: over 800 applicants for several dozen places.

Second and third cohorts: external partner financing (Kyiv fund ReSkill, etc.) – the company received payment for training each participant, participants had accommodation in Vinnytsia paid during the course. Additionally, under state programs: training women as forklift and truck drivers.

1.4 Low digital literacy of persons 40+ and of pension age, unpreparedness of collectives to work with representatives of vulnerable groups	• Development of digital literacy programs for adults: basic skills (Word, Excel, Internet) • Integration of digital competencies into retraining and activation programs of employment services • Short-term practical courses of digital skills through the network of administrative service centers and educational institutions

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Gas Distribution Company of Naftogaz Group in Mykolaiv

In one of the most affected cities of Ukraine consciously does not discriminate employees by age: one of the oldest specialists – a man about 80 years old, leading occupational safety specialist, hired in 2022.

The company became one of the pioneers of systemic veteran reintegration programs among large industrial enterprises and was awarded the status "Inclusive Enterprise" in Mykolaiv. The program began not with hiring, but with preparation of the collective. First trainings were conducted by an HR manager whose husband is a combatant – this gave authenticity and trust.

Upon veteran's return: automatic vacation is provided – the person does not immediately start work, receives time for adaptation; the collective is prepared in advance: everyone knows how to communicate, which words may be triggering; a new position is offered if the previous one does not fit health condition or desire.

Ferrexpo

The first company in Ukraine's mining and metallurgical complex to introduce a systemic veteran support program back in 2014. It includes medical insurance with extended package (basic 100,000 UAH + 25,000 UAH additional), dental coverage (introduced in 2025), and reimbursement of rehabilitation expenses – in 2024, 470,000 UAH allocated. Beyond physical aspects, the company conducts internal webinars for staff: how to communicate with a person just returned from combat, which topics to avoid, and how to notice signs of PTSD.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2. ALIGNMENT OF RESULTS OF THE EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM WITH CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYER DEMAND

2.1 Motivational barriers: people do not see prospects after training

- Combination of training with career counseling
- Mentorship and demonstration of real success stories
- Involvement of employers to show career prospects
- Psychological support as a condition of program completion

SUCCESSFUL CASES

SoftServe

Regularly invites veteran employees to speak at internal training events. These individuals share their concrete path: what position they held before service, what changed after return, how they completed the EmpowerU course or retraining, and where they are now. This is not a motivational speech – it is a specific career trajectory that can be repeated. The first three veterans hired from the market (not former employees) became living proof that entry into IT is possible.

Metinvest

The UN is filming a documentary series about real Metinvest veterans: who they are, what they went through, how they returned, and where they are now. This is not a corporate video – it is independent documentation that conveys real career trajectories to an audience far beyond one enterprise. Such a format removes distrust better than any advertisement.

Interpipe

Organized mentoring groups where more experienced veterans – those who already returned and found their place – regularly meet with those just demobilized. Format "peer-to-peer" inside production: not an HR specialist saying "everything will be fine," but a colleague-veteran concretely explaining how he solved each adaptation problem.

Tytanovi

Founder Fedir Sambursky consciously uses a coffee shop as a motivational instrument: "Guys want and can work! They need to be shown an example – here is a person without arms who opened a coffee shop, here is one without a leg who organized an exhibition. You see – you are inspired and start yourself." The coffee shop in a large shopping mall is a public place where tens of thousands of people daily see a veteran with disability in a working context. This is more real than any campaign.

Fedir Sambursky is an IDP from Makiivka, marine sapper. After severe injury in Kherson region (lost a leg, fingers, and partially sight) he entered the rehabilitation center Tytanovi. There, together with founder Viacheslav Zaporozhets, in a month launched a coffee shop – as an additional instrument of fundraising for prosthetics and socialization of veterans. Opened December 13, 2024 at the food court of Respublika Park mall. Veterans with severe injuries work there – for them it is practical rehabilitation through return to active social life. In the first month 14 million UAH was raised for prosthetics. Plans include a franchise for veterans and a multimedia platform on social support for persons with disabilities.

2.2 Shortage of training providers in new and demanded fields of preparation

- Stimulation of educational institutions and private entrepreneurs to open new training programs
- Partnership of business and education in developing modern courses for real market demand
- State support for rapid launch of programs for current market needs (especially new technological fields)

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Social coffee shop "Sensory Coffee" (small social establishment, Dnipro)

Created by Anna Kyrychenko in memory of her brother, Hero of Ukraine Maksym Kravchyk. All defenders are served free of charge. Baristas – a couple of IDPs from Pokrovsk: Andrii – a veteran who lost a leg in the war, and his wife Tetiana. For them the coffee shop became a point of entry into a new career – Andrii mastered the profession of barista instead of working in the mine, where he can no longer return physically. The case demonstrates how small business with a social mission simultaneously solves the problem of reintegration of veterans and IDPs, providing a concrete workplace.

Metinvest Polytechnic

Veterans who want to upgrade qualifications or change specialty within the Metinvest group can enroll in the corporate university Metinvest Polytechnic free of charge. In 2025, 26 veterans used this opportunity. Training is built so as not to interrupt work: after completion – a concrete career step inside the enterprise, not uncertainty with a diploma in hand.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3. ENSURING SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND REMOVAL OF BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT OF THE POPULATION

3.1 Psychological barriers and lack of readiness for employment

- Psychological support – mandatory component, not additional
- Profiling of psychological, physical, and professional readiness
- Differentiated approach: mothers, widows, veterans – separate groups
- Two-sided adaptation ("synergy"): veterans adapt to civilian environment, and society and employers – to veterans
- Development of localized models of psychological support adapted to the Ukrainian experience of war

SUCCESSFUL CASES

MHP "Nearby"

Introduced unlimited psychological support hotline for all veteran employees and their families – consultations by specialists with specific experience working with military personnel. Over 5,200 requests processed. Each veteran also receives access to the MARTA mobile app for independent work on mental health. Stabilization occurs before return to work, not in parallel – reducing risk of repeated withdrawal.

Metinvest

For veterans requiring physical rehabilitation before returning to production work, introduced program "Free Waves" – group swimming sessions in three company cities (Kamianske, Kryvyi Rih, Zaporizhzhia). 432 veterans participated. Swimming is combined with psychological sessions and gradual introduction into work rhythm – without abrupt full shifts.

Interpipe

Each returning veteran undergoes mandatory medical examination, then meets with corporate psychologist. A personal mentor-colleague is appointed, who supports daily in the first weeks – answers questions, helps adapt to collective and production changes. Patronage service records psychological state every 6 months and redirects to external specialists if needed.

NOVA (Nova Poshta))

Nova Poshta introduced two specialized staff positions: specialist for mobilized employees (support during service) and specialist for veterans (support after return). Veterans do not return "cold": first 2–4 months they undergo recovery with psychologist and career trainer. Only after this – full employment. Forbes 2023: leader in "Logistics" category of best employers for veterans.

3.2 Stigmatization and incorrect communication on the part of employers

- Mandatory courses of "veteran sensitivity" and inclusive culture for HR
- Modules in management training programs (Ministry of Education)
- Trauma-informed assistance trainings
- Appointment of veteran-managers inside companies – "peer-to-peer" principle for creating psychologically comfortable environment
- Veteran-friendly corporate policies: internal support programs, change of organizational processes

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Metinvest

Together with DTEK Academy developed mandatory course "Heroes Nearby" for all enterprise managers. Includes electronic simulators of real conversations with veterans, infographics explaining PTSD and its manifestations at work, video lessons with cases of incorrect and correct behavior. 1,200 managers trained. Parallel program "Leadership During War" launched – on managing teams under stress and constant change.

SoftServe

HR specialists and recruiters obtained international certification Veterans at Work from SHRM – recognized in over 165 countries. Additional training from Veteran Hub with veterans as trainers. Result: 62 veterans successfully hired or returned. Veterans regularly speak at internal events – colleagues see live examples of successful reintegration.

MHP

Introduced mandatory corporate course "Supermen" – on inclusion and interaction with vulnerable groups – for all sellers at its retail points across Ukraine. Practical course: concrete scenarios of what to do and what not to say. 40 regional coordinators of "MHP Nearby" program undergo advanced training and then consult managers locally.

Interpipe

To reduce stigmatization inside collectives, introduced two measures: personal mentor-colleague for each veteran in first weeks (someone who has gone through similar path or special training), and mentoring groups where veterans communicate with each other, sharing return experiences. This removes feeling of "I am the only one" and accelerates adaptation.

Kyivstar

Developed internal program "4.5.0. Finally, Home" for veteran employees, including HR and manager training on correct communication with people returning from combat zones. Awarded Forbes Ukraine 2025 "Experts' Choice" for systemic work on inclusion and veteran support.

Pizza BRO

Pizzeria opened by veteran Mykhailo Roshchuk (served 2015–2016). Positioned as space "for those who support Ukraine" – without division into "ours" and "others." Menu includes 17 types of pizza, feature – "two pizzas in one" for different tastes. 25% discount for military and medics. Clients can "suspend" a pizza – pay for an order later delivered to wounded or medics in hospitals. Thus, small veteran business simultaneously removes stigma ("veterans – ordinary entrepreneurs") and builds bridge between veterans and civilian society.

3.3 Non-inclusiveness of workplaces and absence of accessibility

- Restoration of social taxi; programs for financing workplace adaptation
- Implementation of accessibility standards and employer compensation
- "Green corridor" for documentation in employment
- Flexible work organization as element of accessibility
- Compensation to employers for workplace adaptation for persons with disabilities (up to 129,000 UAH for Group I) – scaling successful mechanism
- Adaptation of regulatory procedures and medical protocols to modern labor market conditions (including veterans after amputations)
- Adaptation of enterprises to needs of different groups of workers: flexible schedule, special rooms (experience of Podolyany mall)

SUCCESSFUL CASES

SoftServe

Corporate policy guarantees each returning veteran one month of additional paid vacation for adaptation – beyond standard. Workplace and salary preserved for entire service period regardless of duration. Return to full workload is gradual: initially part-time, then increasing with readiness. HR Business Partner develops individual retraining plan with the person.

NOVA (Nova Poshta)

Invested 50 million UAH in building rehabilitation cottage town at hospital in Klevan (Rivne region) – memorandum signed with regional administration. Veteran employees can undergo physical rehabilitation in comfortable conditions before returning to work. After discharge – partial employment with gradual increase of workload.

Ferrexpo

Pays for workplace adaptation for veterans with disabilities – using state compensation and supplementing with own funds. Medical insurance (100,000 UAH basic + 25,000 UAH additional) covers rehabilitation after injuries. In 2024, 470,000 UAH spent on rehabilitation. From 2025, dental coverage added – critical for people after maxillofacial injuries.

Interpipe

Patronage service records position and salary level from first day of mobilization. Upon return, veteran does not "start from zero" – position and salary preserved. If health requires change of work conditions (e.g., heavy physical work contraindicated), HR together with veteran finds suitable position inside enterprise, not dismissal.

ARS Group LLC

Enterprise with 700 employees and 11 supermarkets changed personnel management approach: instead of employees adapting to company, company adapts to employees' needs. Employs pensioners (oldest 75 years), 50 persons with disabilities, IDPs, veterans. For IDP teachers, separate room arranged at warehouse for remote lessons. Work schedule adapted to employee's possibilities. Uses state compensation programs for workplace adaptation. Special trainings for managers on working with veterans. Female mechanic with combatant certificate services all enterprise equipment.

3.4 Information chaos and lack of a "single window"

- Special employment programs for relevant positions
- Regional "single window" (portal/bot): vacancies, training, grants, support
- Unified information system of employment service
- Local access points: stands, QR codes in hubs, administrative centers
- Cluster communication model: information exchange between organizations via shared online groups and messengers (experience of Ternopil)

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Interpipe

Instead of veteran independently searching for psychologist, lawyer, HR, and social worker – one contact exists. Patronage service acts as single coordinator: from issuing equipment at front to finding new position after demobilization. Veteran or family calls one place and receives routing to needed specialist – without queues, without paperwork.

MHP

Built network of 40 regional coordinators of "MHP Nearby" program. Each coordinator is a live access point for veterans and families in their region. Consultations on legal issues, social protection, psychological support, job search – all through one specialist who knows the person and leads their case. Support 24/7 via chat.

Metinvest

Each returning veteran receives structured onboarding package: meetings with lawyer (benefits and documents), psychologist (assessment and support plan), financial consultant (payments, insurance, compensations). All within first two weeks after return to work, without need to search separately.

Auchan Ukraine

Since August 2024, hypermarkets introduced branded shelves "Created by Defenders" – with products from veteran enterprises or enterprises where majority of workers are veterans or IDPs. Memorandum signed with Ministry of Veterans. Shelf presence in large chain – not just sales: visibility and legitimacy for small veteran producers, providing concrete sales channel for dozens of microbusinesses – response to problem of "isolation of veteran producer from market."

"Single window" of Ternopil employment center

Platform created on website of Ternopil Employment Center uniting three categories: IDPs, veterans, persons with disabilities. Each category includes list of partner organizations with contacts and services. Memoranda of cooperation signed with all organizations; joint events held. About 30 CSOs provide services to IDPs. System allows people to obtain not only state services but also support from CSOs. Participants can combine state grants with support from other organizations for better results.

3.5 Employer barriers: lack of knowledge of inclusivity, high cost of adaptation	• Involvement of local media for information dissemination • Quick compensations and simplified documentation • Ready support packages: checklists, compensation algorithms, consultations • Internal corporate inclusion programs • Specialized trainings for enterprise managers on working with veterans and other vulnerable groups

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Metinvest

Consciously invests in what most companies consider "too expensive." Budget for veteran adaptation programs in 2025 – $550,000 (twice as much as in 2024). Result: 80% of demobilized employees return (compared to ~40% nationally). The UN documents Metinvest's experience as a scalable model for other corporations.

"Alef Stroy"

Explored donor assistance opportunities and solved staffing problem in a non-standard way: instead of waiting for ready specialists from the market, together with Nemishaieve Vocational College and with USAID support, trained 54 female operators of construction equipment – among them IDPs and wives/mothers of defenders. Employer participated in training from the first day, set requirements for the program, and shared responsibility for results with the educational institution. Outcome: 100% passed the state exam, free training, accommodation, and meals for participants.

Kyivstar

Demonstrates that inclusion can cover several vulnerable groups simultaneously without excessive organizational burden: "4.5.0. Finally, Home" – for veteran employees; "Without Doubt" – open hiring of persons with disabilities; "On Your Marks, Career!" – for specialists aged 55+. Three parallel programs in one company – and Forbes "Experts' Choice" award in 2025.

3.6 Disorientation of job seekers and the "grant trap"	• Career intensives and personal case management • Mentorship "to the result": training → application → entry into work • Internships and mentoring from employers in hubs

SUCCESSFUL CASES

DTEK "ProVeteran"

Solved the problem of the "training trap" by tying the course from the start to a specific workplace. 18 veterans – former employees – completed the program "Specialist in Solar Energy Facilities" (developed with DTEK Academy and NTU "Dnipro Polytechnic"). After certification, each returned to the enterprise in a new role. Pilot course – company plans to scale.

NOVA (Nova Poshta)

Assigns career trainer to each veteran returning to work – a specific person who knows the veteran. Trainer diagnoses skills, defines career path inside the company, and develops a 3–6-month plan. If no suitable position exists inside Nova Poshta, trainer helps externally. No veteran left "in between."

Veterano Group

Veterano Group solves the "training trap" entrepreneurially: no course without result. Veteran wanting to start business receives ready model – branded franchise for symbolic fee. Route clear: demobilization → franchise application → training → opening → real income. Already 130 employees, ~50 veterans completed this path. No abstract "prospects" – concrete business and brand.

3.7 Infrastructure barriers for women with children and families with care responsibilities	• Development of childcare services during training: partner child spaces, nanny service compensation via grants or state funds • Organization of parallel activities for children (art therapy, etc.) during mothers' training • Flexible formats of training and remote work for women with care responsibilities • Compensation of transport costs for mothers of children with disabilities (experience of project "Reboot")

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Hubs "VONA"

Hubs "VONA" – project implemented by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Ukraine. The project is aimed at developing the professional potential and financial capacity of women who have suffered from domestic/gender-based violence or are at risk. It is a network of offline spaces functioning as a "single window" for IDP women and survivors of domestic violence.

A woman goes through the path from individual consultation with a psychologist to training in professional courses (from drivers to IT). Career advisors can also help to develop a business plan and accompany the woman up to her first sales.

The hubs provide the opportunity to leave a child in a children's corner under supervision while the mother works with a mentor or studies. This is a critically important element of "sensitivity" to the needs of IDPs.

3.8 Insufficient socialization and integration of persons with visual impairments into the open labor market	• Development of inclusive socialization and career guidance beyond closed specialized environments • Adaptation of vocational training programs for persons with visual impairments • Systematic approach to defining accessible professions and creating adapted workplaces

SUCCESSFUL CASES

ATB

ATB – the largest retail chain in Ukraine with more than 50,000 employees and thousands of stores across the country. The company has a systematic approach to engaging vulnerable groups: fulfills the 4% quota for employment of persons with disabilities, has special vacancies, adaptive working conditions, and partnerships with veteran support organizations.

For different categories of persons with disabilities and veterans ATB has formed specific positions: packer – suitable for persons with reduced mobility, mental disorders, or acquired disability; monotonous, clear work with a definite result; security guard/video surveillance operator – key vacancy for veterans with limb amputations; does not require physical movement, but requires attentiveness and responsibility; cleaner – accessible vacancy for a wide range of vulnerable groups.

New ATB stores are built with full accessibility: Braille on entrance signs; special tactile floor tiles for persons with visual impairments; special signs for employees with hearing and speech impairments; adapted cash registers for clients and employees in wheelchairs.

ATB has established systematic partnership with "Veteran Hub" as a recruitment and psychological support channel. HR managers and store managers undergo training in inclusive communication with veterans.

All categories of employees receive equal social support in emergency situations – an approach of equal opportunities, not special treatment. This is important for corporate culture and for the self-respect of vulnerable groups.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4. STIMULATION OF FORMAL EMPLOYMENT AND ENSURING DECENT REMUNERATION

4.1 Mismatch of wages with veterans' experience	• Mechanism for recognition of competencies acquired in the Armed Forces of Ukraine • Revision of remuneration systems taking into account managerial experience • Allowances for combatant status (+20% – experience of SE "Forests of Ukraine")

SUCCESSFUL CASES

SE "Forests of Ukraine"

All demobilized employees holding combatant certificates receive a permanent +20% supplement to their salary, not as a one-time bonus. Additional payments: material assistance equal to minimum wage upon return to work, annual payment up to 15,000 UAH, compensation for health improvement or firewood (8,000 UAH), financial support for medicines – up to 50,000 UAH, for surgical treatment – up to 100,000 UAH (with supporting documents). This experience is described in the Employment strategy 2030 as a model for other state enterprises.

Metinvest

Since February 2022, raised average wages across enterprises by 50%, and in 2025 – by another 20%. Average salary – 32,500 UAH, for key technological specialists – about 43,000 UAH. Veterans wishing to change or upgrade qualifications may enroll free of charge in Metinvest Polytechnic – the corporate university. In 2025, 26 veterans used this opportunity. Training is combined with work at the enterprise: after graduation – career growth within the group.

Interpipe

Patronage service records veteran's position and salary from the first day of mobilization. Upon return, the person does not "slide down" the career ladder even if the unit was restructured and colleagues advanced. If the veteran gained command experience during service, HR takes this into account when reviewing position or evaluating for promotion.

Ferrexpo

Conducts internal webinars for HR and managers explaining how to read and evaluate military experience. Veterans who commanded units are deliberately considered for managerial positions in production and service divisions – their leadership experience is taken into account when determining remuneration level.

4.2 Problems of youth employment: spread of informal employment and risk of loss of educational motivation	• Simplification of procedures for official employment of minors; informational clarification for business • Development of dual education programs, production practice, and internships for youth • Programs of "first job," seasonal employment, and mentorship • Development of models of legal combination of study and official employment

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Restaurant NOA (Lviv) + "Dough with Meaning"

Restaurant NOA in Victoria Gardens Mall in Lviv opened its doors for internships of youth with developmental disabilities within partnership with social enterprise "Dough with Meaning" (Halyna Varkholyk). Youth with disabilities underwent friendly internship in the restaurant hall as preparation for work in their future inclusive coffee shop "Coffee with Meaning" in Pustomyty community (planned opening summer 2026). The case shows: even a small restaurant can become an instrument of preparation for employment – without grants and formal agreements, simply by opening its doors.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5. STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE LABOR MARKET

5.1 The trap of benefits: social protection restrains entry into the labor market

- Gradual, not abrupt reduction of support when entering employment
- Integration of employment programs with social and housing instruments
- Individual activation plans with assessment of readiness and phased transition

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Metinvest

After demobilization, a veteran does not immediately return to full shifts: a careful work regime with gradual increase of workload is provided. First – medical examination and psychological stabilization. Then – part-time week or limited tasks. Only when the person feels ready – transition to standard regime. Corporate support (payments, insurance) does not stop abruptly but "flows" into regular salary.

Interpipe

Patronage service has no "gap" between service and return: it is active from the first day of mobilization and continues until the veteran is fully settled in civilian life. For those returning with severe injuries requiring long rehabilitation, the service continues support – legal, financial, and psychological – in parallel with recovery. No break between "support mode" and "work mode."

NOVA

For veterans with severe injuries or pronounced psychological barriers, offers possibility to start with partial employment – a few hours per day or a few days per week. Income is lower than full, but the person is already in the employment system, already earning, already building rhythm. Transition to full schedule – gradually and by readiness, without pressure.

SoftServe

HR Business Partner develops with each veteran an individual plan for return to work: how many hours per week, which tasks, which KPIs. Workload increases step by step, at agreed pace. This removes stress of "either full workload or stay on benefits" – person transitions smoothly, preserving both income and psychological stability.

5.2 Fragmentation of initiatives: grants end – programs disappear

- Institutional partnership and coordination between ministries and other stakeholders
- Permanent coordination mechanisms independent of grant cycles
- Institutionalization of partnerships and scaling of successful models
- Tripartite model of interaction (state–business–civil sector) with clear roles and responsibilities in financing and monitoring programs
- Focus of grant programs on preparation for work after grants, correlation of selection criteria for grant recipients

SUCCESSFUL CASES

SE "Forests of Ukraine"

Veteran community organized into Union of Forester-Warriors of Ukraine – permanent public structure at the enterprise, existing independently of grants or project cycles. Coordinates support and mutual aid among veterans, defends their interests, and is institutional voice. In 2025, members collected over 414 million UAH for Armed Force's needs. Employment Strategy 2030 cites this model as example for other state enterprises.

Interpipe

Patronage service – oldest corporate structure of this type in Ukraine. Survived three waves of mobilization, several financial crises, and full-scale invasion – never stopped work a single day. Example of true institutional sustainability: not a project, not an initiative "while money lasts," but part of corporate DNA.

Ferrexpo

Introduced veteran support program back in 2014 – first among mining and metallurgical companies of Ukraine. More than 10 years of continuous work. Program is not "response to 2022" – it developed and improved over years, today includes medical insurance, rehabilitation, dentistry, staff training. Norm of corporate culture, not reaction to external pressure.

Veterano Group

Veterano Group was built from start as commercially sustainable model. Ostaltsev received 22 refusals from investors but eventually launched pizzeria with $4,000 start-up capital. Franchise is paid (symbolically) but self-sustaining. Today network exists over 10 years and develops without external support. Each new outlet creates jobs for veterans and resources for army support.

5.3 Staffing shortage in state and local institutions – low capacity to implement support programs

- Short-term training programs for community specialists and civil servants
- Strengthening cooperation between Employment Centers, educational institutions, and Training Centers
- Involvement of NGOs and business in joint staffing programs

SUCCESSFUL CASES

NGO "Agency for Regional development of Tavriia association of territorial communities"

Training of project managers from among veterans and IDPs for communities. "School of Change-Makers" – long-term project for territorial development, within which a component of training project managers of local and regional development is implemented.

5.4 Limited opportunities in small communities

- Mobile career days and outreach consultations
- Microgrants and support for self-employment in local niches
- Development of social entrepreneurship (coffee shops, workshops, services)
- Expansion of remote vacancies by employers

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Metinvest

Present in cities with few alternative large employers: Kamianske, Kryvyi Rih, Zaporizhzhia, and communities that accepted evacuated staff from Mariupol. In each of these cities, Metinvest enterprises are system-forming employers. Reintegration programs and adaptive work regimes effectively set employment standards for entire community.

SoftServe

EmpowerU course and new AI Fundamentals (launched May 2026) – fully remote: 8 weeks, twice weekly, not tied to city. Means veteran or IDP in any village or small town has equal access to training, potentially leading to real offer from IT company. Additionally, they provide access to 10,000+ Udemy courses for self-development.

NOVA

Physical presence in hundreds of small towns and settlements across Ukraine. Local branch managers become first contact point for veterans and IDPs seeking work: can refer to HR specialist, inform about vacancies, or connect to career trainer – without need to travel to regional center.

Veterano Pizza Dnipro

After February 24, 2022, First Wave pizzeria in Dnipro (opened by veteran Andrii Sarvira after demobilization on Veterano Pizza franchise) became volunteer hub. Up to 50 volunteers daily cooked, packed, and delivered hot meals to military and volunteers, and fed IDPs arriving from combat regions. Case shows: veteran small business in medium city can become anchor support point for vulnerable groups (IDPs, veterans) even where large corporate programs are absent.

5.5 Employment centers and administrative service centers: underutilized channel for vulnerable groups	• Training administrators for initial employment information • Employment Centers as "entry point" and navigator to intensives, hubs, grants • Unified digital platform: vacancies, training, grants, support • Local support in communities

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Interpipe

For 1,300+ mobilized employees, Patronage service performs same function as ideal Employment Center: one contact point that knows each person, sees full picture of needs, and routes to correct resources. Service covers entire cycle – from mobilization to full return to civilian life. Corporate "single window" model that state structures could adopt.

MHP

40 regional coordinators of "MHP Nearby" effectively fill gap between what state employment service offers and what veterans actually need. Act parallel to Employment Centers – often first contact leading person to correct resources: grants, psychologists, training programs, or vacancies. Support 24/7, without bureaucratic barrier.

Metinvest

Instead of veteran independently figuring out benefits and where to apply, Metinvest organizes structured meetings in first two weeks after return to work: lawyer explains rights and documents, psychologist assesses condition, financial consultant assists with payments and insurance. Model shows how corporate "navigator" can replace absence of functional Employment Center nearby.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6. HARMONIZATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY SYSTEM WITH THE EU ACQUIS FOR THE PURPOSE OF UKRAINE'S INTEGRATION INTO THE EU LABOR MARKET

6.1 Discrimination against women in "male" professions	• Research of women's needs before launching programs; adaptation of vacancy descriptions • Regulation of "hazing" as an administrative violation (occupational safety) • Gender-sensitive adaptation of corporate procedures

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Initiative Women For The Future

Supported by UN Women, helps Ukrainian women to rethink their own path, find internal resources, and turn uncertainty into a clear plan of action.

Between 2022–2025, provided support to more than 80,000 women and girls, helping them to resolve various career challenges. More than 4.5 million Ukrainian women learned about professional development opportunities through the initiative's communication campaigns. Behind these figures are diverse life circumstances: job loss, forced career pause, uncertainty about next steps, doubts in one's own abilities.

The stories of participants are examples of real change that begins with conversation, support, and belief in oneself.

"Alef Stroy"

Together with Nemishaieve College and with USAID support, they opened the first school in Ukraine where women are trained to operate construction machinery. Among 54 participants were IDPs, wives, and mothers of defenders. Everything was free of charge: training, accommodation, meals. 267 women applied, 151 were selected. Training lasted several months and ended with 100% passing of state exams. This case proves: women successfully master technical specialties if given real access.

Metinvest

Purposefully engages women in positions traditionally considered "male": crane operators, electricians, drivers of quarry equipment. Programs "First Job" and "Young Specialist" are formally open to women from any community and contain no gender restrictions. Corporate culture gradually changes through manager training and mandatory anti-discrimination course.

NOVA

Majority of employees are women (62%). Company purposefully promotes women to managerial positions through women's leadership development program. Unlike declarations, this indicator is supported by real numbers and included in corporate reporting.

Campaign "Of course, you can!"

Operates platform youcan.com.ua – a single navigator that gathers all available programs and instruments in one place and offers each woman a practical route, considering her situation and needs.

In addition, new opportunities open for training and retraining in fields recently considered exclusively "male": becoming deminers, bus and heavy equipment drivers, energy specialists, machine operators – working in sectors with real labor shortages and decent pay.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS BY AREA	SOLUTIONS AND STEPS
EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	
STRATEGIC GOAL 1. ENSURING TIMELY SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYERS' DEMAND FOR LABOR AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE LABOR MARKET	
1.1 Low correspondence of training outcomes to labor market requirements	• Development of flexible modular training programs for rapid acquisition of qualifications with employment guarantees • Simplification of mechanisms for recognition of partial and micro-qualifications • Introduction of initial modules of digital literacy and self-management skills • Training "by employer's order": formation of courses for specific vacancies with subsequent guaranteed employment • Reorientation to demanded sectors: manufacturing, logistics, defense sphere, working professions (instead of oversaturated fields)

SUCCESSFUL CASES

State Vocational Training Institution "Bila Tserkva Higher Vocational School of Construction and Service"

With support from the company "FRAM," the agency "Enabel," and the "Rehau" Academy, the school's workshops were modernized, and a Construction Hub was created for non-formal vocational training to master micro-skills in construction and installation works, conducting short-term courses demanded by the market, including for war veterans and IDPs.

In partnership with the furniture factory "Kyiv Standard," dual training programs are implemented, and a specialized training and practice center has been organized.

Within the framework of the School Nutrition Reform Strategy project, qualification improvement courses for cooks of educational institutions in Kyiv region were implemented on the basis of the school's culinary hub.

The Qualification Center of the institution carries out assessment and recognition of results of formal, non-formal, and informal learning, awarding and/or confirming professional qualifications.

State Vocational Training Institution "Ternopil Center of Vocational and Technical Education"

Provides training of workers of high qualification level, retraining and upskilling of employed workers and unemployed population, including vulnerable groups.

Within the Career Center of the institution, career guidance meetings are held with specialists of the regional employment center (consultative support, informing students and graduates about vacancies at enterprises, organizations, institutions, features of CV writing and useful advice on interviews with employers).

Together with partners, programs for mastering soft skills and digital competences are implemented for successful entry into the labor market or starting one's own business.

With material and financial support of partners ("Henkel Bautechnik Ukraine" ("Ceresit"), "Fomalgaut-Polimin," etc.), regional training and practice centers have been created and developed, where skills demanded by the regional labor market are formed.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2. ALIGNMENT OF THE RESULTS OF THE EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM WITH CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYER DEMAND	
2.1 People study what does not convert into employment	• Consideration of market conditions and regional labor market specifics in the development of educational programs • Organization of intensives in partnership business–education–Employment Service • Development of qualification centers on the basis of educational institutions • Absence of mechanisms of support and adaptation after training – inclusion of post-training support in grant programs as a mandatory component
2.2 Low motivation and weak career guidance of youth as a factor of structural unemployment	• Implementation of comprehensive systems of career guidance and motivational support at all levels of education • Involvement of practitioners and employers in the educational process to familiarize with real labor market needs • Combination of training with psychological support and formation of social competences • Practice-oriented model: training + internship + mentoring

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Higher Vocational School No. 7, Kalush

HVS No. 7, Kalush is a socially oriented institution that performs the function of protecting vulnerable groups of youth (orphans and children deprived of parental care; persons who have one parent; children from families in difficult life circumstances; from low-income families), retraining of internally displaced persons.

Training of students and unemployed population, as well as internships of vocational education specialists and construction workers, takes place in modern workshops created with partners and employers interested in graduates:

1. Regional training and practice center of the company "Henkel Bautechnik Ukraine"
2. Training and practice center KNAUF ("KNAUF GIPS Kyiv")
3. Training and practice center Sniezka (2016)
4. Center of Culinary Professions (2017)
5. Training and practice center "Welder" (2018)
6. Training and practice center in the profession "Electrician for repair and maintenance of electrical equipment" ("Goodvalley")

The Career Center of the school facilitates employment of graduates and unemployed population in the regional labor market.

A Qualification Center functions on the basis of the school.

State Vocational Training Institution "Brovary Vocational College"

3The institution has concluded about 120 agreements with employers, taking into account vacancies in the regional labor market, which determine and order the training of qualified workers. With support of partners, an Interregional training and practice center for training installers of sanitary-technical systems and equipment, a training and practice center "Siniat," and a training and practice center "Śnieżka" have been created.

On the basis of the college, a career guidance hub DECIDE operates, which has a training zone and seven practical stations (welder; sanitary technician-installer; painter and tiler; master of building insulation; specialist in frame construction; driver of freight transport).

In partnership with the Trade Union of Builders of Ukraine, short-term training is organized in various modules: water supply, sewerage, installation of all types of toilets, installation of underfloor heating, with the target audience being internally displaced persons, temporarily unemployed, etc.

In three communities of Kyiv region – Irpin, Brovary, and Bila Tserkva – there is an opportunity to take short-term courses to master working professions – furniture makers, tailors, and cooks. Training is organized within the project "LEP4WORK – Local Employment Partnerships for Decent Work and Effective Labor Market Governance," implemented by the Ukrainian Women's Fund with support of the International Labour Organization.

State Vocational Training Institution "Khmelnytskyi Center of Vocational and Technical Education in the Service Sector" (SVTI KhC VTE SS)

The basis of effectiveness of SVTI KhC VTE SS is long-term partnership with all groups of stakeholders (Employment Service, employers, etc. – more than 100 business partners, 70 agreements for training qualified workers) in the development of the institution.

Courses of retraining for veteran families are implemented thanks to support of the Government of Great Britain, within the project "Women. Peace. Security: Acting Together."

Courses of training in the profession "Baker" for people with hearing problems (inclusion) are conducted with support of Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) within the Program of Economic Resilience of Ukraine (ERP).

The training program "Company" – a course in youth entrepreneurship, recommended by the European Commission as best practice in entrepreneurial education – has been implemented.

At the institution, a training and practice center "Culinary Hub" has been created thanks to co-financing within the Ukraine Plan and Ukraine Facility and with co-financing from Khmelnytskyi City Council. With support of employers and other partners, a training and practice center of modern sewing technologies and design, a training and practice center of technological innovations in the food industry and restaurant business, and a Career Development and Soft Skills Center have been created.

A Qualification Center functions on the basis of the institution.

2.3 Barriers to the development of practice-oriented formats of training

- Simplifying the accreditation and official recognition of learning outcomes obtained through non-formal and informal education, through mechanisms for assessing and awarding professional qualifications in qualification centers
- System of incentives for employer participation in practice-oriented training
- Inter-institutional integration of services and entry points to vocational education and retraining

SUCCESSFUL CASES

DTEK Academy in partnership with NTU "Dnipro Polytechnic"

Veterans, with support of DTEK, mastered a new profession in the field of solar energy. 18 veterans – former employees of DTEK – received certificates of completion of training under the program "Specialist in Solar Energy Facilities."

This is a pilot educational course implemented by the company together with NTU "Dnipro Polytechnic" specifically for veterans who returned from service.

LLC "Engineering and Technical Center IVIK"

In partnership with Dnipro Center of Vocational and Technical Education, implemented a project to create new professions "Master of Installation, Maintenance, Repair and Adjustment of Heat Pumps," "Master of Air Conditioning Systems," developed professional standards and training programs for course preparation, created a qualification center.

LLC "Barks"

In partnership with the Trade Union of Construction Workers and Building Materials Industry of Ukraine, implemented a project to create new professions "Master of Installation of Hinged Ventilated Facades and Translucent Structures," "Senior Master of Installation of Hinged Ventilated Facades and Translucent Structures," developed professional standards, organized popularization of construction professions in all regions of Ukraine.

Private enterprise "Academy of professional education of specialists of the beauty industry 'Partner Plus'"

Licensed vocational education institution training specialists in cosmetology, massage, podology, manicure, tattooing, hairdressing, and other areas of the beauty industry. Implemented a project to develop professional standards in the beauty industry ("Cosmetologist," "Hairdresser (hairdresser-designer)," "Manicurist. Pedicurist," "Make-up Artist. Make-up Artist-Stylist"), created a qualification center, in cooperation with vocational education institutions (SVTI "Zaporizhzhia Higher Vocational School of Fashion and Style"; Kyiv Vocational College of Art and Service Technologies, etc.) developed state educational standards for professions.

2.4 Gap between education and needs of relocated business: specialists with specific production experience do not find work	• Regular updating of educational programs according to requests of relocated enterprises • Reorientation of training to deficit technical and production specialties • Development of flexible, short-term practice-oriented programs with strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Relocation of Bakhmut Vocational School to Hoshcha Community

Implemented rapid and optimal solutions for launching and scaling activities – central building, production workshops, dormitory. The institution is successfully developing, implementing educational and professional programs according to needs and requests of the council/community (energy management, installation of solar panels).

Thanks to this, a high level of employment of graduates, human resources potential of local enterprises, including relocated ones, is ensured.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3. ENSURING SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND REMOVAL OF BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT OF THE POPULATION

3.1 Problems of readiness of vulnerable groups for activation in education and in the labor market	• Individualized models of activation for each vulnerable group with psychological support • Motivation and inclusive adaptation to skills renewal or retraining • Strengthening client-orientation of services (monitoring of satisfaction level) • Transition from purely material assistance to comprehensive programs of motivation and re-adaptation (educational + psychological + social support)
3.2 Low motivation and difficult behavior of part of beneficiaries (traumatized adolescents, IDPs) – formal instruments do not work	• Transition to individualized approaches of motivation and re-adaptation • Implementation of mentoring for restoration of trust and formation of responsibility • Preparation of personnel for work with demotivated and traumatized people

SUCCESSFUL CASES

NGO "Epiprosvita"

NGO "Epiprosvita" takes care of people with epilepsy and concomitant diseases. It is part of the largest patient network "Patients of Ukraine," develops inclusivity, provides educational and humanitarian opportunities to people with disabilities.

Project "Mom, work!" (NGO "Epiprosvita") – a comprehensive initiative created for free training and employment of women raising children or persons with disabilities. The program helps to acquire a new profession, restore a career, and achieve economic independence.

The organization provides psychological support, career consultations – for mothers of children with disabilities, the psychological barrier and loss of self-esteem are the main obstacle to activation in the labor market. The project implements a differentiated approach: mothers of children with disabilities, widows, women with undefined loss – separate support groups. Thanks to this, 80% of course graduates find employment.

The project develops partnerships (Red Cross Society, Nova Ukraine, League of the Strong, National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine, Ukrainian Anti-Epileptic League, etc.) to create new opportunities for retraining and acquiring professions (customer relations manager, HR recruiter, accountant, logistician, SMM specialist, specialist in digital office programs). The organization developed the "Encyclopedia of remote professions."

3.3 Vulnerable groups need new professions but have limited awareness and resources for training or retraining	• Creation of a program "Learning with Income" and short adaptive educational trajectories • Use of Administrative Service Centers as points of initial contact • Creation of a single activation route with personal case management • Social advertising of the concept of lifelong learning, incentives for learning throughout life • SMM-promotion of new opportunities and successful cases of graduates • Use of artificial intelligence as a tool for self-learning and career guidance (free, accessible)

SUCCESSFUL CASES

MHP

International company MHP has unique experience in building communication strategies adapted to different businesses and countries of presence. Strategically integrated effective communications of corporate social responsibility (CSR) of MHP transform awareness and positive image in society, effectiveness and partnership potential of social initiatives into sustainable development. Effectiveness of CSR cases of the company is regularly noted by experts, victories in competitions ("Business that Changes the Country," etc.).

Wide informational resonance in society, accompanied by scaling of positive practices and instruments of work with vulnerable groups of the population, does not contradict but is the result of clear targeting of humanitarian initiatives and communications. Each program ("MHP Nearby," "MHP – To the Community," "Supermen," etc.), by effectiveness and with PR support, becomes a well-known CSR brand.

The ecosystem of support and effective interaction with veterans and communities also contributes to achieving corporate goals of MHP. Development of effective communications and interactions of CSR programs with communities allows business to attract highly intellectual labor resources into the community. Considering the large number of veterans, military personnel, and their family members among employees, the company created a special communication infrastructure for effective interaction and support: Telegram channel "Strength of Veterans," which covers hundreds of employees, with a target engagement rate of over 90%; a 24-hour hotline and a network of coordinators who provide individual support and accompaniment to each military and veteran of MHP, etc.

NGO "Epiprosvita"

NGO "Epiprosvita" takes care of people with epilepsy and concomitant disorders, and also provides support in self-realization and improvement of quality of life of their family members. The organization effectively and professionally develops effective communications and networks of partnership interaction in educating society, combating stigmatization, expanding opportunities and accessibility of treatment, inclusive education, etc.

The communication strategy and branding of "Epiprosvita" focus on humanization and integration of patients and their family members into society, based on strong expertise. The organization acts as an authoritative communication partner for the Ministry of Health and other specialized institutions, participates in specialized international projects, provides detailed responses regarding treatment opportunities and psychological support for patients and all family members.

The brand "Epiprosvita" and the personal brand of its founder Nii Nickel are built on principles of social responsibility, inclusion, and openness.

The brand "Epiprosvita" clearly demonstrates how socially oriented and non-profit organizations can use modern communication tools (from community management and social networks to lifestyle media) to unite society around values of support and inclusion.

Communication is built with strong and convenient multichannel feedback, successful visualization, "without drama" in the development of a culture of inclusion and humanism in society, emphasis is placed on debunking myths, telling success stories (human-to-human), and supporting families, developing community. In particular, in print and online formats, the lifestyle magazine "Syayvo" is published, positioned as "a lifestyle magazine without drama," telling how to live happily with disability, breaking stereotypes about perception of diseases and focusing on normal, full life.

3.4 Absence of systemic post-training support – high share of unemployed after training (especially veterans in IT)	• Systemic mentoring, psychological support, and individual adaptation programs after completion of training • Development of separate programs of reintegration of veterans taking into account specifics of adaptation to work rhythm and culture • Inclusion of post-training support in grant conditions as mandatory, not voluntary element

SUCCESSFUL CASES

SoftServe EmpowerU

SoftServe launched a free training course EmpowerU for veterans – without IT experience. First intake: 237 participants, 40 completed the course. By the end of 2024, three graduate veterans from the open market (not former employees) received offers from SoftServe. In 2025–2026, a new course AI Fundamentals (8 weeks online, twice a week) was opened. Key difference from "typical" training: the course is a direct recruitment channel, not just an educational product.

Coffee shop "Quiet place"

Dmytro Martynenko opened the first outlet in 2022 between rotations – with his own funds and a grant from the Ukrainian Veterans Fund under the program "Varto 2.0." The coffee shop is positioned as a space for the veteran community: on the walls – photographs of military personnel, part of the profit goes to support the army. Free legal consultations for veterans, English lessons, meetings of comrades are held in the establishment. Already two outlets have been opened in Kyiv. The founder's goal is to turn "Quiet Place" into a free franchise for veterans: so that each demobilized person could receive not only experience but also a clear business route.

3.5 Inclusivity – a cross-cutting problem of society	• Training in the culture of inclusion • Inclusive programs, trained personnel, accessible and equipped educational spaces • Development of local ecosystems of inclusivity • Systematic upskilling of teachers, social workers, and mentors for work with traumatized and vulnerable groups • Development of clear algorithms of response to complex cases; institutional recognition of the role of social educators

SUCCESSFUL CASES

State vocational training institution "Odesa Center of Vocational and Technical Education" (SVTI OC VTE)

Provides inclusive vocational education to children with special educational needs (with hearing impairments), IDPs, students from among children of combatants; carries out retraining of unemployed population with the aim of increasing their competitiveness in the regional labor market.

The percentage of premises accessible to students with special educational needs is 70%. Therefore, the work of the Center is aimed at ensuring social protection of children with disabilities, their professional rehabilitation, employment, and adaptation to social life.

Achieved results of experimental work:

- developed technologies for ensuring accessibility of educational space for students with hearing impairments;
- developed structural-content model of innovative technologies and methods of education of students with hearing impairments in conditions of vocational education institution;
- developed adapted programs taking into account the study of the problem of education of students with hearing impairments;
- developed methodological recommendations on application of methods of distance-modular inclusive training, which allows to significantly improve the quality of training of future workers;
- developed and implemented technologies for ensuring accessibility of educational space of vocational education institution for students with hearing impairments, which contribute to improving the quality of vocational education of students with hearing impairments, their comprehensive development, ensure their competitiveness in the modern labor market and adaptation in modern conditions.

Correctional and developmental work is systematically carried out by a practical psychologist for all students of the Center, including those with special educational needs.

Organization of interactive inclusive distance learning provides students with the opportunity to choose formats that best meet their educational needs.

Creation and development of training and practice centers with material and financial support of partners:

1. Training and practice construction centers for studying modern construction technologies ("Henkel Bautechnik Ukraine" ("Ceresit"), "Knauf," "Triora," "Fomalgaut-Polimin," "Sniezka").

2. Interregional training and practice center for training installers of sanitary-technical systems and equipment (Swiss Cooperation Office in Ukraine and Representation of Swiss company "Geberit International Sales AG").

3. Training and practice center of vocational training "Agrotechnologies" and "Tractor Driver-Machinist of Agricultural Production" (modern equipment purchased with funds of the regional budget).

4. Training and practice centers of vocational training "Information Technologies (IT)" ("Auchan Ukraine. Hypermarket"), "Electrician for Repair and Maintenance of Electrical Equipment," "Operator of Refrigeration Installations."

5. Training and practice center of welding ("Fronius").

6. Training and practice center "Culinary Hub" (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine).

Ensuring equal opportunities in mastering a profession traditionally considered male in society: among first-year students in the specialty "installer of sanitary-technical systems and equipment," girls have enrolled.

MHP

The program "Supermen" (course on inclusion) is mandatory for all sellers of retail outlets. The team of the veterans' interaction center – 40 regional colleagues.

Veteran Oleksandr completely lost his sight, underwent rehabilitation, learned to read with the help of assistive technology, mastered massage in 3 months, and now successfully works as a massage therapist at the enterprise.

At MHP, the number of employees currently serving is more than 2,600 military personnel, and the veteran community numbers more than 600 people. In 2023, the company launched the program of reintegration of military personnel and veterans "MHP Nearby."

STRATEGIC GOAL 5. STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE LABOR MARKET

5.1 Excessive workload on individual specialists: responsibility for complex cases without interagency support	• Creation of coordination mechanisms between educational institutions, social services, and NGOs for distribution of responsibility • Development of clear algorithms of response to complex cases (IDPs, children with traumatic experience) • Administrative and psychological support for pedagogical and social workers

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Ternopil Higher Vocational School No. 4 named after M. Parashchuk

Case of work of a vocational-technical institution with vulnerable categories of youth, including IDPs, persons with disabilities, and orphans with traumatic experience from Berdyansk. In particular, a complex case of integration of evacuated adolescents without documents and basic social skills, who had no motivation for learning and demonstrated deviant behavior, previously taken to Italy, then enrolled to study in the vocational school without prior notification about the life history of the children. The burden of their socialization in fact fell on one employee, despite the formal presence of external support services.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS BY AREA	SOLUTIONS AND STEPS
SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP	
STRATEGIC GOAL 2. ALIGNMENT OF THE RESULTS OF THE EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM WITH CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYER DEMAND	
2.1 Deficit of "business competences" and high entry threshold	• Create a system of basic entrepreneurial intensives and navigation programs in communities and hubs • Clear route "idea – business plan – launch" • Development of a system of preparation for entrepreneurial activity for vulnerable groups through a network of hubs and educational platforms • Training of veterans in legal and financial aspects of business as a mandatory minimum • Preferential conditions for veterans in marketplaces and sales platforms: reduced commissions, access to consultations

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Veteran Venture Program

An ecosystem of support for veterans in IT, which includes stages of training, mentoring, incubation, and investment, aimed at developing veteran tech-business operating in international and local markets.

Community "Veteran Hub"

Creation of a network of partner spaces in communities where veterans receive services of requalification and support in opening their own business in a psychologically comfortable environment. Services are provided by qualified specialists in law, psychology, and social work. Consultants analyze individual needs of veterans and work comprehensively – involving those specialists who will provide the necessary support.

Network of Hubs and Educational Platforms (Skills4Recovery)

Project Skills4Recovery "From Training to Work." It offers new opportunities for rapid retraining and upskilling for veterans, people with special needs, women, and other groups in key sectors important for recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine. Training is adapted to employer needs and includes both classroom sessions and practice directly at partner enterprises.

Participants who complete the professional course will be employed at the enterprise where they underwent practice, with a guarantee of work for at least six months.

Agroholding "Kernel," Project "VARTO: Business with Character"

Agroholding "Kernel" cooperates with veterans who are ready to create their own business in agro-industry, thereby expanding its partnership environment. The key principle of success – when training is conducted by veterans themselves, since they better understand the specifics of adaptation. Companies appoint veteran-managers, which creates a psychologically comfortable environment on the principle "peer-to-peer" and increases trust among veteran employees.

The company operates a special program covering four areas: Psychological Assistance, Physical Rehabilitation, Financial Support, Legal Assistance, and also introduced a separate support scenario for team leaders who have veterans in their teams. In addition to working with veterans in the team, powerful external projects and partnership initiatives of support for veterans and other vulnerable groups are implemented.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3. ENSURING SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND REMOVAL OF BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT OF THE POPULATION

3.1 Crisis of mental adaptation of self-employment after relocation and combat experience

- Introduction of psychologically sensitive routes of self-employment combining mentoring and social support
- Formation of differentiated models of LAG (Local Action Groups) for support of self-employment of vulnerable groups
- Support of veterans in entrepreneurship through art therapy and creative practices as instruments of overcoming barriers (case of marketplace Create4Me)
- Promotion of successful cases of veteran entrepreneurs as motivational instrument and reduction of psychological barrier "I cannot"

SUCCESSFUL CASES

"VARTO" program

Implementation by the Ukrainian Veterans Fund (UVF) of measures for introduction of projects aimed at supporting entrepreneurial activity of veterans. The competition is implemented in partnership with the charitable organization "Charitable Fund 'Together with Kernel.'" This is not just provision of grants, but comprehensive support. The program combines financing (up to 3 million UAH) with mandatory mentoring and legal support. UVF introduces hotlines of support and self-help groups where veteran entrepreneurs share experience "peer-to-peer," which reduces anxiety when launching business. Hotline – Veterans Fund (Together with the Veteran).

Public Support Centers: "House of the Warrior"

Municipal Enterprise "House of the Warrior" – informational and social support, individual consultations of psychologist, lawyer, group events – trainings, seminars, meetings (rehabilitation-entertainment, psychological, rehabilitation, creative, self-help groups, informational, etc.). Network of hubs in Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Ivano-Frankivsk. Provision of services on the principle "peer-to-peer." Legal support here is not general, it focuses on issues specific to vulnerable groups.

Coffee Shop "5.45"

Two veterans – Serhii Kucheriavyi and Serhii Shendryk – met on the second day of the full-scale invasion, joining the Territorial Defense together. After service, they invested their own funds and opened the coffee shop "5.45" (name – caliber of cartridge, symbol of service). "This coffee shop brought me back to life," says one of the founders. The case demonstrates psychological effect: own business as perspective and as rehabilitation simultaneously – the person is no longer "a veteran in search," but an entrepreneur with a concrete business and daily rhythm.

Coffee shop "Vrazhaie"

Veteran Serhii Petchenko, who lost both arms during combat, opens a coffee shop in the center of Lviv. The name "Vrazhaie" – double meaning: the enemy strikes, and opportunities amaze. The case became symbolic: a person without arms establishes own business in hospitality sector. The enterprise destroys the stereotype "a person with severe disability cannot be an entrepreneur" and simultaneously creates jobs in service sector – traditionally accessible for people with different characteristics.

3.2 Mismatch of employment formats with real needs

- Scaling flexible forms of employment (remote work, job sharing) and development of social entrepreneurship
- Benefits for social enterprises employing >50% persons from vulnerable groups
- Stimulation of communities to create inclusive coworkings

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Kyivstar

"BezVahan" program – an open application of the company for hiring persons with disabilities and specialists aged 55+. Among these groups, women are significantly more represented: they more often have disability due to illness or injury of family members, and also constitute majority among middle-aged and older persons who lost jobs due to displacement. Kyivstar adapts working conditions – flexible schedule, remote format, adapted equipment.

«Good Bread from Good People»

Bakery where people with mental disabilities work. This is a classical model of social enterprise, where more than 50% of staff are vulnerable groups.

In application of the law norm on exemption from VAT for enterprises founded by NGOs of persons with disabilities (provided employment quota is met), as well as in development of programs "Veteran. Work," promising is scaling of experience in Veteran social enterprises, granting them benefits for rent of municipal property in communities (rent for 1 UAH), if they employ >50% of comrades or family members of the deceased.

3.3 Absence of system of inclusive support for persons with disabilities for entry into labor market and entrepreneurship	• Creation of a network of supported living centers and inclusive day centers (social support + training + psychological assistance) • Team approach to support: specialist + parents + teacher + social worker as a single system • State financing of training of specialists in inclusive work and caregivers • Partnership of communities, churches, charitable funds, and employers for combined support
3.4 Deficit of care services as systemic barrier to employment (particularly women, parents of children with disabilities)	• Development of local care services: day centers, nanny services, supported living • Development and certification of the profession of caregiver as independent direction of employment • Flexible forms of employment for parents; compensation for care services through grant or state programs

SUCCESSFUL CASES

NGO "TMZhK 'Revival of the Nation'"

Within the program of economic support and training of women-IDPs, the organization, with financial support of donors, provides babysitter assistance and organizes parallel activities for children (including art therapy). This allowed involvement of women who could not attend training due to lack of childcare. They received opportunity to fully undergo training, and some of them – successfully find employment. The practice proved so effective that the organization continues to provide such services even on volunteer basis. The case demonstrates that availability of care services is a key precondition of economic activity of women from vulnerable groups.

Project "Reboot"

In the project "Reboot," the Ukrainian Red Cross Society implemented a comprehensive approach to employment of vulnerable groups. Each participant receives individual support: works with psychologist and career advisor, undergoes vocational training (beauty sphere, sewing, drone operators), and can also receive a microgrant up to 120,000 UAH. For mothers of children with disabilities, additional compensation of expenses for nanny and transport is provided (subject to formalization of service). In the first quarter of project implementation, already 26 participants were employed. The case illustrates high effectiveness of integrated approaches combining skills development, psychosocial support, and financial instruments.

NGO "Eco-Inclusivity"

In Ternopil, a space of emotional relief and community development was organized (training in providing first aid and psychosocial support, participation in workshops and communication with specialists – how to cope with stress, daily difficulties, and challenges of war).

Target audience of the space – internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, and also elderly people. However, all residents of the city and community can join it and discover something new..

STRATEGIC GOAL 4. STIMULATION OF FORMAL EMPLOYMENT AND ENSURING DECENT REMUNERATION

4.1 Market isolation of micro-producers	• Development of aggregated marketplaces and platforms for product sales (case "Tse Kraft," Create4Me) • Training in marketing, packaging, and market entry • Organization of regular fairs of veterans and IDPs in communities (experience of Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk) • Creation of joint brands for community micro-producers

SUCCESSFUL CASES

"Tse Kraft" platform

The mission of the Platform is support of micro and small entrepreneurship working and creating in Ukraine, with emphasis on support of local producers and artisans who revive and modernize the historical and cultural heritage of Ukraine. In 2021 – 51 brands, by the end of 2024 – 150 brands, in the assortment – 4,700 product items, 16% of suppliers – social enterprises.

"Tse Kraft" is a social enterprise founded in 2020 by three enthusiasts from Nova Kakhovka, who since 2022 were forced to relocate from the occupied territory to the city of Uman. The platform operates as a revolving fund – 19 grants were provided in the amount of 415,500 UAH.

Create4Me

A marketplace of handmade goods Create4Me was created with grant funds of the Ukrainian Veterans Fund (program "Varto 11.0"). The platform unites artisans of handmade goods with special support for veterans – provides preferential conditions, assists with legal and accounting issues, consults on grant programs, ensures first sales. The project has been operating since October (9 months), has a social component – helps veterans overcome fear of starting their own business and try themselves in the niche of handmade goods.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5. STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE LABOR MARKET

5.1 Institutional complexity and bureaucratic pressure on sole proprietors (FOP)	• Service support and de-bureaucratization of FOP • Introduction of "Unified Support Package for FOP" (instructions, templates, consultations), adapted to the needs of veterans, IDPs, and persons with disabilities • Development of business consulting infrastructure directly in communities: free legal and accounting consultations at the start
5.2 Crisis of partnership in the community ecosystem	• Creation of a regional cooperation platform "Community – Employment Service – Business – NGO" • Regular publication of "Community Needs Maps" (real niches for business) • Training of project managers for small communities as a systemic approach • Integration of relocated business into regional value chains

SUCCESSFUL CASES

Regional Digital Platform "Oplitch"

The platform was created with support of the regional employment partnership "Oplitch" within the project of the International Labour Organization "Inclusive Labor Market for Job Creation in Ukraine," financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and the Government of Germany with support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The Lviv Regional Employment Partnership "Oplitch" was created to facilitate addressing local needs in the sphere of employment, support and development of entrepreneurship, improvement of professional competences and qualifications of local labor resources, facilitation of employment of target groups of the population.

The digital platform provides business wishing to relocate, already relocated business, as well as internally displaced persons, with accessible information about support programs, facilities for business placement in Lviv region, mentoring support, cooperation with local entrepreneurs, legal/psychological support, labor market vacancies, retraining of workers, housing search for employees and IDPs.

NGO "Agency for regional development of Tavriia association of territorial communities"

Training of specialists able to "package" ideas of vulnerable groups into grant applications.

The NGO "Agency for Regional Development of Tavriia Association of Territorial Communities" has been implementing the project "School of Change-Makers 2025" for the third year. This is a long-term project of territorial development, within which a component of training project managers of local and regional development is implemented.

The NGO, in partnership with partners in Moldova, promotes in Ukraine initiatives of the LEADER program (fr. Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale – Link between Actions for Rural Economic Development). In particular, creation of so-called Local Action Groups (LAG) is envisaged, including representatives of communities, business, NGOs (veterans and representatives of vulnerable groups of the population), and authorities for joint management of territorial development.

Lviv logistics center "PORT"

Relocated companies ("Mobizhuk," etc.) and enterprises changing supply chains due to military actions – the Lviv Regional Military Administration maximally facilitates enterprises in their placement in the region, local chambers of commerce and industry create a register of relocated enterprises and introduce them to local producers.

5.3 Limited financial resource and "one-year trap"

- Implementation of post-grant support programs in the format of business incubators
- Expansion of financial instruments (combination of microgrants, preferential loans, and revolving funds)
- Creation of transparent system of communication about grants with support in application and reporting
- Sustainable mechanism of co-financing state–communities–international donors–charitable funds for support of inclusive centers and social entrepreneurship

SUCCESSFUL CASES

FinStream

Joint project of NGO "Association of Entrepreneurs-Veterans of ATO" and financial company "K2000," operating under the brand FinStream – provision of war veterans and their family members with professional financial and business support, assisting them in economic recovery and development of own business, financing of national veteran business in wartime conditions, through placement of securities (corporate securities of LLC "K2000" with targeted use and yield of 6% per annum). All funds raised through sale of securities are directed to support and development of Ukrainian veteran business.

Veterano Group (network of veteran enterprises: Kyiv, Dnipro, Lviv, Vinnytsia, etc. – financing FinStream)

Leonid Ostaltsev returned from ATO in 2015 with $50 in his pocket and opened the first pizzeria Veterano Pizza in Kyiv – having experience as pizzaiolo and understanding that veterans are refused employment. The model is simple: the owner of each franchise outlet can only be a veteran, hired employees – anyone. Today the group unites Veterano Pizza, Veterano Coffee, Veterano Brownie, Veterano Bar, Veterano Guard. Total number of employees in all projects – 130, of which ~50 are veterans. Part of profit is transferred to children of fallen soldiers. In establishments, the system of "suspended pizza" operates: visitors pay for orders later delivered to wounded in hospitals. The franchise is available for a symbolic fee and is a direct route "demobilization → own business → new jobs for comrades."

5.4 Risks of "romanticization" and psychological barriers of veteran business

- Deployment of a network of regional mentoring programs with support during the first 3–6 months
- Creation of networks of veteran entrepreneurs
- Development of startup ecosystem on the example of case "Teple Misto" (Ivano-Frankivsk)
- Principle "veteran teaches veteran": involvement of veteran entrepreneurs in training and mentoring (experience of agroholding Kernel and platform Create4Me)

SUCCESSFUL CASES
"Teple Mistse" (Ivano-Frankivsk) The pro-veteran direction in "Teple Misto" supports veterans, female veterans, and their families through psychoeducational trainings, legal, financial, communication, and fundraising consultations. With the help of the mentoring program, the team develops veteran and pro-veteran initiatives. The success of the case "Teple Misto" lies in trust. For veterans and IDPs, the mentor must be "one of their own" or someone who understands their context. Therefore, the network of mentors must necessarily include people with similar life experience, who have gone the path from service/relocation to own business. This is a benchmark case for development of startup ecosystems in communities, which can be adapted for veterans and IDPs.
Urban Space 100 Creation of a public restaurant (100 founders equally financed the opening of the restaurant), where 80% of profit goes to social projects of the community. This allows the community to independently finance experts (accountants, lawyers) for new entrepreneurs from among vulnerable groups. Management of the establishment is carried out by the company "23 Restaurants."

5.5 Structural barriers to entrepreneurship due to absence of production infrastructure (for relocated business)	• Development of infrastructure for business relocation: prepared production sites, improvement of logistics, access to communications • Alignment of wage levels with cost of living; mechanisms of rent compensation for IDPs • Integration of relocated business into regional value chains

SUCCESSFUL CASES
Relocation of LLC Advertising and Production Company "Alexia" to Hoshcha Community Many relocation projects have been implemented in the community. LLC Advertising and Production Company "Alexia" (Kharkiv) was relocated in March 2022. As a result of rapid and optimal solutions for launching and scaling sewing production of corporate clothing and accessories (premises provided and workshops equipped), preservation and creation of new jobs, the enterprise in short terms restored and established cooperation and partnerships, including in export markets (France, Italy, etc.).
Project "Free People Employment Center" (FPEC) This non-governmental organization has built one of the strongest systems of case management for internally displaced persons, veterans, and local residents of frontline and adjacent zones. Combination of career coaching with therapeutic groups. Program "BizClub" for IDPs and Veterans. It includes "crash-tests" of business ideas, where mentor-entrepreneurs provide feedback in a soft, supportive form, taking into account the traumatic experience of participants. Creation of a "Circle of Trust," where participants become clients and partners of one another, forming a new social network in the city of relocation.

Among the successful Ukrainian cases presented above, it is important to highlight examples of enterprises and other organizations whose systemic approaches ensure overcoming most of the typical barriers along the path of activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labor market.

Their experience is extremely valuable and demonstrates, first, promising approaches and solutions for achieving the strategic goals envisaged by government programs of employment activation and activation of vulnerable groups in the labor market, and second, the vectors and effective formats of integration of stakeholder efforts for the implementation of state strategies and initiatives.

Based on the results of research and social dialogue, the following components/factors of successful Ukrainian cases in the activation of employment of vulnerable groups of the population can be distinguished, which are systematized and schematically presented in the figure.

Fig. 12. Factors of successful Ukrainian cases in the activation of employment of vulnerable groups of the population

It is important that successful experience of systemic and effective support for the activation of employment of vulnerable groups in Ukraine is possessed by organizations from all sectors of economic and social activity. Their examples are presented below.

Business organizations

Interpipe

The entire complex of support is implemented by the corporate Patronage Service. Under its care – more than 1,300 people. More than one thousand employees of the company serve in the Defense Forces.

The company does not practice a single "new recruit package" or "wounded package" or any other unified package. Assistance is variable, depending on the current needs of a particular person and takes into account many factors: military specialty, provision of the unit, health condition of the fighter, length of service, even family status. Each employee from the first day of mobilization has a personal coordinator who is in contact with the fighter and his family and understands his needs well. This person is called by fighters and their relatives when drones or vehicles are lacking, when ceramic plates are needed, in case of injury, to explain the law, and sometimes simply to remain silent after a hard day.

Coordinators of the Patronage Service provide continuous support: from the stage of mobilization of employees and their service to the return of demobilized personnel, ensuring "civilian" medical, legal, psychological, and emotional support, selecting new jobs if necessary. Veterans working in the Patronage Service are deeply involved in interaction with the military and understand their needs well.

Understanding and orientation to real/ significant needs/ requests of the target audience

Interpipe	
The support ecosystem is constantly developing. In the first days of the full-scale invasion, the Patronage Service had a single task – urgent procurement of equipment for mobilized personnel. At the second stage, response to injuries and illnesses became relevant. After several months of active combat, it became clear that mobilized employees needed medical support – due to injuries and illnesses. Such assistance was organized on the basis of the corporate polyclinic. They provide medicines, consultations, medical equipment, adaptive clothing, if necessary transport between hospitals, communicate with doctors, help families organize care for military personnel in hospitals. Another important direction became legal support: processing of payments, explanation of laws, preparation of documents. In recent years, the veteran community in the company has been actively developing, mentoring groups are regularly held. To create conditions for comfortable communication, the employer organizes regular events where people interact and engage in interesting activities: pottery, fishing, horse riding, etc. Psychologists are necessarily involved in developing the program of such events. A psychological rehabilitation program for families of the deceased has also been launched.	*Motivation and leadership in developing effective solutions, not in formal provision of support*
At the corporate polyclinic or in other medical institutions, each veteran employed in the company after demobilization undergoes an in-depth medical commission, additional comprehensive examination as indicated, treatment and rehabilitation, communication with a psychologist as needed. If necessary, veterans undergo rehabilitation courses at Recovery – the national network of rehabilitation centers for wounded military personnel.	*Effective integration of efforts, use of community potential, partnerships*
–	*Use of all available resources and funding opportunities for stable functioning*
The corporate Patronage Service employs staff specialists, and the work is organized like any other business process in a large company. If necessary, other structural units of the company with strong expertise in a particular issue are involved – logistics, procurement, lawyers, security service, doctors, production units, and transport department. Each veteran receives a personal mentor-colleague in the first weeks after return. Mandatory medical examinations for veterans every 6 months. Staff psychologist for support of those who have returned. The Patronage Service monitors the condition of each ward from the day of mobilization.	*Developed effective practices, skills, and routines*
The company operates a corporate program of veteran reintegration: comprehensive medical support and physical rehabilitation, psycho-emotional support, job selection depending on current physiological condition, and legal support. Position and salary level are fixed from the day of mobilization. Upon return, the veteran does not "slide down" the career ladder, even if the unit has been restructured. The Patronage Service has become a full-fledged structural unit of the company, involving specialists with deep expertise and experience of service in the Defense Forces. Support does not break between "service" and "civilian" – there is no gap, no "trap."	*Long-term orientation, comprehensive approach and solutions*

Interpipe	
The backbone of the Patronage Service consists of communication specialists. They became personal curators for mobilized personnel, maintaining constant contact – both with the military and their relatives, supporting with word and deed, consulting, coordinating the work of procurement specialists, logisticians, lawyers, doctors, psychologists. Most importantly, they constantly collected feedback from the military, closely monitored changes in the nature of the war, army provision, moods, and continuously improved and updated the support complex for their wards. The company has created mentoring groups where more experienced veterans share their experience of returning to work with those who have just been demobilized (peer-to-peer format within the corporation), as well as a general veteran chat where coordinators promptly inform veterans about new opportunities, legislative changes, housing queues, projects, benefits, and specifics of their application in different cities, etc.	*Effective communications*

Vocational education institutions

State vocational training institution "Odesa Center of Vocational and Technical Education" (SVTI OC VTE)	
SVTI OC VTE provides inclusive vocational education to children with special educational needs (with hearing impairments), internally displaced persons (IDPs), students from among children of combatants; carries out retraining of unemployed population with the aim of increasing their competitiveness in the regional labor market. Organization of interactive inclusive distance learning provides students with the opportunity to choose formats that best meet their educational needs.	*Understanding and orientation to real/ significant needs/ requests of the target audience*
The percentage of premises accessible to students with special educational needs is 70%. Therefore, the work of the Center is aimed at ensuring social protection of children with disabilities, their professional rehabilitation, employment, and adaptation to social life. Correctional and developmental work is systematically carried out by a practical psychologist for all students of the Center, including those with special educational needs.	*Motivation and leadership in developing effective solutions, not in formal provision of support*
Creation and development of training and practice centers with material and financial support of partners: • Training and practice construction centers for studying modern construction technologies ("Henkel Bautechnik Ukraine" ("Ceresit"), "Knauf," "Triora," "Fomalgaut-Polimin," "Sniezka"). • Interregional training and practice center for training installers of sanitary-technical systems and equipment (Swiss Cooperation Office in Ukraine and Representation of Swiss company "Geberit International Sales AG"). • Training and practice center of vocational training "Agrotechnologies" and "Tractor Driver-Machinist of Agricultural Production" (modern equipment purchased with funds of the regional budget). • Training and practice centers of vocational training "Information Technologies (IT)" ("Auchan Ukraine. Hypermarket"), "Electrician for Repair and Maintenance of Electrical Equipment," "Operator of Refrigeration Installations." • Training and practice center of welding ("Fronius"). • Training and practice center "Culinary Hub" (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine).	*Effective integration of efforts, use of community potential, partnerships*

State vocational training institution "Odesa Center of Vocational and Technical Education" (SVTI OC VTE)	
Participation in international projects "Vocational Education for the Ukrainian Construction Sector" (Germany), "Public-Private Partnership for Improvement of Sanitary-Technical Education in Ukraine" (Switzerland), which provide opportunities to introduce modern innovative production methods into the educational space. Participation in the Danube Project (inclusive education): AI-learning throughout life in the Danube region – innovative solutions in inclusive education for socially vulnerable and low-income students, improvement of human capital and combating "brain drain." Partnership proposal from the partner search platform. Participation in the ERASMUS+ project (Norway): Refugees in Ukraine: micro-paths to employment and integration – (training of IDPs through short-term programs).	*Use of all available resources and funding opportunities for stable functioning*
Achieved results of experimental work: • developed technologies for ensuring accessibility of educational space for students with hearing impairments; • developed structural-content model of innovative technologies and methods of education of students with hearing impairments in conditions of vocational (vocational-technical) education institution; • developed adapted programs taking into account the study of the problem of education of students with hearing impairments; • developed methodological recommendations on application of methods of distance-modular inclusive training, which allows to significantly improve the quality of training of future workers; • developed and implemented technologies for ensuring accessibility of educational space of vocational (vocational-technical) education institution for students with hearing impairments, which contribute to improving the quality of vocational education of students with hearing impairments, their comprehensive development, ensure their competitiveness in the modern labor market and adaptation in modern conditions.	*Developed effective practices, skills, and routines*
Ensuring equal opportunities in mastering a profession traditionally considered male in society: among first-year students in the specialty "installer of sanitary-technical systems and equipment," girls have enrolled. Issues of gender equality are included in the provisions of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, where in Article 420 (Chapter 21) it is stated that the agreement must ensure achievement in Ukraine of goals, among which, in particular, is ensuring gender equality for women and men in the sphere of employment and education. Girls enjoy it and are determined – to master the chosen profession and work and develop further in this direction. And for this there are all opportunities, since thanks to social partnership between the Odesa Center of Vocational Education and the leading company Geberit, students have the opportunity to master the basics of the profession in the training and practice center on modern equipment using innovative technologies.	*Long-term orientation, comprehensive approach and solutions*
–	*Effective communications*

State enterprises

State enterprise "Forests of Ukraine"	
In "Forests of Ukraine" there is one of the largest and most active veteran communities, which weekly receives dozens of requests from 50 of its representatives in brigades. It is precisely the veterans of the enterprise who take care of providing assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Hundreds of drones, thermal imagers, generators, charging stations, car components, drone detectors, and electronic warfare equipment have been purchased and delivered.	*Understanding and orientation to real/ significant needs/ requests of the target audience*
More than 90% of veterans return to work at the enterprise. Each retains their position; if a unit is liquidated – another position is offered. If a veteran has severe injuries and can no longer perform physical work, other vacancies are proposed. More than 19 demobilized employees return to work each month. At SE "Forests of Ukraine" 569 veterans are employed. The enterprise enhances support for training veterans if they wish to master a new specialty – from workers to forest masters, from masters to foresters, etc. SE "Forests of Ukraine" systematically works on implementing the barrier-free strategy initiated by Olena Zelenska.	*Motivation and leadership in developing effective solutions, not in formal provision of support*
The enterprise seeks to combine vacation for veterans with rehabilitation and sanatorium treatment. Opportunities for rehabilitation exist, many veterans simply do not know about them. SE "Forests of Ukraine" cooperates with specialized educational institutions regarding distance learning programs, offering employees who could not obtain education the opportunity to improve their career prospects. Training contributes to psychological rehabilitation, restores interest in life. The enterprise facilitates integration of efforts of the State Forest Agency, hunting ground users, and veterans for the development of veteran entrepreneurship – hunting can become a profitable business and also help successfully integrate into civilian life.	*Effective integration of efforts, use of community potential, partnerships*
The enterprise provides assistance of 8,000 UAH for purchase of firewood for heating, can finance obtaining education in specialized forestry institutions according to the norms of the collective agreement.	*Use of all available resources and funding opportunities for stable functioning*
SE "Forests of Ukraine" is one of the few enterprises whose collective agreement prescribes all social guarantees for demobilized employees, their families, families of the deceased and missing. Most soldiers return to civilian life after severe injuries or due to complications of chronic diseases acquired during service. Despite this, more than 90% of demobilized forest soldiers resume work. An important role in this is played by the effective social support program of SE "Forests of Ukraine," which helps to adapt after service, recover, and become a full-fledged part of the forestry community.	*Developed effective practices, skills, and routines*
During 2025, 140 forest soldiers were demobilized – and practically all were employed at SE "Forests of Ukraine." Immediately upon return to work, veterans are paid material assistance in the amount of the minimum wage. Demobilized employees receive a 20% supplement to their salary. Once a year the enterprise provides assistance up to 15,000 UAH, has introduced additional paid vacations for veterans. Treatment and health improvement – at the expense of SE "Forests of Ukraine" (up to 50,000 UAH for medicines and up to 100,000 UAH for surgical treatment (with supporting documents)). A systemic solution of such scale has been implemented by a state enterprise in Ukraine for the first time.	*Long-term orientation, comprehensive approach and solutions*

State enterprise "Forests of Ukraine"

Special attention is paid to families, children from families of the deceased and missing. Until the age of 18 they are paid monthly assistance in the amount of the minimum wage, and children with disabilities of groups I–II – until the age of 30. The enterprise compensates families of veterans for firewood for heating. At SE "Forests of Ukraine" efforts are made to create special workplaces for employees after severe injuries (difficulty walking, rapid fatigue, etc.), to find formats of application for people with physical limitations. Economic feasibility of such workplaces is not a priority – the main thing is that the person feels needed, useful, involved.	
At the enterprise a large and active Union of Forest Soldiers of Ukraine has been created; within the community professional communications and SMM are established, nationwide campaigns are constantly held with wide coverage of initiatives in the media ("Forests of Memory," etc.). The enterprise management holds regular meetings with the opportunity to personally communicate with each veteran, feedback is organized through questionnaires, hotlines, representation via the veteran union or trade union. The union has the opportunity to participate in personnel selection for managerial positions, the veteran community has instruments for public control over the enterprise's activities.	*Effective communications*

Non-governmental organizations

NGO "Epiprosvita"

NGO "Epiprosvita" supports 10,000 people with epilepsy, is part of the largest patient network "Patients of Ukraine," develops inclusiveness, and provides educational and humanitarian opportunities for people with disabilities. Each year the team provides about 1,300 hours of individual consultations, helps with disability registration, rehabilitation, free medicines and technical aids, and defends rights in cases of refusals or delays in decisions. This work is carried out by specialists who themselves are mothers of children with disabilities and know the system from personal experience, which makes the support maximally practical and effective. The organization implemented the program "Mom, Work!," which helped more than 450 mothers of children with disabilities regain faith in themselves and the possibility of earning. The program combined career training, psychological support, and real interaction with employers. More than 100 participants completed professional retraining and received certificates, and 18% of mothers already received job offers during or after participation. More than half began actively seeking employment, and over 90% noted increased confidence, a new vision of their career and future. Employers (LUN, TechMagic, Pfizer, and others) joined the program, creating a direct bridge between a vulnerable group of women and the labor market. The project implements a differentiated approach: mothers of children with disabilities, widows, women with ambiguous loss – separate support groups. Thanks to this, 80% of course graduates find employment.	*Understanding and orientation to real/ significant needs/ requests of the target audience*
NGO "Epiprosvita" participates in a coalition on draft laws regarding employment of people with disabilities, on amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On State Social Assistance to Persons with Disabilities from Childhood and to Children with Disabilities" concerning formation of comprehensive state support and strengthening of social guarantees for families with persons with disabilities, among others. In 2026 NGO "Epiprosvita" will publish the first nationwide study of employment opportunities for mothers of children with disabilities.	*Motivation and leadership in developing effective solutions, not in formal provision of support*

NGO "Epiprosvita"	
NGO "Epiprosvita" develops cooperation with 80 partner organizations (Red Cross Society, Nova Ukraine, GS League of the Strong, National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine, etc.), is involved in the activist network Fight For Right, which develops inclusiveness, provides educational and humanitarian opportunities for people with disabilities. The organization is a member of the Ministry of Health working group on medical procurement for neurological diseases, and closely cooperates with the largest association of neurologists and psychiatrists – the Ukrainian Anti-Epileptic League – developing joint projects to provide best treatment practices to both doctors and patients.	*Effective integration of efforts, use of community potential, partnerships*
NGO "Epiprosvita" participates in international projects funded by the governments of Norway and Sweden, among others. In 2025 the organization received 30 million UAH of additional budget for central procurement of medicines, as well as 0.47 million UAH for direct assistance through the Dobro.ua platform, organizing 12 targeted charitable campaigns, and 0.44 million UAH to the official bank account.	*Use of all available resources and funding opportunities for stable functioning*
NGO "Epiprosvita" provides daily consultations to people with disabilities and their families throughout Ukraine, offering guidance in the complex system of rights, payments, and services. The organization has created more than 100 verified materials for parents on its own website, which have become a support point for thousands of families.	*Developed effective practices, skills, and routines*
The organization provides comprehensive support for self-realization and improvement of quality of life for people with epilepsy and comorbid disorders, as well as for their family members. NGO "Epiprosvita" effectively and professionally develops efficient communications and networks of partnership interaction in public education, combating stigmatization, expanding opportunities and accessibility of treatment, inclusive education, etc.	*Long-term orientation, comprehensive approach and solutions*
NGO "Epiprosvita" clearly demonstrates how socially-oriented and non-profit organizations can use modern communication tools (from community management and social networks to lifestyle media), professionally built with strong and convenient multichannel feedback and good visualization, in developing a culture of inclusion and humanism in society. The emphasis is on debunking myths, telling success stories (human-to-human), supporting families, and developing community – to unite society around values of support and inclusion. In 2025 the organization participated in more than 25 events. The main communication channel is social networks. During the year NGO "Epiprosvita" publications received more than 600,000 views and over 5,400 interactions. Educational materials on YouTube received 636,000 views.	*Effective communications*

Integration of efforts of all stakeholder groups in scaling up existing successful Ukrainian cases, as well as in improving, based on their examples, the practices and initiatives of domestic organizations and the overall system of employment activation for vulnerable groups, will contribute to the effective resolution of critical problems and imbalances of the current period and to the formation of prerequisites for the rapid post-war recovery of Ukraine.

4 CROSS-SECTORAL INTERACTIONS IN SCALING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

The effectiveness of the system of support for activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labor market directly depends on the performance of each process and the interactions of all its participants. At all stages of achieving the goals of Government strategies and programs, integration of efforts of all stakeholder groups is envisaged (Table 1)[35].

Table 1. Stages, zones of responsibility, and indicators of achieving the goals of employment activation strategies in Ukraine[36]

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Ministry of Economy	3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.2, 9, 10.1, 10.6, 11, 12, 14.1, 15.6, 16.1, 17.1, 19, 20.1, 20.2, 21.1, 21.4, 22.5, 24.5, 26.1, 27.1, 27.2, 28.2, 28.3, 29.1, 29.3	3.2, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 7.4, 9, 10.1, 10.6, 11, 12, 13, 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.7, 16.1, 17.1, 17.2, 22.1, 22.2, 22.4, 22.6, 23, 24.1, 24.2, 24.4, 25.1, 28.1, 29.2, 29.3	1.1, 1.2, 2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.2, 5.4, 8.1, 9, 10.1, 10.6, 11, 12, 14.1, 16.1, 17.1, 18, 22.3, 24.3, 24.6, 24.7, 25.2, 26.2	3.2, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.2, 5.4, 9, 10.1, 10.6, 11, 12, 14.1, 16.1, 17.1	3.2, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.2, 5.4, 9, 10.1, 10.6, 11, 12, 14.1, 16.1, 17.1
SES	3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 5.3, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.6, 11, 12, 14.1, 16.1, 17.1, 21.1, 21.2, 21.4, 24.5, 27.2	3.2, 4.1, 4.3, 5.2, 5.4, 10.1, 10.2, 10.6, 11, 12, 13, 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 16.1, 17.1, 17.2, 21.3, 23, 24.4, 25.1	1.1, 2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.3, 5.2, 5.4, 8.1, 10.1, 10.2, 10.6, 10.9, 11, 12, 14.1, 16.1, 17.1, 25.2	3.2, 4.1, 4.3, 5.2, 5.4, 10.1, 10.2, 10.6, 11, 12, 14.1, 16.1, 17.1	3.2, 4.1, 4.3, 5.2, 5.4, 10.1, 10.2, 10.6, 11, 12, 14.1, 16.1, 17.1
MES	6.1, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2, 9, 10.1, 10.4, 10.6, 10.7, 10.10, 12, 22.5, 26.1, 26.3	7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 9, 10.1, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, 10.10, 12, 15.3, 15.4, 26.3	1.1, 2, 8.1, 9, 10.1, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 10.9, 10.10, 12, 24.6, 26.2, 26.3	9, 10.1, 10.6, 10.7, 10.10, 12, 26.3	9, 10.1, 10.6, 10.7, 10.10, 12, 26.3
Ministry of Social Policy	4.1, 4.2, 5.3, 5.4, 10.6, 12, 14.1, 14.4, 15.2, 15.6, 16.1, 20.2, 21.4	4.1, 4.2, 5.4, 10.6, 12, 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.7, 16.1, 17.2, 22.1, 29.5	2, 4.1, 4.2, 5.4, 10.6, 12, 14.1, 16.1, 24.3, 24.7, 29.5	4.1, 4.2, 5.4, 10.6, 12, 14.1, 16.1	4.1, 4.2, 5.4, 10.6, 12, 14.1, 16.1
Ministry of Veterans Affairs	5.4, 5.7, 10.6, 16.1, 16.2, 19, 21.4	5.4, 10.6, 14.2, 16.1	5.4, 10.6, 16.1	5.4, 10.6, 16.1	5.4, 10.6, 16.1
NAC	6.1, 16.2, 26.1, 26.3	26.3	1.1, 24.6, 26.3	26.3	26.3
State Labor Service	19, 20.2, 22.5, 29.1, 29.3	14.2, 22.1, 22.2, 22.4, 22.6, 24.4, 29.3	1.1, 22.3		
Ministry of Finance	5.6, 5.7, 15.6, 20.1, 29.1	15.7, 22.1	8.1, 18		
Civil Society Institutions	7.2, 10.10, 20.2	7.2, 10.10, 14.2, 28.1	10.5, 10.9, 10.10, 18, 22.3	10.10	10.10
Employers and Business Communities	5.4, 7.2, 14.4, 16.1, 16.2	5.4, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 14.2, 16.1, 22.2, 22.4, 28.1	5.4, 10.5, 10.9, 16.1, 18, 22.3	5.4, 16.1	5.4, 16.1
Ministry of Youth and Sports	5.7, 12	12, 15.3, 15.4	12	12	12
Ministry of Digital Transformation, NACS, NBU, Ministry of Justice, MFA, SMS, MIA, National Police	3.2, 4.2, 5.6, 5.7, 29.1	3.2, 4.2, 15.1, 22.1, 22.6, 23, 24.1, 24.2	1.1, 3.2, 4.2, 10.9, 24.3, 24.7	3.2, 4.2	3.2, 4.2

Strategic Goal 1. Ensuring timely satisfaction of employers' demand for labor and digital transformation of the labor market
Strategic Goal 2. Aligning the outcomes of the education and vocational training system with the current and projected demand of employers
Strategic Goal 3. Ensuring socio-economic inclusion and removal of employment barriers for the population
Strategic Goal 4. Stimulating formal employment and ensuring decent remuneration
Strategic Goal 5. Strengthening the institutional capacity of the labor market
Strategic Goal 6. Harmonization of the employment and occupational safety system with the EU acquis for the purpose of Ukraine's integration into the European Union labor market

35 Employment strategy of the population of Ukraine until 2030. CMU. 2026.
36 Employment strategy of the population of Ukraine until 2030. CMU. 2026.

The results of stakeholder interaction mapping at the research stage of the project demonstrated the need to develop a separate roadmap for integrating the efforts of all stakeholders interested in activating employment of vulnerable groups for the successful implementation of joint programs and initiatives.

A clear action scheme potentially allows taking advantage of opportunities and partially compensating for the limitations characteristic of Ukrainian practices and organizational features of support systems for vulnerable groups.

With the onset of the full-scale war in Ukraine, the activity of all stakeholder groups in the direction of activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labor market has noticeably increased. Initiatives of civil society organizations in cooperation with state institutions, international donors, and other stakeholders are gaining increasing importance and scale.

A significant advantage of Ukraine, which finds full reflection in the sphere of support for employment activation of vulnerable groups and inclusion, is the high level of self-organization and horizontal interaction of civil society subsystems.

However, in the development of cross-sectoral initiatives involving civil society organizations, problematic issues include uneven accessibility and unpredictable stability of implementation, which significantly depend on financial, regulatory, and other constraints.

At the same time, the state system of support for vulnerable groups in Ukraine is one of the most extensive among countries in a state of active armed conflict. In terms of funding volume, number of instruments, and institutional diversity, it formally corresponds to the scale of the challenge. At the same time, the system has a fundamental structural drawback: it is built according to the logic of departmental competence.

The state system of support for vulnerable groups in Ukraine currently dominates and has strong potential, which is currently realized only partially due to structural fragmentation and lack of an effective mechanism of public-private partnership. Elimination of duplications and introduction of a coordination protocol between ministries would significantly increase the effectiveness of existing programs without increasing expenditures.

It should be emphasized that civil society organizations cannot significantly influence the priorities, direction, and nature of international assistance, nor the use of state budget funds. This becomes partially possible when they are involved as implementers in the realization of international or national programs and projects of assistance to vulnerable groups or a broader circle of war-affected population.

The creation of advisory bodies and limited representation of vulnerable groups, specialized NGOs, and employers (private sector) for real participation in decision-making (actual processing of requests and proposals) and implementation of changes is insufficient and does not ensure an effective governance architecture for activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labor market.

The build-up of uncoordinated stakeholder efforts creates additional problems regarding effective informing of vulnerable groups about current opportunities to participate in programs and initiatives supporting their activation and reintegration in the labor market. Vulnerable groups do not receive timely information about existing programs and initiatives, whose number and diversity are constantly growing, as well as about changes in current offers.

A separate problematic issue is duplication of functions and initiatives of various stakeholders, particularly state institutions, which leads to inefficient use of scarce budgetary funds, as well as parallel development of versions of national strategy and policies for activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labor market.

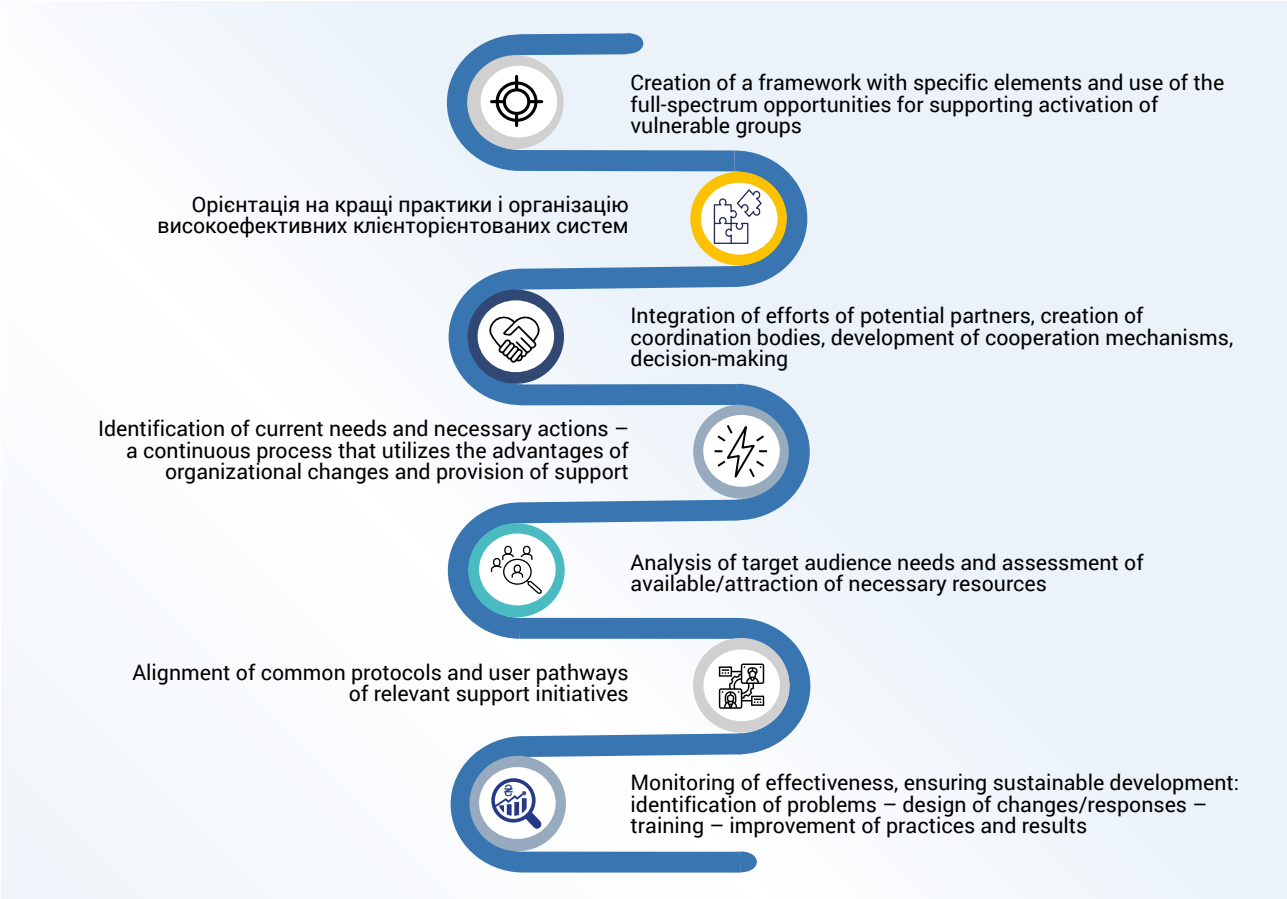
Given the scale and complexity of problems in ensuring normal functioning of mechanisms of assistance to vulnerable groups at the state and local levels, it is important to establish effective communication and coordination of efforts with all stakeholders.

Cooperation between the state, international organizations, business, and civil society has already proven its extraordinary effectiveness. Horizontal communication and network cooperation have always been the guarantee of Ukraine's democratic progress.

Consistent and competent development of stakeholder interactions, their involvement in government framework agreements and programs, including under international arrangements, will contribute to increasing the effectiveness of partnerships and institutional capacity for activation of vulnerable groups in the labor market, improving vocational training, career guidance, particularly for veterans, people with disabilities and the elderly, internally displaced persons and other social groups, as well as supporting inclusive employment in sectors related to Ukraine's economic recovery.

Below is proposed a sequence of steps in implementing joint initiatives for activation of employment of vulnerable groups for stakeholders, which will lead them from the initial point of aligning interests and defining goals, planning and organizing interactions to ensure the intended results – to their monitoring and evaluation (Fig. 13)

Fig. 13. Roadmap for integration of efforts



The scheme shows a practical algorithm with control elements for developing stakeholder initiatives to support activation of employment of vulnerable groups and inclusion. This approach can be adapted for organizations of any size and regardless of the stage of the process they may already be at.

It will be especially useful for organizations with limited experience in promoting employment of vulnerable groups. The roadmap will help better understand the opportunities and challenges of implementing such initiatives, as well as establish effective cooperation with partners.

Organizing effective cross-sectoral interactions and successful implementation of programs and initiatives to support vulnerable groups is a complex task. The scale of cooperation, interaction, and coordination required to achieve effective support for activation of employment of vulnerable groups covers a wide range of horizontal and vertical partnerships. At the same time, stakeholder engagement fundamentally differs from hierarchical directive management systems: interaction with stakeholders requires readiness for change and interested dialogue, alignment of interests of potential partners. Stakeholders participating in projects to support vulnerable groups are expected to fully understand the process, as well as effective planning of initiatives that take into account common goals, interests, positions, and roles of each stakeholder in cooperation.

Creating prerequisites and assisting vulnerable groups in activating their employment and reintegration into the labor market is not a one-time action or a linear process. Building support systems or introducing or improving new elements requires time, careful planning of changes and development of partner interactions, expansion of their circle, establishment of monitoring of effectiveness and feedback.

The presented process is iterative and cyclical; lessons learned will shape future planning and interactions. The non-linearity and iterativeness of the process, during which the organization learns and improves its ability to effectively ensure the success of initiatives, successfully interact with target audiences and partners to achieve goals, will simultaneously develop long-term relationships and trust instead of fragmentary and non-scalable activities.

The formation of new political and legal frameworks in the system of support for activation of employment of vulnerable groups creates both opportunities and challenges for stable functioning and improvement of subsystems of assistance to IDPs, veterans, persons with disabilities, and the elderly in employment, training, or self-employment. Focusing on priorities and goals, political and legal frameworks of government strategies and programs at national/regional levels, but relying on the vision and concept of localized cross-sectoral interactions, stakeholders interested in developing initiatives to support activation of employment of vulnerable groups must form working models of operation.

In this regard, the materials and recommendations of the roadmap may be relevant and useful to all stakeholder groups. Success stories and specific cases can serve as sources of inspiration but will require adjustment taking into account real situations and practices of cooperation in activation of employment of vulnerable groups.

At the request of project partners, "Roadmap for activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labor market" recommendations were tested in developing applied tools for integrating stakeholder efforts to activate employment, improve vocational training, career guidance of veterans, people with disabilities and the elderly, internally displaced persons and other social groups, as well as supporting inclusive employment in sectors related to Ukraine's economic recovery.

In accordance with tasks and performance indicators in the responsibility zone of the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Education and Science (7.3 and 7.4)[37], and with participation of partner representatives, interactive algorithm schemes and a set of documentary templates were developed for implementing practice-oriented training with mentoring (dual form of education based on vocational institutions and in partnership with employer enterprises). The results of developments, which were successfully tested within pilot projects, are presented in the Annexes.

37 Employment strategy of the population of Ukraine until 2030. CMU. 2026.

The proposed recommendations and step-by-step schemes of the "Roadmap for activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups in the labor market" implement a dynamic vision of modern support systems for IDPs, veterans, persons with disabilities and the elderly in employment, training, self-employment, as an open-to-updates guide to action, intended to facilitate achievement of the goals of strategies, programs, and initiatives of project partners.

The roadmap is based on a holistic approach to employment activation and inclusion, combining universal strategies and models of stakeholder interaction with targeted and specific support measures for representatives of vulnerable groups. Only with such dynamic and adapted integration of elements of initiatives and stakeholder efforts can inclusiveness, flexibility, and responsiveness of support be ensured for activation of employment, improvement of vocational training, career guidance of veterans, people with disabilities and the elderly, internally displaced persons and other social groups, as well as support for inclusive employment in sectors related to Ukraine's economic recovery.

CONCLUSIONS

The Roadmap acknowledges and demonstrates the complexity of the issues and the provision of effective implementation of inclusive employment policy under conditions of war. However, these problems also open unique opportunities for innovation and systemic change. Recognizing the multifaceted problems faced by internally displaced persons, veterans, persons with disabilities and the elderly, women and youth, stakeholders can move away from fragmented initiatives and structures of support for the employment of vulnerable groups towards a more integrated and client-oriented approach. This can contribute to rapid positive changes and increased effectiveness of the ecosystem of support for the economic activity of vulnerable groups, improvement of their vocational training, employment and self-employment, as well as the development of inclusion.

Based on research and joint developments of project stakeholders, the Roadmap proposes specific steps for the effective implementation of inclusive employment policy in Ukraine.

The Roadmap is based on a holistic approach to employment activation and inclusion, combining universal strategies and models of stakeholder interaction with targeted support measures for representatives of vulnerable groups. Only through such dynamic and adapted integration of elements of initiatives and efforts of stakeholders can inclusiveness, flexibility and responsiveness of support for employment activation, improvement of vocational training, career guidance of veterans, persons with disabilities and the elderly, IDPs and other social groups, as well as support for inclusive employment in sectors related to the recovery of Ukraine's economy, be ensured.

In the first section, the set of strategic guidelines of governmental programs for the activation of employment of vulnerable groups is structured according to three stages of implementation of the envisaged systemic changes. Analytical elaboration of prerequisites, problems and barriers in the implementation of governmental strategies in Ukraine made it possible to better assess the potential effectiveness of changes, as well as solutions in overcoming risks and limitations on their path. Thanks to this, the Roadmap is able to support strategic thinking, development and effective implementation of program initiatives of stakeholders based on factual data and analytical assessments.

Based on empirical and analytical data obtained within the research stage of the project, integration of information and viewpoints of stakeholders and experts, the second section defines key stages and the most significant problems (barriers) of individual scenarios of passing through the processes of employment activation by representatives of different vulnerable groups. Each of the components and gaps in the chain of sequence of interrelated steps reflects current directions of change for increasing the effectiveness of individual processes and the overall ecosystem of employment activation of vulnerable groups. Indeed, each subsequent step becomes significantly more difficult if the previous one has been passed with unsatisfactory results. Therefore, client-orientation becomes one of the key requirements of effectiveness in the development and implementation of modern strategies and programs of inclusive employment of the population, support for socio-economic activity of citizens affected by war.

The recommendations of the Roadmap form the basis for the improvement of systems of activation of inclusive employment, with the alignment of policy, practice and resources at different levels and for all stakeholders, so that each representative of vulnerable (war-affected) groups has the opportunity to successfully realize their potential in education, in the labor market, in self-employment.

In the third section, the recommendations of the Roadmap regarding overcoming barriers on the way to the implementation of strategic governmental programs of employment activation of vulnerable groups of the population are supported by examples demonstrating diverse and effective practices of organizations of all sectors of the economy.

Successful cases are presented that are promising for scaling, can inspire and create benchmarks for initiating or increasing the effectiveness of initiatives of a wide range of organizations in the direction of activation and reintegration of vulnerable groups into the labor market, as well as support for inclusive employment in sectors related to the recovery of Ukraine's economy.

Factors that create prerequisites for high effectiveness and long-term success of initiatives for the activation of vulnerable groups according to cases of organizations of different sectors and spheres of activity are identified and schematically systematized.

Stakeholders at all levels have been involved in active participation in the implementation of the recommendations and initiatives of the Roadmap, at least in accordance with the zones of responsibility and performance indicators established by the Government. This implies adaptation of strategic tasks to local conditions, ensuring constant dialogue among all stakeholders and continuous assessment of the impact of measures taken. By adhering to the recommendations and algorithms presented in the fourth section, participants of the domestic ecosystem of support for inclusive employment will be better prepared for the implementation of positive changes.

Thus, in accordance with the broad purpose of the development of the Roadmap, the results achieved will contribute to strengthening the capacity of Ukraine's ecosystem of social protection and employment support, increasing its resilience through enhancing its ability to absorb shocks, effectively scale, adapt to structural transformations, as well as support inclusive growth and social cohesion in Ukraine.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project team would like to express its sincere gratitude to the organisations and experts who joined the implementation of this vital social initiative and provided valuable input into the development of the Roadmap for activating and reintegrating vulnerable groups in labour market:

TO THE VETERANS:

Oleg Wenger, Andriy Shvets, Yevhen Volkov, Ruslan Kolishenko, Andriy Volyk, Eduard Makarov;

TO REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS, CIVIL AND CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS:

Anna Rogovchenko, Yulia Kyrylova, Olga Zavadska, Olga Derlytsa, Lyubov Voychenko, Daniil Bezruchko, Renat Abashev, Yulia Bashlakova, Natalia Vitka, Tatyana Gerasimenko, Tatyana Karelskaya, Hanna Kyrychenko, Elizaveta Mordan, Evgenia Morozova, Larisa Skrypchenko, Olena Vertosenko, Irina Khanikova, Svitlana Demko, Olga Veselovska, Anastasia Zarichna, Victoria Kulakova, Nia Nikel, Irina Orel, Victoria Kolokova, Irina Ugnivenko, Kateryna Chubar, Anna Klymovets, Hanna Koval, Nadiya Dalyaak, Natalia Melnykova, Anastasia Ozerova, Oksana Mospanyuk, Oleg Dzyoba, Olena Dudzenko, Sergey Guminilovich, Yulia Chesnokova, Yulia Yastrebova, Khrystyna Mykhaylyuk, Igor Tochonov, Olena Dudzenko, Hanna Koval, Volodymyr Shegda, Viktoria Nagorna, Andriy Ustenko, Viktor Skrypnikov, Anastasia Ozerova, Kateryna Mikhailida, Lesya Lipka, Lyudmila Lukiyan, Iryna Yaremchuk, Maksym Holtvyanytsky, Anna Bessonova, Tatyana Hryshaeva, Natalia Zalunina, Olena Kapustina, Olga Torokova, Iryna Surovtseva, Lyubov Khvostyk, Natalia Martynova, Anna Voropaeva, Galina Kravets, Anatoly Pavlenko, Sergey Mehelyk, Pavlo Karakatko;

TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF AUTHORITIES AND MILITARY ADMINISTRATIONS:

Olga Kupriya, Natalia Nilova, Maryna Balytska, Anton Maly, Svitlana Kryvenko, Inna Lebid, Vitaliy Matsypura, Mykola Koreshkova, Lyudmila Petrishena, Vitaliy Belov, Iryna Voitenko, Valentyna Voitkova, Tatyana Kamenshchuk, Tatyana Yushko, Yulia Dzis, Inna Bondina, Tatyana Volkova, Iryna Moskalenko- Cherevko, Liliana Horal, Oksana Dyakiv, Oleg Yatsyuk, Olesya Velychko, Olga Ganysh, Lyubov Danylyuk, Olga Sokolovska, Khrystyna Zalozetska, Anzhelika Mishchanchuk, Nazar Romaniv, Natalia Stakhova, Olga Pylypyshyn, Yulia Ivanenko, Oleksandr Pototsky, Maksym Varenyk, Oleksandr Mormul, Vladyslav Kryvospytsky, Iryna Dolyna, Margarita Butyrina, Natalia Voiko, Natalia Sushkova;

TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

Olga Zamkova, Tetyana Lemeshchenko, Valeria Kolosok, Yulia Ugrinia, Ilya Khadzhinova, Lilia Martynova, Yana Sugeiko, Iryna Polishchuk, Iryna Yurchik, Maryna Oliynyk, Dmytro Nikolina, Natalia Kozmuk, Olga Kucheryava, Lyudmila Lemeshko, Mykola Nesen, Natalia Prokopenko, Iryna Skolotova, Vasyl Sulima, Iryna Shvetskivska, Natalia Yuklyaevska, Maya Yarmolova, Irina Shvets, Mykhailo Babyak, Lyudmila Vynnychuk, Natalia Petrunya-Pylyavska, Natalia Yukhym´yuk, Igor Rosypaylo, Svitlana Kryvoruchko, Tetyana Shepel, Vitalia Nitsenko, Halyna Apelt, Victoria Efremenko, Victoria Gordienko, Andriy Zarichnyak, Oksana Pokropivna, Taisia Zaverus, Svitlana Smeretka, Inna Senko, Igor Lotysh, Maria Kramarenko, Yuri Glazachev, Hanna Avramenko, Svetlana Mazur, Tatyana Alferyeva, Iryna Yaroschuk, Oksana Pavlenko, Tatyana Zherchenko, Iryna Bayvaryna;

TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EMPLOYERS:

Yehor Bozhko, Yevheniya Koshelenko, Oksana Cherkas, Oksana Brynetska, Anna Skladchykova, Sergey Fomenko, Anna Stepanova, Natalia Prudnik, Olena Bezpalko, Anna Chmukh, Anna Shystko, Lyumila Kravchenko, Ivan Melnyk, Yulia Bilyk, Tetyana Vityuk, Oleksandr Kholod, Lyudmila Yarikovska, Mykhailo Melnyk, Oksana Cherkas, Pavlo Zlenko, Lyudmila Vasileza, Golda Vynohradska, Ksenia Grigorieva, Iryna Gubareva, Olena Kolesnikova, Ksenia Matorina, Igor Stepanets, Yulia Skichko, Olga Symchych, Taras Kotyk, Marianna Kizan, Kostyantyn Yastrebov, Larisa Marchuk, Lyubov Lozinska, Nadiya Romanyuk, Natalia Svyrydova, Natalia Dyachyshyn, Natalia Kisil, Natalia Mykytyuk, Oksana Brynetska, Olena Morozova, Olena Pretyatko, Olga Tyshko, Roksolyana Kravtsiv, Volodymyr Slobodyanyuk, Oksana Shportun, Maksym Maksymenko, Tetyana Chubak

1.1 APPLICANT — PATH 1: no place in a company (independent search for an enterprise)

STAGES

- 1. FAMILIARISATION WITH DFVE
- 2. PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DFVE
- 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF DFVE

STEPS

Familiarisation with the features of DFVE	Consultation at the educational institution	Selection of an enterprise from the list of partners	Passing selectio at the enterprise	Preparation of documents	Formalisation of cooperation	Training and work at the enterprise	Evaluation of learning outcomes
Study the conditions and features of training under DFVE: rights and obligations of the parties, organisation of practical training at the enterprise, legislative f ramework and available methodological materials.	If necessary, contact the dual education centre, coordinator from the educational institution, head of the training and practical centre or another responsible person to obtain comprehensive consultation on the conditions and procedure for implementing DFVE.	Obtain from the educational institution the current register of partner enterprises with a detailed description of training conditions. Select an enterprise corresponding to the specialty and learn about the conditions of applicant selection.	Pass an interview or other selection procedure at the chosen enterprise. Obtain official confirmation of successful selection and an offer to participate in DFVE.	Prepare and submit to the educational institution a package of documents for transition to DFVE: applicant's statement, confirmation of passing selection and draft of individual learning plan.	Sign a tripartite agreement between the applicant, the educational institution and the enterprise. Agree and approve the individual learning plan and all accompanying documents.	Study according to the agreed schedule and individual plan, combining theoretical training at the educational institution with practical training at the workplace under the guidance of a mentor	Pass final evaluation of learning outcomes, demonstrate and confirm acquired competences.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

TOOLS

1.1 Information and methodological materials on dual education in Ukraine (infographics, guides, checklists) 1.2 Legislative framework: Law "On Education", "On Vocational Education", CMU Resolution on the Concept of DFVE 1.3 Example of regulation on implementation of DFVE elements in training of skilled workers 1.4 Advantages and procedure of applicant's transition to DFVE 1.5 Sample Regulation on DFVE in VET institution 1.6 Cases of DFVE organisation	2.1 Comparison of structures of curricula (standard and DFVE) 2.2 Example of algorithm for applicant's transition to DFVE 2.3 Information and analytical materials on opportunities and results of DFVE in Ukraine 2.4 Description of training and working conditions at partner enterprises	3.1 Register of partner enterprises with definition of DFVE conditions 3.2 Checklist for choosing an enterprise for participation in DFVE 3.3 Description of training and working conditions at enterprises	4.1 Example of procedure of competitive selection of applicants for DFVE 4.2 Sample criteria for selection of applicants 4.3 Example of order on appointment of selection commission 4.4 Applicant's CV (if necessary) 4.5 Form of confirmation of selection results	5.1 Procedure of actions for transferring applicant to DFVE 5.2 Template of applicant's statement on transition to DFVE 5.3 Sample schedule of educational process under DFVE 5.4 Example of structure of applicant's individual plan	6.1 Template of tripartite DFVE agreement 6.2 Matrix of role distribution of DFVE participants 6.3 Consent of enterprise to provide training at the workplace 6.4 Applicant's individual learning plan 6.5 Professional competence map (if available) 6.6 Professional development plan (if available) 6.7 Matrix of learning outcomes	7.1 Checklist of applicant's adaptation at the workplace 7.2 Journal of occupational safety instruction 7.3 Job description of applicant's functions 7.4 Act on provision of workplace, mentor and working conditions 7.5 Regulation on mentoring at the enterprise 7.6 Order on appointment of mentor 7.7 Algorithm of cooperation between VET coordinator and enterprise mentor 7.8 Schedule of educational process in enterprise training centre 7.9 Sample applicant's DFVE diary	8.1 Matrix of monitoring of learning outcomes 8.2 Materials of applicants' attestation (training at production) 8.3 Checklist of competence formation 8.4 Evaluation questionnaires of DFVE programme effectiveness 8.5 Evaluation criteria 8.6 Template of mentor's feedback from enterprise

1.2 APPLICANT — PATH 2: already has a place in a company (involvement of own employer)

STAGES

- 1. FAMILIARISATION WITH DFVE
- 2. PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DFVE
- 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF DFVE

STEPS

Familiarisation with the features of DFVE	Consultation at the educational institution	Involvement of own enterprise in DFVE	Transfer of contacts and coordination with VEI	Preparation an signing of documents	Training and work at the enterprise	Evaluation of learning outcomes
Study the conditions and features of under DFVE: rights and obligations of the parties, organisation of practical training at the enterprise, legislative framework and available methodological materials.	Contact the dual education centre, coordinator from the educational institution or another responsible person to obtain comprehensive consultation on the conditions and procedure for implementing DFVE. If necessary, study open information sources.	Inform your employer about dual education and propose to establish official partnership with the educational institution. Explain the advantages of enterprise participation in DFVE.	Contact the responsible person for DFVE at the educational institution and provide the contact details of the interested enterprise for further negotiations between organisations.	After signing a bilateral agreement between 4 the educational institution and the enterprise: write a statement on transfer to DFVE, provide a copy of the employment contract, sign a tripartite agreement and agree the individual learning plan.	Study according to the agreed schedule and individual plan, combining theoretical training at the educational institution with practical training at the workplace under the guidance of a mentor.	Pass final evaluation of learning outcomes, demonstrate and confirm acquired competences.

КОМУНІКАЦІЯ ТА ЗВОРОТНІЙ ЗВ'ЯЗОК

TOOLS

1.1 Information and methodological materials on dual education in Ukraine (infographics, guides, checklists) 1.2 Legislative framework: Law "On Education", Law "On Vocational Education", CMU Resolution on the Concept of DFVE 1.3 Example of regulation on implementation of DFVE elements in training of skilled workers 1.4 Advantages and procedure of applicant's transition to DFVE 1.5 Sample Regulation on DFVE in VEI 1.6 Cases of DFVE organisation	2.1 Comparison of structures of curricula (standard and DFVE) 2.2 Example of algorithm for applicant's transition to DFVE 2.3 Information and analytical materials on opportunities and results of DFVE in Ukraine	3.1 Information and analytical materials on opportunities and results of DFVE in Ukraine 3.2 Matrix of role distribution of DFVE participants 3.3 SWOT analysis of potential DFVE partnership for enterprise 3.4 Samples of letters of interest in DFVE development	4.1 Criteria for selection of enterprises for DFVE 4.2 Checklist for evaluation of partner enterprise 4.3 Matrix of correspondence of learning outcomes to enterprise capabilities 4.4 Register of potential partner enterprises 4.5 Invitation letter to enterprise regarding cooperation 4.6 Protocol of negotiations with recorded agreements	5.1 Example of bilateral DFVE agreement 5.2 Example of tripartite DFVE agreement 5.3 Matrix of role distribution of DFVE participants 5.4 Procedure of actions for transferring applicant to DFVE 5.5 Template of applicant's statement on transition to DFVE 5.6 Consent of enterprise for training at workplace 5.7 Professional competence map (if available) 5.8 Professional development plan (if available) 5.9 Sample individual learning plan of applicant	6.1 Checklist of applicant's adaptation at workplace 6.2 Journal of occupational safety instruction 6.3 Job description of applicant's functions 6.4 Act on provision of workplace, mentor and working conditions 6.5 Regulation on mentoring at enterprise 6.6 Order on appointment of mentor 6.7 Algorithm of cooperation between VEI coordinator and enterprise mentor 6.8 Schedule of educational process in enterprise training centre 6.9 Sample applicant's DFVE diary	7.1 Matrix of monitoring of learning outcomes 7.2 Materials of applicants' attestation (training at production) 7.3 Checklist of competence formation 7.4 Evaluation questionnaires of DFVE programme effectiveness 7.5 Evaluation criteria 7.6 Template of mentor's feedback from enterprise

2. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INSTITUTION (VEI)

STAGES	1. INTRODUCTORY	2. ANALYSIS AND DECISION-MAKING	3. PARTNERSHIP AND DOCUMENTATION				4. IMPLEMENTATION OF DFVE	
STEPS	Study of normative and methodological base	Analysis of feasibility of DFVE implementation	Development of local normative base	Formation of partnerships with employers	Documentary support of applicants	Creation of DFVE structural unit	Organisation of training under DFVE	Monitoring and evaluation of results
	Familiarise with current legislation, normative acts, methodological recommendations and successful practices of DFVE implementation in Ukraine and abroad.	Assess readiness of the institution to introduce DFVE: determine relevant professions and educational programmes, potential employer partners and resource capacity of the institution. Conduct SWOT analysis.	Prepare internal normative documentation regulating organisation of training under DFVE in the institution: regulations, orders, job descriptions.	Establish partnership with enterprises and organisations, determine conditions of DFVE implementation, distribution of roles and responsibilities of the parties. Sign cooperation agreements.	Ensure legal formalisation of applicants' participation in DFVE: signing of tripartite agreements, coordination and approval of individual learning trajectories.	Appoint responsible persons or establish a structural unit (dual education centre) to coordinate interaction with employers and accompany applicants.	Ensure implementation of the educational process in accordance with agreed curricula, schedules and conditions of training at the workplace.	Organise systematic evaluation of learning outcomes, collection of feedback from employers and applicants, preparation of reports and improvement of DFVE programmes.
	KCOMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK							
TOOLS	1.1 Information and analytical materials on the development of dual education in Ukraine 1.2 Legislative framework: Laws "On Education", "On Vocational Education", "On Mentorship"; Concept and Action Plan of DFVE CMU 1.3 Algorithm for DFVE implementation in VEI 1.4 Cases of successful DFVE organisation	2.1 Recommendations for VEI on conducting initial analysis 2.1.1 Checklist of institution's readiness for DFVE 2.1.2 Questionnaires for employers and applicants 2.2 SWOT analysis of DFVE organisation by the institution (if necessary) 2.3 Labour market analysis and employers' staffing needs 2.3.1 Matrix of potential partners 2.4 Additional advantages of VEI financing due to DFVE	3.1 Recommendations on development of local documentation for VEI 3.2 Example of Regulation on DFVE in VEI 3.3 Procedure of actions for transferring VEI applicants to DFVE 3.4 Sample applicant's statement for transfer to DFVE 3.5 Example of structure of applicant's individual plan 3.6 Sample applicant's individual plan under DFVE 3.7 Template of Order on introduction of DFVE 3.8 Template of Regulation on structural unit / Dual Education Centre 3.9 Template of job descriptions of responsible persons	4.1 Example of Framework Agreement (Memorandum) on cooperation 4.2 Sample bilateral DFVE agreement 4.3 Criteria for selection of enterprises for DFVE 4.4 Checklist for evaluation of partner enterprise 4.5 Matrix of correspondence of learning outcomes to enterprise capabilities 4.6 Invitation letter to enterprise regarding cooperation 4.7 Protocol of negotiations with recorded agreements 4.8 List of workplaces for training	5.1 Recommendations for development of tripartite agreement 5.2 Sample tripartite DFVE agreement 5.3 Matrix of role distribution of DFVE participants 5.4 Consent of enterprise for training at workplace 5.5 Applicant's statement on training under DFVE 5.6 Applicant's individual learning plan 5.7 Documents regarding selection of applicants	6.1 Recommendations on creation of DFVE structural unit in VEI 6.2 Example of Regulation on Dual Education Centre 6.2.1 Work plan of the unit 6.2.2 Functional responsibilities of DFVE coordinator 6.3 Recommendations on adaptation of educational content and schedules to DFVE 6.4 Database of partners	7.1 Matrix of correspondence of learning outcomes to enterprise capabilities 7.2 Sample applicant's individual plan under DFVE 7.3 Job description of applicant's functions 7.4 Act on provision of workplace, mentor and working conditions 7.5 Checklist of applicant's adaptation at workplace 7.6 Algorithm of cooperation between VEI coordinator and enterprise mentor 7.7 Programme of practical training 7.8 Schedule of educational process in enterprise training centre 7.9 Sample applicant's DFVE diary	8.1 Matrix of monitoring of learning outcomes 8.2 Materials of applicants' attestation (training at production) 8.3 Checklist of competence formation 8.4 Evaluation questionnaires of DFVE programme effectiveness 8.5 Evaluation sheets of mentors from enterprises 8.6 Feedback questionnaires for applicants and employers 8.7 Reports on DFVE implementation and performance indicators

3. ENTERPRISE (employer partner)

STAGES	1. INTRODUCTORY	2. ORGANISATIONAL					3. IMPLEMENTATION OF DFVE		
STEPS	Study of conditions and features of DFVE	Analysis of staffing needs and opportunities	Coordination with the educational institution	Selection and preparation of mentors	Formation of team and internal documentation	Information and selection of applicants	Signing of agreements	Training and integration of applicants	Evaluation of results
	Study in detail the features of applicant training at the enterprise within DFVE: legislative framework, organisational conditions, rights and obligations of the employer partner.	Analyse the staffing needs of the company and the real opportunities for organising effective practical training. Assess the company's compliance with the criteria of the educational institution for DFVE partners.	Hold a meeting with the educational institution: agree on the list of available workplaces for training, professions and qualifications, conditions and schedule of practical training.	Select candidates for the role of mentor among experienced specialists of the company. Ensure their preparation (if necessary — with the support of VEI).	Form an internal team for DFVE implementation. Approve internal documentation and sign a bilateral agreement with the educational institution. Agree on the objectives of the applicant training programme.	Develop information materials for applicants about the conditions offered by the company and ensure their dissemination. Conduct competitive selection of applicants for DFVE training.	Sign tripartite agreements and (if necessary) employment contracts with applicants. Agree and approve individual learning plans.	Ensure training of applicants in accordance with agreed curricula and their gradual integration into the company's production processes.	Conduct evaluation of applicants' learning outcomes according to established criteria. Provide feedback to the educational institution and formulate proposals for programme improvement.
	COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK								
TOOLS	1.1 Information and analytical materials on the development of dual education in Ukraine 1.2 Legislative framework: Laws "On Education", "On Vocational Education", "On Mentorship"; Concept and Action Plan of DFVE CMU 1.3 Algorithm for DFVE implementation at the enterprise 1.4 Cases of successful DFVE organisation	2.1 Recommendations on a systematic approach to formation of staffing policy and inclusion 2.2 SWOT analysis of the enterprise – potential DFVE partner 2.3 Matrix of correspondence of learning outcomes to enterprise capabilities 2.4 Criteria for selection of enterprises for DFVE 2.5 Checklist for evaluation of partner enterprise	3.1 Samples of letters of interest in DFVE development 3.2 Example of consent of business entity to participate in DFVE 3.3 Example of programme of first meeting 3.4 Checklist for evaluation of potential partners under educational programme 3.5 Memorandum note of production training master 3.6 Protocol of negotiations with recorded agreements	4.1 Law "On Mentorship" 4.2 Example of Regulation on mentoring at the enterprise 4.3 Template of request to VEI regarding mentor preparation 4.4 Sample order on appointment of mentors 4.5 Mentor's memo 4.6 Typical job functions of corporate mentor in DFVE system	5.1 Matrix of role distribution of DFVE participants 5.2 Sample bilateral DFVE agreement 5.3 Protocols of meetings of methodological commission on formation of partner base 5.4 Example of regulation on implementation of DFVE elements in training of skilled workers 5.5 Invitation letter to enterprise regarding cooperation	6.1 Sample programme of DFVE applicant training 6.2 Sample schedule of DFVE educational process 6.3 Matrix of target learning outcomes 6.4 Register of relevant professional standards 6.5 Sample applicant's individual learning plan 6.6 Comparison of structures of curricula with DFVE and without 6.7 Calendar of communications and coordination meetings	7.1 Example of procedure of competitive selection of applicants 7.2 Sample criteria for selection of applicants 7.3 Sample applicant's statement for DFVE 7.4 Recommendations for development of tripartite agreement 7.5 Sample tripartite DFVE agreement 7.6 Consent of enterprise for training at workplace	8.1 Example of structure of applicant's individual DFVE plan 8.2 Act on provision of workplace, mentor and working conditions 8.3 Sample applicant's DFVE diary 8.4 Journal of occupational safety instruction 8.5 Job description of applicant's functions 8.6 Checklist of applicant's adaptation at workplace	9.1 Materials of applicants' attestation (training at production) 9.2 Evaluation questionnaires of DFVE programme effectiveness 9.3 SWOT analysis based on DFVE implementation results 9.4 Matrix of monitoring of learning outcomes 9.5 Checklist of competence formation 9.6 Evaluation sheets of mentors

4. LIST OF MAIN DOCUMENT TEMPLATES BY DFVE PARTICIPANTS

DFVE PARTICIPANT	MAIN DOCUMENT TEMPLATES	PURPOSE / FUNCTION
Applicant / Learner (Path 1 — without a place in a company)	• Application for transfer to DFVE • Form of confirmation of passing selection at the enterprise • Applicant's individual learning plan under DFVE • Tripartite agreement on organisation of training under DFVE • Diary (journal) of training at the enterprise • Form of evaluation of learning outcomes • Methodological recommendations for applicants regarding DFVE	• Initiates the procedure of transfer to DFVE • Confirms successful selection for participation in DFVE • Records the agreed trajectory and schedule of training • Defines rights, obligations and responsibilities of all parties • Documents the course of practical training at the enterprise • Records achieved results and level of competences • Guides the applicant on organisation and content of DFVE
Applicant / Learner (Path 2 — already has a place in a company)	• Application for transfer to DFVE • Copy of employment contract with the enterprise • Bilateral agreement VEI — enterprise (initiated by institution) • Tripartite agreement on organisation of training under DFVE • Applicant's individual learning plan under DFVE • Diary (journal) of training at the enterprise • Form of evaluation of learning outcomes	• Initiates the procedure of transfer to DFVE • Confirms existence of employment relations with the enterprise • Establishes official framework of partnership between organisations • Secures tripartite obligations under DFVE • Records the agreed trajectory and schedule of training • Documents the course of practical training at the enterprise • Records achieved results and level of competences
Vocational Education Institution (VEI)	• Checklist of institution's readiness for DFVE implementation • Regulation on organisation of DFVE • Order on introduction of DFVE • Regulation on Dual Education Centre / coordinator • Cooperation agreement between VEI and employer • Tripartite agreement on education under DFVE • Applicant's individual learning plan • Diary (journal) of training under DFVE • Forms of evaluation of learning outcomes • Feedback questionnaires for employers and applicants • Template of annual report on DFVE implementation	• Assesses organisational readiness of the institution • Establishes internal procedure of DFVE organisation • Officially launches DFVE in the institution • Regulates activities of coordination unit • Defines conditions of partnership between institution and enterprise • Secures tripartite obligations in specific cases • Records agreed learning trajectory • Tracks the course of practice at the enterprise • Records learning outcomes of applicants • Ensures collection of evaluations from all participants • Summarises results of DFVE implementation for the year
Enterprise (employer-partner)	• SWOT analysis of enterprise — potential DFVE partner • Letter of interest in DFVE development / invitation letter • Protocol of negotiations with recorded agreements • Bilateral agreement with VEI • Tripartite agreement (enterprise / VEI / applicant) • Regulation on mentoring at the enterprise • Order on appointment of mentors • Act on provision of workplace and working conditions • Evaluation sheets of mentors • Employer's feedback questionnaire	• Assesses own readiness and advantages of participation in DFVE • Officially confirms readiness for partnership • Documents agreements between enterprise and VEI • Establishes framework of partnership at organisational level • Secures specific obligations regarding individual applicants • Regulates rights and obligations of mentors • Officially appoints mentor to applicant • Confirms fulfilment of employer's obligations • Records mentor's evaluation of applicant's competences • Provides feedback to the educational institution

ROADMAP FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE VOCATIONAL INSTITUTION AND THE ENTERPRISE MENTOR WITHIN THE DUAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

STAGES	STAGE 1. INITIATING COOPERATION			STAGE 2. PREPARATION FOR WORK WITH THE STUDENT			STAGE 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF MENTORING			STAGE 4. JOINT EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES		STAGE 5. FINAL ASSESSMENT
STEPS	STEP 1. IDENTIFICATION OF A POTENTIAL PARTNER ENTERPRISE RESPONSIBLE: HEAD OF THE METHODOLOGICAL COMMISSION	STEP 2. CONDUCTING THE INITIAL MEETING	STEP 3. SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS	STEP 4. APPOINTMENT OF THE ENTERPRISE MENTOR	STEP 5. APPOINTMENT OF THE ACADEMIC MENTOR FROM THE METHODOLOGICAL COMMISSION	STEP 6. FORMATION OF THE STUDENT'S INDIVIDUAL PLAN	STEP 7. STUDENT ADAPTATION AT THE ENTERPRISE	STEP 8. REGULAR INTERACTION BETWEEN THE METHODOLOGICAL COMMITTEE AND THE MENTOR	STEP 9. MONITORING OF STUDENT RESULTS	STEP 10. INTEGRATION OF THE ENTERPRISE INTO THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS	STEP 11. UPDATING THE TRAINING PROGRAMME	STEP 12. FINAL EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT
TOOLS	ACTIONS: ▪ analysis of the enterprise profile; ▪ verification of professional relevance; ▪ assessment of the enterprise's; ▪ staffing potential determination of the possibility of appointing mentors;	PARTICIPANTS: ▪ representatives of the methodological commission; ▪ HR or enterprise management; ▪ potential mentor; DISCUSSION TOPICS: ▪ format of dual education; ▪ expectations of both parties; ▪ student competencies; work schedule; ▪ opportunities for practical training; ▪ digital tools for interaction;	DOCUMENTS FORMALISED: ▪ memorandum of cooperation; ▪ dual education agreement; ▪ mentorship regulations; ▪ implementation roadmap;	CRITERIA: ▪ professional experience; ▪ communication skills; ▪ readiness for mentorship MENTOR PROVIDED WITH: ▪ methodological guidelines; ▪ assessment templates; ▪ competency map; ▪ interaction calendar;	RESPONSIBLE: ▪ methodological commission; FUNCTIONS: ▪ academic supervision; ▪ coordination with the enterprise; ▪ monitoring of results; integration of practical ▪ cases into training;	JOINTLY DETERMINED: ▪ list of skills/competencies; ▪ practical tasks; ▪ Development KPIs; ▪ work schedule; ▪ reporting format; DOCUMENTS: ▪ individual trajectory; professional ▪ development plan; ▪ competency map;	MENTOR ENSURES: ▪ familiarisation with the enterprise; ▪ instruction and briefing; ▪ explanation of production processes; ▪ integration into the team THE STUDENT RECEIVES: ▪ workplace; ▪ list of tasks; ▪ communication system; ▪ access to internal processe;	FREQUENCY: ▪ weekly operational contact; monthly coordination ▪ meeting FORMATS: ▪ online meetings; ▪ brief reports; ▪ joint consultations; ▪ Teams / Google Meet / Zoom; DISCUSSION TOPICS: ▪ student progress; ▪ problematic issues; ▪ workload; ▪ competency levels and skill acquisition; ▪ adaptation;	MENTOR EVALUATES: ▪ hard skills ; ▪ soft skills ; ▪ discipline; ▪ adaptability; ▪ teamwork; METHODOLOGICAL COMMISSION EVALUATES: ▪ compliance with programme outcomes; ▪ integration of practical training into education; ▪ academic progress TOOLS: ▪ checklists; ▪ KPIs; ▪ digital diaries; ▪ electronic portfolio; ▪ competence dashboards	FORMS: ▪ guest master classes; ▪ workshops; ▪ case championships; ▪ practical sessions; ▪ joint projects; ▪ real cases; RESPONSIBLE: ▪ methodological commission; ▪ mentor; ▪ enterprise HR;	CONDUCTED: ▪ analysis of market needs; ▪ assessment of new skills/ competencies; ▪ review of training programme components; ▪ updating of methodological support; MENTOR PROVIDES: ▪ recommendations; ▪ industry trends; ▪ list of relevant skills;	EVALUATED: ▪ professional outcomes; ▪ completed task; ▪ competency level; ▪ professional readiness; FORMATS: ▪ demonstration/ presentation results; ▪ portfolio; ▪ mentor's evaluation;
RESULTS	A COMPILED LIST OF POTENTIAL MENTORS	PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION, MEETING	FORMALIZATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP	APPOINTED CORPORATE MENTOR	ESTABLISHED DUAL MENTORSHIP MODEL	APPROVED DUAL EDUCATION PLAN	SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL ADAPTATION	CONTINUOUS PROCESS COORDINATION	SYSTEMATIC TRACKING OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT	STRENGTHENED PRACTICAL COMPONENT OF TRAINING	ADAPTIVE MODERN TRAINING PROGRAM	COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF DUAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES