

R&D-Report

Report 2. The new model of retraining and social adaptation of IDPs

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Nord University
R&D-Report no. 111
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REPORT 2

The new model of
retraining and social
adaptation of IDPs

2024

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FOREWORD

The report “The new model of retraining and social adaptation of IDPs” is developed under “the Universities’ Reaction to Big Obstructions: Building resilient higher education to respond to and manage societal crises” (TURBO) project (Project: 101129315-TURBO-Erasmus-EDU-2023-CBHE), a collaborative initiative aimed at increasing resilience Ukrainian universities, their preparedness and responsiveness, by building their capacities, improving competencies, and sharing experience among Ukraine, Norway and Poland. The project is funded by the European Union.

This report reviews the development and implementation of a new model for the retraining and social adaptation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine, building on the extensive experience of professional retraining and social adaptation of veterans and their family members.

Key findings from the report:

1. Previous experience of social adaptation of veterans and their family members:
 - Over the period of 2003-2022, the fruitful collaboration of Norwegian and Ukrainian partners has successfully retrained over 10,000 individuals, with 95% securing employment within three years.
 - Programs focused on inclusive educational environments, psychological support, and practical, short-term professional retraining, ensuring the successful transition of veterans to civilian life.
 - Lessons learned from the 20-years’ experience include the importance of combining professional retraining with psychological and social adaptation, optimizing program duration to 500 hours, and involving local NGOs and businesses into the process.
2. The new model for IDPs:
 - The proposed model leverages micro-credentials, integrating academic and non-academic partners to deliver flexible, region-specific programs.
 - Specializations align with regional labour market needs.
 - The model incorporates socio-psychological support to address the unique vulnerabilities of IDPs, ensuring holistic adaptation and integration into new communities.
 - Sustainability is ensured through diverse funding sources, including government agencies, international organizations, and private sector contributions.



INTRODUCTION

This report aims to map the pressing social demands not addressed by the market and directed toward vulnerable groups in Ukrainian society, particularly IDPs. The report provides an overview of previous successful initiatives in retraining and social adaptation for veterans and their family members. Additionally, it proposes a new model specifically tailored for IDPs.

The objectives of the report include:

- Analyzing previous experiences in retraining veterans to identify best practices.
- Mapping the current social demands of IDPs across seven Ukrainian regions.
- Proposing a new model for retraining and social adaptation of IDPs, designed to meet regional labor market needs and ensure the long-term sustainability of these initiatives.

The narratives on the previous experiences and suggestions on the new study programs were prepared by the teams of Ukrainian researchers from 7 partner universities in the TURBO project: Lviv Polytechnic National University (LPNU), West Ukrainian National University (WUNU), Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (YFCNU), Chernihiv Polytechnic National University (CPNU), Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (KNU), Vinnytsia National Technical University (VNTU), South Ukrainian State Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushynsky (SUNPU).

The editorial team Veronika Vakulenko (Associate professor, PhD, Nord University), Olga Filina (Project coordinator, PhD, IFSA) and Volodymyr Rubtsov (President, IFSA) compiled and extended the report with research materials, provided more contextualization, refined the narrative to ensure the integrity of the report's content.

The contributions of Roman Vakulchuk (Senior Research Fellow, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs), Anatoli Bourmistrov (Professor, PhD, Nord University), Valeriia Melnyk (Researcher, PhD, Nord University) and Olga Iermolenko (Associate professor, PhD, Nord University) were valuable for reviewing, commenting and enhancing the report quality.

The report is structured into two main parts: the first part reviews previous experiences with veteran retraining and maps the current social needs of IDPs. The second part introduces the new model for IDP retraining and social adaptation, detailing the program design, regional alignment, and sustainability strategies.



PART 1.

MAPPING THE PRESSING SOCIAL DEMANDS NOT ADDRESSED BY THE MARKET AND DIRECTED TOWARDS VULNERABLE GROUPS IN UKRAINIAN SOCIETY

This section provides an overview of a historical background, and experiences of project partners related to the retraining and social adaptation of veterans and their family members. Additionally, it addresses the unique challenges faced by IDPs in Ukraine. The section covers important aspects such as the development of inclusive educational environments, optimization of retraining programs, provision of psychological support, and the adaptation of these aspects to meet the specific needs of IDPs, who face distinct legal, economic, social, and psychological vulnerabilities compared to veterans.

1.1. Analysis of previous experience in retraining and social adaptation of veterans and their family members

The TURBO project has been developed on the solid basis of the fruitful long-term collaboration between Norway and Ukraine that began in 2003. The project's main aim has been to alleviate the adverse social effects of military and economic reforms in Ukraine, particularly for retired military personnel and their families. The cooperation started as a series of annual projects supported by Norway's Ministry of Defence of Norway, which further evolved into a more extended three-year partnership in 2011, and eventually culminated in a comprehensive project titled "Professional Retraining and Social Adaptation of Servicemen, Veterans and Their Family Members" from 2015 to 2019 funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway.

The primary focus of project activities was on helping military personnel transition to civilian life by providing retraining, employment opportunities, and fostering entrepreneurship. Following the escalation of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, the program expanded to include veterans – those who participated in the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) and Joint Forces Operation (JFO).

Over the 16-year period (during 2003-2019), more than 10,000 individuals were retrained and socially adapted. The project achieved remarkable success, with over 95% of participants securing employment within three years of completing the program (Vakulenko et al., 2021). Additionally, the initiative significantly improved participants' psychological well-being and living conditions, with many going on to start their own businesses.

Building on the success of these efforts, the “Norway-Ukraine. Professional Adaptation. Integration into the State System” (further – NUPASS) project was launched and implemented in 2020-2022. Its goal was to incorporate the effective model of professional and social adaptation developed over the previous 16 years into the Ukrainian state system providing sustainable and systematic support for veterans and their families across Ukraine and ensuring their successful transition to civilian life. For more information, please see Vakulenko et al. (2021).

The project started with partnering with universities and NGOs in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, but after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, the project activities there discontinued. From 2014, the project expanded its activities in western, central, and eastern Ukraine establishing cooperation relationships with 22 universities and 17 NGOs across Ukraine. Project partners had the opportunity to add their own vision and regional specifics to the local implementation of the project and therefore developed their best practices.

Key partners in the NUPASS project included the International Foundation for Social Adaptation (IFSA), Nord University, a network of Ukrainian universities, and numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Nord University was a coordinating institution from Norwegian side, brought European experience to the project by implementing European standards for reporting, designing and managing project activities.

Together with other stakeholders, the upper mentioned partners formed a social partnerships (see visualization in Figure 1) as a collaborative setting in which multiple stakeholders, such as public organizations (i.e., universities), government entities, local businesses, NGOs, and other civil society groups, work together to address social challenges, for example: foster social inclusion, or promoting economic development (Vakulenko et al., 2024).

Approximately over 20 years of cooperation, project activities including retraining, psychological support, legal adaptation, and employment assistance, with an increased emphasis on entrepreneurship, allowing the project to meet the diverse needs of veterans and their families to facilitate their successful integration into civil society.

The peculiarity of the project is the use of a holistic approach to solving the problem of social and professional adaptation of veterans and their family members through close collaboration between universities and NGOs both playing distinctive roles in addressing this problem.

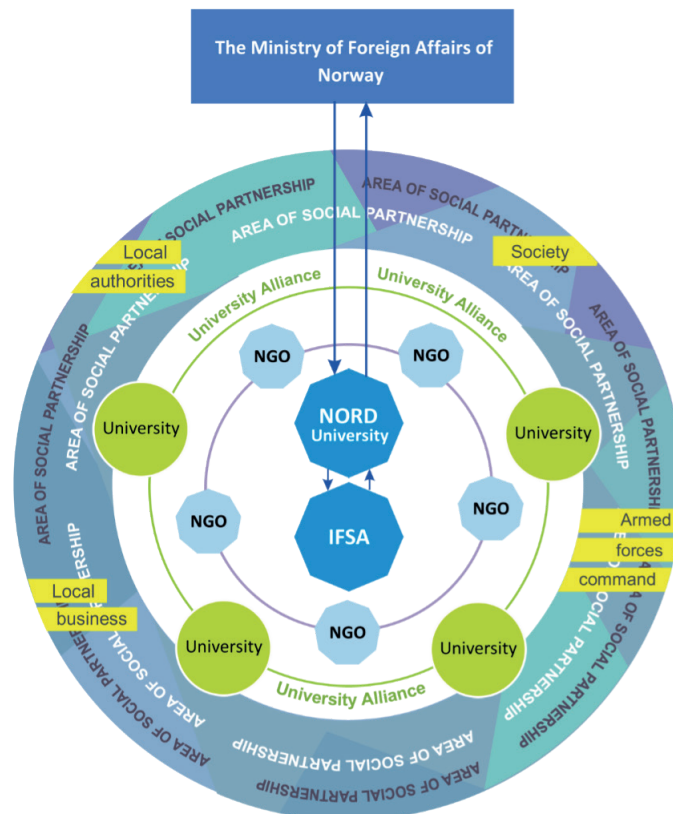


Figure 1. Partners engaged into professional and social adaptation of veterans and their family members (IFSA, 2019)

NGOs played a vital role in the project, as they organized and provided activities directly contributing to the achievement of the goal of the project. In particular, NGOs:

- Assisted in finding a job or starting a business (business practices at enterprises, seminars, consultations, assistance in finding sources of financing for their own business) and mentoring support;
- Provided psychological adaptation (collective and individual counselling, prevention of suicide and violence, drug and alcohol addiction in the families of project participants);
- Provided legal adaptation (consultations on civil law, provision of reference manuals and individual consultations);
- Selected and recruited participants for study groups participating in the project in accordance with the criteria agreed with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Conducted monitoring of the work of project participants in implementing the curriculum, their participation in events, and providing timely information on changes in their social status;
- Organized a survey of project participants, providing agreed personal data to form a database of project participants (taking into account the requirements of martial law);

- Provided counselling services to project participants between semesters and throughout the year, after the completion of the retraining course (mentoring);
- Disseminated information by covering the project in the media, informing local authorities, territorial recruitment and social support centers, the Security Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and regional representatives of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs to promote understanding of the project's purpose and cooperation;
- Organized surveys and sociological research, providing access to project participants for representatives of IFSA, Nord University, and independent experts to assess the quality of project activities;
- Formed and maintained the status of a «Norwegian project» in the region;
- Assisted in solving the problem of motivating students and ensuring that at least 95% of those enrolled for retraining complete their studies in accordance with the university's order;
- Searched for sources of co-financing for the project from local budgets and businesses.

Another important activity to achieve social integration of veterans and their family members was professional retraining provided by universities. The duration of the professional retraining was conditioned by the requirements of the laws of Ukraine on social guarantees for military personnel and their families, which allowed all categories of military personnel, including those in their last year of service before discharge, to participate in a course of retraining lasting more than 500 academic hours. According to the legislation, the maximum duration of retraining courses was approved at 1200 hours for obtaining a working specialty.

Based on the experience obtained throughout the project implementation, the most optimal period for social adaptation and professional retraining should be between 3 and 5 months totalling 350-500 training hours. The ratio of theory to practice should be 40% to 60% or 30% and 70%, depending on the specialization selected for professional retraining. Psychological assistance is combined with training as a supportive activity. At the time of the project's initiation, seeking psychological help was not a common practice in Ukraine. The project contributed to the development of psychological adaptation of soldiers and civilians to new living conditions.

Six TURBO partner-universities have participated in different years in the professional retaining and social adaptation of veterans and their families project and thus have experience working with vulnerable populations. Only KNU had not previously implemented similar activities and therefore is currently gaining new experience in the TURBO project. An overview of previous experiences of TURBO partners is outlined below.

Lviv region: Lviv Polytechnic National University (LPNU)

Since 2014, LPNU has been conducting activities for the social and professional adaptation of servicemen and their families as part of the Ukraine-Norway project and as part of the

budget program of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs. From 2014 to 2022, more than 800 people aged 26 to 40 underwent social and professional adaptation, of whom approximately 35% were women and 65% were men.

To improve the quality of educational services for participants who belong to a vulnerable group with special educational needs, the university has created and continues to develop an inclusive educational environment based on both physical, social accessibility and psychological barrier-free environment based on the interaction of participants in the inclusive educational process and their participation in joint work.

In December 2023, the Rector's Order approved the Inclusive Education Policy at LPNU, which provides for the adoption of university-wide decisions to meet a wide range of educational, informational and social needs of persons with special educational needs due to disabilities and chronic diseases, including persons with disabilities as a result of war. The functions of implementing the inclusive educational policy at the University are assigned to the Service of Accessibility to Learning Opportunities «Without Limits».

The university was flexible enough to respond to the needs of the labour market and offered a variety of study programs, ranging from 160 hours to 650 hours. Practical experience of implementing programs with different number of hours has shown the optimality of the course duration of 500 hours, as fewer hours cannot fully ensure both professional competencies and soft competencies. An observation concluded that a greater number of hours causes fatigue and a decrease in activity and motivation in learning. This experience was confirmed by the results of the student survey.

Besides the process of organizing retraining, which involves new approaches, the ratio of practical and theoretical classes is also important. As a rule, course participants were adults with prior education, life and professional experience. For this category of students, it is important to provide the basics of theoretical knowledge and the ability to independently search for the necessary theoretical information. Therefore, the curriculum includes 70% of practical training and it is during these classes that theoretical material, which makes up 30%, is better absorbed.

In their activities, the university combines professional and psychological adaptations, which complement each other helping to create a powerful synergistic effect. Without the introduction of psychological adaptation technologies, it may be difficult to maintain group cohesion, effective communication, and personal openness.

During the project implementation, it is advisable to take measures for the social and psychological adaptation of project participants, which include both individual work and work in study groups. This process includes the following steps:

- Professional selection, initial diagnostics.
- Individual counselling.
- Correctional stage.
- Control diagnostics.
- Individual counselling upon completion of the retraining.

For the project, psychologists used the following tools at different stages:

- incoming questionnaire;
- test methods aimed at assessing the main characteristic tendencies and qualities of a person;
- determining the emotional and motivational orientation of the individual;
- psychological assessment of a person's suitability for professional activity;
- personality diagnostics for motivation to succeed and avoid failure;
- Individual interviews.

LPNU recognizes that psychological support is crucial for veterans and their family members, especially during professional retraining, as they are considered a vulnerable group. This support involves initial and ongoing diagnostics using methods like interviews, online surveys based on the SAN methodology, and the Rogers-Osnitsky Scale of Social and Psychological Adaptability.

The SAN method assesses health, activity, and mood dynamics, providing a real-time evaluation of an individual's well-being. This is essential for understanding how veterans and their families are coping at any given moment. The Rogers-Osnitsky scale, on the other hand, measures various aspects of social and psychological adaptation, such as self-acceptance, acceptance of others, emotional comfort, locus of control, and tendencies towards escapism. Monitoring these indicators helps identify challenges in the adaptation process, allowing for targeted interventions to improve their overall psychological and social well-being.

The experience of LPNU highlights the need for comprehensive psychological support as vital for ensuring that veterans and their families can successfully navigate the challenges of professional retraining and reintegration into civilian life.

Ternopil region: West Ukrainian National University (WUNU)

The projects "Retraining and social adaptation of military officers and their family members in Ukraine" and NUPASS were implemented at WUNU during 2014-2022. This included professional retraining of military officers/veterans and their family members in civilian specialties that are in demand of local labour market (with a duration of 500 academic hours), psychological adaptation of project participants to living conditions in a civil society, legal adaptation of military officers/veterans and their family members to increase social security and assistance in finding employment or starting their own (family) business.

To participate in the project, all potential participants were interviewed and took tests. The tests determined the candidates' readiness to complete the training program. Participation in the program involved a selection process to ensure both sufficient knowledge and motivation of candidates to be admitted to the program. The project offered training, employment and psychological assistance to all participants. The advantage of the project was that the closest family members were enrolled in the group with the main participant if they wanted to start a family business and create a better psychological climate in the group.

The distinctive feature of the project was the participants, who were adults aged 20 to 50, possessing a wide range of educational backgrounds and life experiences. This diversity played a crucial role in deepening and broadening the study of the subject matter. Individuals with varied experiences brought unique perspectives, enabling them to interpret information differently and propose alternative solutions to challenges. The richness of their life experiences significantly enhanced the learning process, as each participant had the opportunity to contribute their stories, knowledge, and skills. This not only made the training more practical but also ensured its relevance to real-world situations. The varied composition of the study groups emerged as a key factor in the project's success, fostering a dynamic learning environment where participants could acquire valuable knowledge and develop essential skills.

WUNU has created an inclusive environment where all participants in the educational process, regardless of their abilities, background or personal circumstances, have equal opportunities for successful learning and development.

The duration of the program was 3-3.5-months (500 academic hours), which provided the following benefits to participants:

- Intensity of training: this program is quite intensive, allowing participants to focus on key aspects of training without dispersing their attention over a long period of time. This contributes to a more effective assimilation of knowledge and skills.
- Motivation and engagement: This period of training helps to maintain a high level of motivation among participants, as they see the result of their training within an achievable horizon. It also helps to increase the participants' engagement in the learning process.
- Fast adaptation: this period is sufficient for program participants to adapt to new conditions and requirements, but not so long that they lose touch with previous experience and skills, which is important for successful integration into a new professional environment.
- Laying the foundation for further development: during this time, participants can acquire the basic knowledge and skills necessary for further professional growth. They will be able to continue their learning and development more confidently and independently after the program.
- Social adaptation: the program allows participants to address key social challenges, such as adaptation to civilian life, development of new social ties and support from the community, which contributes to overall psychological comfort and stability.

Thus, the duration of training of 3-3.5 months and the volume of 500 academic hours was reasonable in terms of effectively solving the problems of social and professional adaptation, providing a basis for further development and successful employment.

The retraining was organized on a 30/70 basis, with 30% of theoretical classes and 70% of practical classes. Additional activities were incorporated to enhance the effectiveness of professional retraining: business training sessions, master classes, interviews, and individual employment counselling.

Psychological support was most effective when participants received extensive training at the start, as this helped to build group cohesion and increase the effectiveness of subsequent group work.

Monitoring was organized on a regular basis to assess the quality of the project. Participants were interviewed about their motivation to learn, and the activities of teachers, psychologists, and trainers were evaluated to identify weaknesses and ways to improve. Psychological tests were used to determine entrepreneurial skills, level of psychological resilience, and satisfaction with participation in the project. The monitoring was conducted using the alumni club database.

The Ternopil region has a diverse labour market, with demand growing for skilled workers and healthcare professionals, as well as for IT and agricultural specialists. Professional competencies, adaptability to market changes, and specialized education are key factors for successful employment in the region. The IT sector remains attractive, and demand for programmers, software developers and other IT professionals continues to grow. The Ternopil region is an agrarian region, so professions related to agriculture, such as agronomists and farm workers, are in high demand.

Chernivtsi region: Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (YFCNU)

Since 2014, YFCNU has been providing professional retraining and social adaptation of military personnel discharged from the reserve, ATO/JFO participants, war veterans and family members of these categories, and since 2022, social adaptation for IDPs. Such activities have been carried out by the Faculty of Economics with the participation of employees of all structural units, invited trainers, representatives of business, the public, and local governments. Within the framework of two international projects "Retraining and social adaptation of military officers and their family members in Ukraine" and NUPASS with the financial support and organizational coordination of Nord University, ISFA, and in partnership with the local NGO "Center for Social Adaptation and Economic Development", 494 military personnel, veterans and their families aged 18 to 50 years, of whom about 60% were men and 40% were women, received professional retraining and social adaptation services in the Chernivtsi region.

After the full-scale invasion in 2022 and 2023, work with IDPs began in parallel with work with military personnel and their families. Thus, during the spring semester, a short-term 40-day social adaptation program was conducted with a group of IDPs (25 people).

Ten years of experience working with military personnel and their families has allowed the project to develop an effective professional retraining program «Organization and Management of Entrepreneurial Activities» and a system of measures for social and psychological adaptation, assistance in obtaining employment and starting a business. The focus of the program was to increase the professional competitiveness of servicemen and their families in the labour market by providing them with the necessary specialized theoretical and practical knowledge of organizing, planning and managing business activities, as well as practical skills in starting their own business and ensuring its successful development in the current economic environment.

The experience of implementing vocational training and social adaptation programs funded by both international grants and local governments has shown that the optimal program

duration is 12-14 weeks with a total of 500 hours. This time is enough for the adaptation period and professional retraining, which helps participants develop key competencies:

- ability to generate creative and innovative business ideas and choose effective strategies for their implementation;
- ability to develop business plans, economically justify and implement entrepreneurial projects;
- the ability to consciously take responsibility for making business decisions;
- ability to ensure capitalization of business in various fields of activity.

In addition to professional and specialized competencies, the program aims to provide participants with digital literacy skills, the use of Internet technologies, and a wide range of soft skills (teamwork, leadership, economic psychology, business ethics, communications, etc.).

The professional retraining program is divided into three logically sequential stages of training (preparatory, main, and final), and the ratio of theoretical (152 hours) to practical (348 hours) training is approximately 30/70.

The first stage involved studying the organizational, economic, legal, and psychological foundations of entrepreneurial activity, the way entrepreneurs think, search for innovations for various business entities, and setting up their own business in various fields. The students studied the patterns and advanced forms of organization of business structures, ways and methods of starting and running a business, regulations that define the legal framework of entrepreneurship, the main features of an entrepreneur's personality, the design of his or her thinking, requirements for entrepreneurial culture, psychology and ethics of behaviour.

The second stage of the retraining is aimed at acquiring skills in developing and drafting a business plan, choosing the optimal taxation system, finding financial resources for setting up an enterprise, accounting and reporting, using modern Internet technologies for business automation, marketing, and sales management.

The third (final) stage of the retraining is aimed at providing students with skills in understanding the functioning of international business, opportunities to choose partner countries for doing business, knowledge of modern methods of interaction between a company and an employee (outsourcing, freelancing, coworking) and opportunities to build their career and employment.

The outcome of the program was a business plan prepared by the participants, its presentation and public presentation before the panel of academic staff, business coaches, entrepreneurs and representatives of local governments. The best business plans in terms of innovation, creativity, realism, business implementation, payback period, and profitability were awarded cash prizes from interested stakeholders.

Along with professional retraining and educational activities, an integral part of the transition of veterans to civilian life (or after returning from the combat zone) is their social adaptation, which includes social and psychological adaptation, legal adaptation, assistance in setting up their own business and employment.

The social and psychological adaptation of project participants is a set of measures that allow servicemen and their family members, individually or as part of a study group, to get used to the conditions of the academic group and interaction with the teaching staff, the requirements of the educational process and the cultural environment of the university. This process takes into account the characteristic features and qualities of the individual in the educational process allowing them to take part in activities aimed at developing the psychological culture of the student and forming the self-awareness of the individual.

The forms of social and psychological adaptation for project participants included:

- Psychological training seminars combined with group counselling sessions with a psychologist;
- Participation of students in scientific, cultural and social events of the faculty and university-wide events.
- Involvement of students in related projects and trainings implemented at the university.
- Individual psychological support and counselling.

The close cooperation and active work of the organizers (Nord University and the International Foundation for Social Adaptation) and the project implementers (a network of universities and NGOs) allowed us to build and test a model of professional retraining and social adaptation for veterans and their families.

The sustainability of the model contributed to the fact that in 2021-2023, local authorities also began to join the process of social adaptation and professional retraining of servicemen and their families. As part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Program for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in the Chernivtsi Region for 2021-2022 and with funding from the Department of Regional Development of the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration, 15 additional participants received professional retraining and social adaptation services in 2021. Moreover, a number of additional social adaptation activities and business seminars were funded by the Department of Socio-Economic Development and Strategic Planning of the Chernivtsi City Council.

To improve the social adaptation and professional retraining program, at the final stage of each semester, an anonymous survey was conducted among participants regarding the quality of the program activities, evaluation of the performers and the effectiveness of participation in the program.

Chernihiv region: Chernihiv Polytechnic National University (CPNU)

From 2016 to 2022, more than 528 ATO/JFO veterans and their family members underwent professional retraining at CPNU. The gender distribution of group participants at different stages of the previous project was parity or close to it. The specifics of the program of a particular semester also influenced these indicators: 81% of men and 19% of women studied in the program «Internet Technologies in Business and WEB Design»; in the program «Entrepreneurship in the field of hotel and restaurant business» 31% of men, 69% of women; «Entrepreneurship in the field of health and recreation»: 22% of men, 78% of women; «Internet technologies, WEB design and English in business»: 53% of men, 47%

of women. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 55 years. However, the average age in each group varied: from 36 to 48 years.

The experience obtained working with veterans and their family members can be summarized as follows:

1. Importance of inclusive environment. Despite their different ages, military ranks, previous education, and level of IT or foreign language skills, the teachers organized the educational process in a way that was understandable and interesting to everyone: the theoretical part was immediately reinforced by practice. The trainers who provided the social adaptation aspect conducted their classes in a training format, where they gradually helped the students to unlock their personal and professional potential and supported their desire for development.
2. Optimization of training hours for retraining. Previous experience of implementing retraining and social adaptation courses shows that the duration of the educational process in this format should be short (e.g., 500 hours), as the students are result oriented. Many participants came to the courses with only an idea for their business, and the teachers helped them develop it into a real plan of action and figures: from business planning to presentations to potential investors. However, there were also those who came with a ready-made business plan, but for some reason did not dare to implement it. At the same time, retraining in the amount of 500 hours is quite intensive, as the result-oriented approach requires the formation of knowledge and skills necessary to perform not only educational tasks, but also for further competitiveness in the labour market.
3. Balance of theory and practice in education. Previous experience in retraining and social adaptation of veterans, servicemen and women and their families has shown that training should be practice-oriented, which is reflected in the content of each lesson and the way it is organized. For example, theoretical concepts are disclosed and analysed by teachers and participants (it is advisable to plan classes as interactive as possible), relevant examples or cases are discussed, and students perform individual or group tasks with further analysis of the results with the teacher. As for skills in IT or business planning, a foreign language, it is also necessary to plan additional independent work in the form of laboratory work, detailed market research (business niche), etc.
4. The need for psychological assistance. Despite the presence of a significant number of participants who had experienced loss, trauma, and other negative events related to the ATO/JFO, all participants showed interest in the programs and were motivated to participate. However, the work of trainers and psychologists on motivation and results orientation continued throughout the training. This helped the participants identify their internal motivations for participating in the program; set goals for themselves, both for participation in the program and for their professional and personal lives; and work out possible risks and ways to minimize them. The trainers paid special attention to the formation and development of existing personal qualities and social skills necessary for further professional activity. Thus, the training format covered personal growth, business psychology, business negotiations and correspondence, presentations of oneself and goods/services to different audiences, etc.

-
5. Improving programs and assessing the quality of education through communication with students. During the period of implementation of the program of professional retraining and social adaptation at the CPNU (from 2016 to 2022), substantive and organizational changes were developed and implemented. Each group of students of these courses had feedback from both the teachers of a particular discipline and the project coordinator at the university, which helped to consider the interests and wishes of the target audience. For example, given the interests of participants programs were developed to address both basics of entrepreneurship and specific areas («Internet Technologies in Business and WEB Design», «Entrepreneurship in the Hotel and Restaurant Business», «Entrepreneurship in the Field of Health and Recreation», «Internet Technologies, WEB Design and English in Business»).

Vinnitsia region: Vinnitsia National Technical University (VNTU)

VNTU has been implementing measures for the social and professional adaptation of veterans and their families and has experience in creating specialized training programs since 2014. During the period from 2014 to 2022, more than 500 people aged 22 to 50 underwent social and professional adaptation. Of these, approximately 40% were women and 60% were men.

The project was based on the professional retraining of the target group in civilian specialties that were in demand in the local labour market and included measures to assist project participants in social adaptation to living conditions in civil society.

VNTU worked on establishing an inclusive educational environment based on physical accessibility and social and psychological barrier-free environment. This facilitated the interaction of participants in the inclusive educational process and joint work. The result of this activity was the Veteran Development Center established in 2023 at VNTU together with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine and Vinnitsia Regional Military Administration.

Practical experience in implementing programs has shown that the optimal course duration for achieving both professional and soft competencies is 500 hours. A smaller number of hours does not provide a complete learning experience, while a larger number can lead to fatigue and reduced motivation among participants. The ratio of practical and theoretical classes was crucial. For adult learners with previous education, it is important to provide the basics of theoretical knowledge and the ability to search for information on their own. Therefore, the training programs included 70% of practical training.

The combination of professional and psychological adaptation creates a powerful synergistic effect. It is important to consider the social aspects and wishes of the trainees. To achieve success in the project implementation, it is important to conduct individual and group work on the social and psychological adaptation of project participants. The aspects that emphasize the need for psychological assistance are as follows:

- Post-traumatic stress: Veterans may face post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression after the war. Psychological support helps them to cope with these emotional challenges.
- Family support: Family members of veterans may also experience stress and anxiety. Psychological support helps them understand and support each other.

-
- Social adaptation: Psychological support contributes to the successful adaptation of veterans to civilian life after the war.
 - Reducing stigma: Mental health care helps to reduce stigma associated with mental health and promotes open communication.
 - Suicide prevention: Psychological support can save lives by helping veterans overcome internal conflicts and depression.

Seeking psychological help is a step towards preserving mental health and improving the quality of life for veterans and their families.

The following psychological adaptation measures were successfully used in the Norway-Ukraine NUPASS project at VNTU together with the NGO «CSA «European Initiative» and helped to improve the mental health and quality of life of veterans and their families:

- Individual counselling: During the training period, veterans and their family members had the opportunity to contact a psychologist for personal counselling. This successfully helped them cope with stress, anxiety and other emotional challenges.
- Group sessions: Group sessions allowed veterans to share their experiences, support each other and feel supported by the training group.
- Psychotherapy: Veterans could receive psychotherapeutic assistance to resolve psychological problems.
- Training on stress resistance: The trainings helped veterans develop skills to strengthen their stress resistance.
- Family therapy: Family counselling sessions were held for veterans' family members to support them in interaction and conflict resolution.

Odesa region: South Ukrainian State Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushynsky (SUNPU)

From 2015 to 2020, SUNPU participated in the international project Ukraine-Norway. During this period, about 800 people (41% women and 59% men) were retrained. Professional adaptation was carried out under the Business Management program, guided by the needs of the labour market. The educational plan consisted of 500 academic hours in total: 184 hours of lectures (36%); 310 hours of practical classes (64%); 6 hours - presentation of the project work (business plan).

The following disciplines were taught:

- Finance and lending to business entities.
- Management of anti-crisis activities of the enterprise.
- Small business management and time management.
- Fundamentals of sectoral economics and entrepreneurship. Marketing activities in business.
- Psychology of small business and business relations.
- Business planning in small business.

-
- Information technologies in commercial activities.
 - Legal basis and economic security of entrepreneurial activity.
 - Project management, public procurement in Ukraine (tenders).
 - Practical stressology. Prevention of stressful conditions in the workforce and business.
 - Defence of a project work (business plan).

During the educational process, anonymous surveys were conducted with the project's participants regarding the quality of the educational process.

Much attention was paid to practical training on psychological adaptation and group communication. The project graduates received psychosocial adaptation and legal assistance for civilian life helping graduates find employment or start their own businesses.

Summary

The TURBO project is rooted in a long-standing partnership between Norway and Ukraine, which began in 2003 with the goal of mitigating the social consequences of military and economic reforms, particularly for retired military personnel and their family members.

The project was characterized by strong collaboration among universities, NGOs, and other stakeholders, forming a social partnership model that addressed various social challenges.

Figure 2 illustrates the model of professional and social adaptation of veterans and their family members (Vakulenko et al., 2021). NGOs played a pivotal role by providing psychological and legal support, assisting with employment and business creation, and ensuring high completion rates for the retraining programs. Professional retraining, conducted by partner universities, typically lasted 3 to 5 months and included 350-500 training hours, with an emphasis on balancing theoretical knowledge with practical application.

The TURBO project built upon these experiences, leveraging the expertise of multiple universities that had previously worked with vulnerable populations. It also made significant contributions to the psychological adaptation of veterans and civilians, a critical need in Ukraine that had been under-addressed prior to the project's inception.

The model in Figure 2 details four important stages that create conditions for veterans and their family members to succeed – to get socially adapted by becoming employed or self-employed. With slight modifications, this model may be adapted for retraining and social adaptation of IDPs.

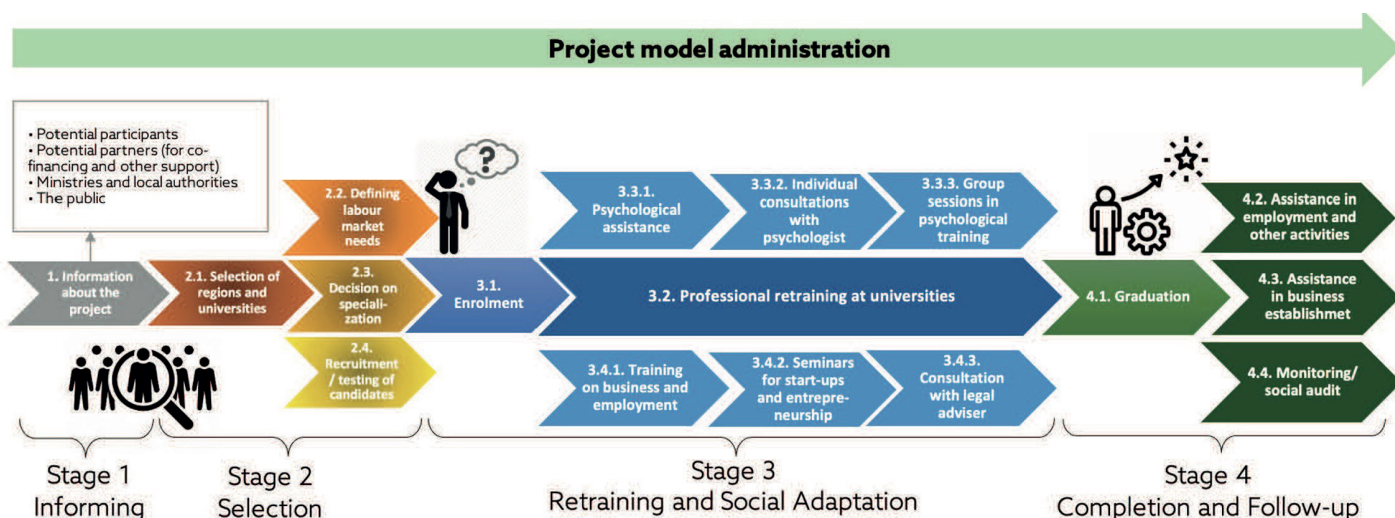


Figure 2. The model of professional and social adaptation of veterans and their family members (from Vakulenko et al., 2021, p. 13)

1.2. Lessons learned from retraining and social adaptation of veterans and their family members

The journey of social and professional adaptation for veterans and their families across various regions of Ukraine has been shaped by a blend of shared goals and unique approaches, reflecting both the common challenges faced by this vulnerable group and the diverse contexts within which different universities operate. The overarching goal was to facilitate the successful transition of veterans from military to civilian life through targeted retraining programs, psychological support, and social adaptation measures. While each institution tailored its methods to its local environment and the specific needs of its participants, several common practices and distinct variations emerged across the initiatives.

A consistent feature across all participating universities was the recognition of the importance of an inclusive educational environment. Institutions like LPNU and VNTU emphasized the creation of barrier-free spaces that catered not only to physical accessibility but also to social and psychological inclusivity. This commitment to inclusivity was echoed in the programs offered by WUNU and YFCNU, which focused on ensuring that all participants, regardless of their backgrounds or personal circumstances, had equal opportunities for successful learning and integration.

Another shared approach was the optimization of the retraining course duration. Most universities converged on the idea that a 500-hour program, spread over three to five months, struck the right balance between intensity and effectiveness. This duration was deemed sufficient to cover both professional competencies and soft skills while maintaining participant engagement and preventing burnout. The 70/30 split between practical and theoretical training emerged as the preferred model, acknowledging that adult learners benefited more from hands-on experience complemented by foundational theoretical knowledge.

Psychological support was universally recognized as a crucial component of the adaptation

process, though the methods of implementation varied. At LPNU, psychological support was deeply integrated into the educational process, with a structured approach that included initial diagnostics, ongoing counselling, and final assessments. WUNU, on the other hand, found that intensive psychological training at the start of the program was particularly effective in building group cohesion, which enhanced the overall learning experience. CPNU and VNTU both highlighted the importance of continuous psychological support, noting that veterans often faced lingering trauma and stress that required ongoing attention throughout their retraining.

Despite these similarities, the diversity in approaches was also evident, particularly in how universities tailored their programs to the specific demands of their local labour markets. For instance, CPNU's focus on IT and business planning was a response to the growing demand for these skills in their region, while SUNPU's emphasis on Business Management reflected the needs of the local economy in Odesa. This responsiveness to local economic conditions ensured that the retraining programs were not only relevant but also positioned participants for successful reintegration into the civilian workforce.

Additionally, the methods of participant engagement and feedback varied. YFCNU implemented a highly structured program with clear stages, including preparatory, main, and final phases, allowing for a progressive buildup of competencies. WUNU and CPNU placed a strong emphasis on regular feedback loops, using participant surveys and direct communication with educators to continuously refine their offerings. This iterative approach allowed these universities to adapt their programs in real-time, ensuring they met the evolving needs of their students.

In conclusion, the collective efforts of these universities highlight a complex interplay of shared strategies and localized adaptations in the process of veteran reintegration. While all institutions recognized the critical importance of an inclusive environment, optimal course duration, and psychological support, the diversity in their approaches reflects a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by veterans in different regions of Ukraine. This blend of common goals and innovative approaches underscores the strength of the collaborative efforts that have been important in supporting the social and professional adaptation of veterans and their families locally.

1.3. IDPs as a vulnerable group in Ukrainian society: peculiarities and ways to address pressing social demands

This sub-section aims to explore the unique challenges faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine after the onset of the full-scale war in 2022, identifying them as a particularly vulnerable group within the society. It addresses critical aspects such as their legal, economic, social, and psychological vulnerabilities, and compares them to veterans and their families (as a group with whom TURBO partner-universities have previously worked) and discusses potential strategies to meet the IDPs' pressing social needs.

IDPs in Ukraine encounter distinct challenges that set them apart from other vulnerable groups. One of the primary challenges is their legal and social status. Many IDPs struggle with understanding and navigating bureaucratic procedures to obtain necessary documentation, which in turn hinders their access to essential services such as social benefits, employment,

and housing. This legal vulnerability significantly impacts their ability to integrate into new communities and achieve stability.

Economically, IDPs face considerable struggle. Displacement has disrupted their livelihoods, leading to a loss of income and increased dependence on state support or humanitarian aid. The Ukrainian economy, already strained by the full-scale invasion, struggles to absorb this influx of economically vulnerable individuals. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that many IDPs originate from regions that were already economically disadvantaged, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and marginalization.

Social and psychological vulnerabilities also play a significant role in the difficulties faced by IDPs. Social inclusion remains a major challenge, as many IDPs experience discrimination and social exclusion in host communities, where they are often perceived as outsiders. This social alienation is further intensified by differences in language, culture, and regional identities. The psychological trauma associated with displacement – such as the loss of homes, communities, and, in some cases, family members – has profound long-term effects on the mental health of IDPs.

Given their peculiar vulnerabilities (see Figure 3), IDPs in Ukraine have several pressing social needs that need to be addressed. The most immediate needs are access to housing, employment, and social services (International Organization for Migration, 2024). Many IDPs are living in temporary or inadequate housing, often in overcrowded conditions, which can exacerbate social tensions and lead to health problems. Employment opportunities are also limited, particularly for those who have been displaced from industrial regions, where job skills may not be easily transferable to other parts of the country (Schuettler and Caron, 2020). Furthermore, IDPs have a pressing need for legal support including assistance in obtaining identity documentation, registering for social benefits, and securing property rights in their areas of origin or new locations (International Organization for Migration, 2024).

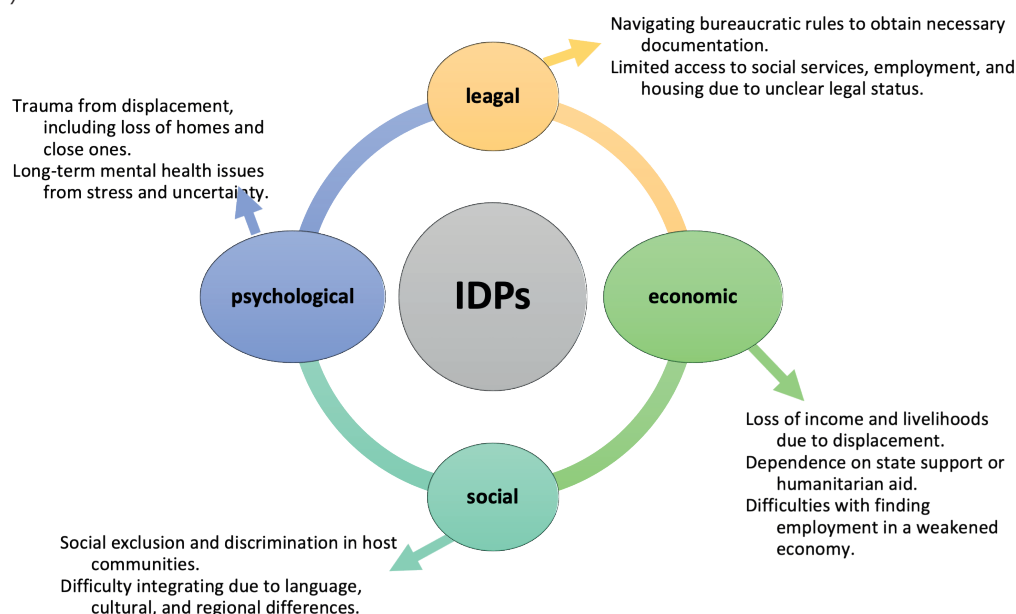


Figure 3. Key aspects of IDPs' vulnerability

Therefore, the overall pressing need of IDPs is social adaptation and integration into a new community. Social adaptation is a broad concept that encompasses not only employment but also the psychological and social aspects of integrating into civilian life. This includes building new social networks, adjusting to civilian norms, and dealing with the psychological impacts of military service or displacement. For IDPs, social adaptation also involves overcoming the trauma of displacement, finding housing, and integrating into new communities, often with economic and social challenges.

This is crucial for helping individuals adjust to new circumstances after significant life changes, such as leaving the military or being displaced due to conflict. While retraining is more focused on employment, social adaptation addresses a wider range of needs to help individuals rebuild their lives and integrate into society.

Addressing these needs requires a multifaceted approach:

1. Employment support. Tailored job training programs that match the skills of IDPs with the demands of the local labour market are crucial. Incentives for businesses to hire displaced persons can also aid in economic revitalization and reduce the burden on state support systems.
2. Legal assistance. Expanding legal assistance programs to help IDPs navigate complex bureaucratic processes is essential. NGOs can provide critical support by offering free legal aid and advocating for the rights of IDPs.
3. Social inclusion and psychological support. Efforts to eliminate the social stigmatization of IDPs are necessary to foster greater understanding and acceptance in host communities. Public awareness campaigns, combined with the provision of psychological support services for those who have experienced trauma, are key to promoting integration and mental well-being.

When comparing the social adaptation and professional retraining of IDPs to that of veterans, several differences emerge (see Table 1). While both groups require substantial support in transitioning to new circumstances – veterans from military to civilian life, and IDPs from displacement to stability, there are several peculiarities in these groups that further frame social adaptation process in different ways. Retraining for veterans often involves a significant shift to civilian employment, while IDPs generally need guidance on entering new job markets or industries that are relevant to their new places of residence. For IDPs, understanding the local labour market and receiving guidance on potential employment opportunities is crucial. Coordinated efforts with relevant ministries, local employment centres, and key stakeholders are essential for success.

Furthermore, IDPs face a challenge of forced relocation, often due to the loss or injury of family members and the destruction of their homes. Unlike veterans, who may be returning to familiar communities, many IDPs have no home to return to and must rebuild their lives from the ground up. This necessitates a distinct approach to social and psychological support, tailored to the trauma and challenges of displacement.

Table 1. Distinction between IDPs and veterans and their family members

Characteristic	IDPs	Veterans and their family members
Legal vulnerability	Difficulty in obtaining necessary documentation; access to services; legal status.	Transition from military to civilian legal status; navigating benefits systems.
Economic vulnerability	Loss of livelihoods, increased dependency on aid; difficulty in labour market adaptation.	Need for retraining and job placement in civilian roles.
Social vulnerability	Risk of discrimination, social exclusion in host communities.	Reintegration into civilian society; rebuilding social networks.
Psychological vulnerability	Trauma from displacement, loss of homes and family.	Trauma from military service; need for mental health support.
Retraining focus	Adapting to new local labour markets, skills matching.	Transitioning from military to civilian employment.
Social adaptation	Rebuilding lives and resettling in new communities, overcoming trauma.	Adjusting to civilian life, rebuilding social identity.

The challenges faced by IDPs in Ukraine are multifaceted, involving legal, economic, social, and psychological vulnerabilities that require comprehensive strategies for effective social adaptation and integration. While there are parallels between the needs of IDPs and veterans, particularly in the areas of legal assistance, employment support, and psychological care, the distinct circumstances of displacement necessitate unique approaches. By recognizing these pressing social demands through coordinated efforts, Ukrainian universities can better support IDPs in rebuilding their lives and contributing to the resilience and recovery of local communities.

PART 2. NEW MODEL FOR RETRAINING AND SOCIAL ADAPTATION OF IDPS

This section outlines the innovative approach Ukrainian universities have developed for the retraining and social adaptation of IDPs. The focus is on integrating micro-credentials, involving non-academic partners, and utilizing digital tools to create flexible, high-quality educational programs that align with dynamic regional labour market needs. The selected specializations for IDP retraining programs are discussed to explain the match between the specific demands of regional labour markets and needs competences required in various regions. These programs aim to bridge the skills gap, enhance employability, and contribute to the economic recovery of war-affected areas. Furthermore, the section explores strategies and funding mechanisms to ensure the long-term sustainability of these retraining and social adaptation programs. It highlights the importance of leveraging common and region-specific funding sources, including government support, international organizations, and private sector contributions, to guarantee the continued success of these vital initiatives.

2.1. Development of the new approach for retraining and social adaptation of IDPs

Ukrainian universities design the programme and its curricula as micro-credentials at university level to increase or change qualifications of IDPs and to ensure the employability of unemployed graduate IDPs holding a bachelor or higher degree in any field. Curricula designed on micro-credential principles bring together courses that aim to provide a student with specific knowledge, skills and competencies that simultaneously respond to societal, personal, cultural and/or labour market needs. This approach is essential, to design relevant, high-quality and flexible learning programmes, reactively responding to societal needs and dynamic labour market trends.

The European approach to micro-credentials is based on 10 principles: quality, transparency, relevance, valid assessment, learning pathways, recognition, portable, learner-centred, authentic, and information and guidance (European Commission, 2021). These principles form a basis for developing holistic study offers at Ukrainian higher educational institutions (HEIs) for IDPs. Importantly, Ukrainian HEIs already have experience in providing short-term trainings which are encouraged by the Ministry of Higher Education as a part of its lifelong learning vision. However, micro-credentials are not that commonly used in Ukraine.

Ukrainian HEIs develop educational programmes to match the needs of IDPs and the local labour market. The content and duration of programmes is determined by each university, depending on the form and purpose of training. The novelty of our approach is engagement of non-academic partners – local NGOs into designing and delivering the programmes. The programme's co-production can be exemplified as follows. Academic staff at the universities provide theoretical foundations in the field of business, management and other relevant subjects. NGOs contribute by enhancing employability and improving psychological condition of IDPs via:

- Involvement of practitioners from business by organizing meetings and training sessions with practitioners as a part of study visits to local businesses, to show students practical operation within a company.
- Assistance with employment and provide consultancy support.
- Recruitment of psychologists to carry out diagnostics and training sessions at the beginning and the end of the programme and to provide counselling throughout the programme.

The programmes to be delivered to IDPs will last 500 hours (17 ECTS) and be conducted on a semester basis. The main difference between micro-credentials and traditional education (full degree education) is that micro-credentials allow providing practical and up-to-date material that can be quickly modified if needed. Such educational material is not included in long-term higher education programs in a selected specialization. Another feature of micro-credentials is the versatility of the modules, which can be used to mix different subjects for IDPs' professional development.

To make programmes engaging and useful for IDPs and to ensure a student-centred approach, Ukrainian HEIs digitalise educational content by incorporating and actively using IT to deliver their programs. Since there is a divergence in digital approaches (different online platforms, digital tools and cloud services) among universities, below the experience of partners on how they digitalise the programmes, store data and project it, manage courses and communicate with students, and share the best practices.

Below we provide a detailed description of a new approach for professional retraining and social adaptation of IDPs in each region.

Lviv

LPNU is actively implementing short-term programs for professional development in various areas of professional education. In particular, the Department of Sociology and Social Work at Lviv Polytechnic National University has experience in developing and implementing such programs as:

1. Social and professional adaptation of servicemen and women discharged from the military, veterans and their families to civilian life (based on NUPASS), which includes the following modules:
 - Project management (500 hours)
 - Software quality control (500 hours)
 - Strategic development of territorial communities (500 hours)
 - Technologies for starting and running a business (500 hours)
2. Social and professional adaptation of veterans (funded from the state budget program), containing the following modules:
 - Creative management practices in business and English (250 hours)
 - Software quality control (500 hours)

-
3. Professional skills development (funded by the voucher program of the Employment Center and the Pension Fund of Ukraine) with the following modules:
- Advanced training in the professional program «Social Security» (150 hours)
 - Advanced training in the professional program «Social Work» (150 hours)
 - Organizational and legal framework of pension provision in Ukraine (72 hours)
 - Team and team building in the context of managed change (30 hours)
 - Psychology of effective performance (30 hours)
 - Communication and interaction (30 hours)

Based on previous experience, analysis of the current needs of IDPs and labour market trends, the new micro-credential program developed for the TURBO project is "Social Entrepreneurship in Social Services" specifically for IDPs. The field of social services in Lviv is large due to the large number of individuals, families and groups in difficult life circumstances who need help and support.

The program «Social Entrepreneurship in Social Services» consists of three interrelated blocks that ensure the professional competencies of a social entrepreneur in the field of social services:

Module 1: Social services as a set of measures aimed at specific population groups.

Module 2. Social enterprise as an agent of positive change in the community.

Module 3: Soft skills of a social entrepreneur.

The educational program is focused on developing:

- Knowledge of the basics of social services in Ukraine.
- Knowledge of and ability to apply state standards for the provision of social services in practice.
- Knowledge of regulatory and legal support in the field of social services.
- Understanding of technologies for providing social services to certain categories of the population.
- Understanding the importance of gender aspects of social services.
- Ability to use digital tools in the provision of social services.
- Knowledge of the basics and technologies of social entrepreneurship.
- Knowledge of community needs, assessment methods.
- Ability to communicate with the internal and external environment of a social enterprise.
- Understanding of various aspects of project management and ability to apply it in practice.
- Understanding the importance of and ability to supervise in social entrepreneurship.

To this, practitioners involved in the educational process to share with the students the practical aspects of providing social services to various categories of the population, problems and opportunities for implementing social projects by IDPs specifically in the Lviv region. The cooperating NGO is «New Society of Ukraine», who will be actively engaged throughout the semester.

Ternopil

WUNU has already developed several short-term programs in cooperation with charitable organizations, namely "Accounting Automation" program and "Micro- entrepreneurship" program, "First Psychological Aid and Self-Help in Crisis Situations" program.

Entrepreneurship is an effective means of achieving economic independence, which is especially important for IDPs who have lost their stable income. Entrepreneurship skills will contribute to the social integration of IDPs by helping them build a new social and professional network. New businesses founded by IDPs can become drivers of the local economy, creating jobs and developing new markets. Thus, to address the needs of IDPs and boost the local economy, the micro-credential program "Entrepreneurship" will be provided focusing on opening and running own business.

The program is built on the modules focusing on psychology of business, personnel management, basic accounting, reporting and planning.

Upon completion of the course, the students will be able to:

- Master the concepts of personality psychology within managerial relations.
- Develop skills in managerial decision-making, business communication, group dynamics management, and innovation processes.
- Analyse managerial functions, provide psychological assistance, and manage staff relations, negotiations, conflicts, and personal growth.
- Understand legal principles governing entrepreneurial activity and navigate Ukrainian legislation related to entrepreneurship.
- Create strategic plans, allocate tasks and resources effectively, and design organizational structures.
- Attract, select, and hire qualified employees, and apply motivational theories to enhance productivity.
- Lead teams, make effective decisions, and develop leadership skills.
- Acquire interpersonal, negotiation, meeting, and presentation skills.
- Gain knowledge of financial reporting, accounting, and tax procedures.
- Use information technology and specialized software in business.
- Develop business plans and deliver persuasive presentations to stakeholders.

Chernivtsi

YFCNU implements short-term programs for professional development in various areas of vocational education, in particular:

-
1. for teachers of general secondary and professional higher education institutions, e.g., «Vector overcoming of educational losses: inclusion, psychological support, innovative technologies» (30 hours); «Methodological innovations in the work of a teacher of Ukrainian language and literature in mixed learning» (30 hours); «Online services, media literacy and formation of psycho-emotional climate during the educational process» (30 hours) and others.
 2. for young scholars and teachers of HEIs on the topic «Pedagogical and research competence of a young scientist and teacher of higher education: current challenges and prospects» (30 hours).
 3. social and professional adaptation of military personnel, retired veterans and their families to civilian life based on the experience of the NUPASS project: «Business Security Management (500 hours); Business Security (500 hours); Organization and Management of Business Activities (500 hours).

Under TURBO project, a new micro-credential program for IDPs will be developed focusing on "Integrated Development: from Adaptation to Entrepreneurship" with a total of 500 academic hours. The content of the program was determined based on analysis of IDPs' academic interest, trends on labour market of the Chernivtsi region and regional strategy on fostering of entrepreneurship in the region.

This micro-credential program will have the following objectives:

- Facilitate professional, social and psychological adaptation of IDPs to increase their motivation to actively seek employment and start a family business in Chernivtsi.
- Strengthening the entrepreneurial capacity of IDPs through participation in training modules on starting a family business.
- Assistance in the employment of IDPs through participation in counselling seminars on the Chernivtsi labour market, job search methods, resume writing and interviewing, etc.

Key competencies obtained upon completion of the program:

- ability to generate creative business ideas and choose effective strategies for their implementation;
- ability to develop, economically justify and implement entrepreneurial projects;
- ability to consciously take responsibility for making business decisions;
- ability to ensure capitalization of business in various fields of activity.

The program "Integrated Development: from Adaptation to Entrepreneurship" includes three modules, each of which will have two components: training blocks and training meetings.

Module 1: Economic and socio-psychological foundations of entrepreneurship

Module 2: Organizing and running your own business

Module 3: Organizational and personal development

Chernihiv

The university has experience in implementing short-term programs, the so-called certified programs. Such courses are usually specialized, and range in topics, covering a wide variety of different industries. For example: «Starting a Tourism Business in Ukraine», «English for Military Personnel», «E-Governance and E-Democracy», «Business Management: Technology, Modern Trends and Models» and other courses in the socio-humanitarian and technical fields. The target audience of such programs, depending on the focus, may include civil servants, military personnel, managers and executives of organizations, start-up entrepreneurs, etc. Certified programs are offered on a fee basis or are implemented with the support of international grants and donors (Erasmus+ program, UNDP, IOM, etc.).

For IDPs, the new program will become a unique opportunity for acquiring a set of professional and social skills, helping to integrate IDPs into new communities by providing them with up-to-date knowledge and skills that are in demand in the labour market.

To ensure maximum inclusiveness of training, especially in the frontline region, the educational process will be conducted in a mixed mode (online and offline). This will include video lectures, interactive tasks, practical cases, and additional materials for self-study. Thus, participants will be able to study safely and conveniently, considering individual needs and circumstances.

Modern business is increasingly moving into a digital space. Providing IDPs with the necessary knowledge in this area increases their chances of successful employment, professional development and contributes to their economic independence by reducing the burden on social services. It also contributes to the overall economic recovery of the region where they reside. Thus, the new micro-credential program will focus on “TURBO: Educational Program for Small and Medium Business Development” that will include the following focus on project management, social entrepreneurship, psychology of business, web development basics.

In addition, the program includes components of social and psychological support and professional adaptation:

- Business training
- Consultations on job search and employment
- Preparation of IT solutions

This comprehensive approach to curriculum development guarantees its effectiveness, relevance and sustainability, which will contribute to the successful integration of IDPs into society and their professional development.

Kyiv city

KNU has extensive experience in organizing and conducting short-term educational programs as it is considered a strategic priority at the university. The university has developed 18 short-term programs that have been conducted remotely in real time for security reasons, including five certified programs; a training seminar and a series of online

webinars as part of the program «Adult Education. Week 2023». Such programs as «Clinical Psychology», «Political Psychology», «Family Counselling». The costs of these trainings were mainly covered by the students, but in some cases the program can run on a free basis.

Educational programs for IDPs have certain specifics: the need for a combination of psychological support and adaptation; versatility (focusing on a wide range of students in a wide range of specialties); the regional labour market trends, and the development of skills for transfer outside of professional activities in the war and post-war period. Thus, the suggested micro-credential program is “Business in a Digital Environment” aimed at forming and acquiring skills in digitalization of business processes to increase business efficiency in the context of digital transformation of the economy. This micro-credential program will become the first such program developed at the Faculty of Economics.

The program will include 500 hours during one semester and will include a combination of educational and training modules, social and psychological adaptation to increase the motivation of IDPs, business training, job search and employment counselling.

Key competencies obtained upon completion of the program:

- Develop understanding of ways to foster business efficiency through digitalization
- Gain proficiency in marketplace operations, online trading, and digitized product management.
- Develop IT business analysis skills.
- Develop critical thinking skills (self-esteem, leadership, emotional intelligence), and the ability to work effectively in teams to drive business development.
- Advance communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal), and social skills necessary for assessing and building relationships with business partners and employees.

To address the need for psychological assistance and motivation for job search and entrepreneurial activities among IDPs, the cooperation with a partner NGO with experience in working with war-affected populations will be organized. This will facilitate social and psychological adaptation of IDPs. In addition, cooperation between university and local businesses in the employment of IDPs will be organized through IDPs’ participation in workshops, market training in the region where they currently reside, job search methods, resume preparation and interviewing, technology of visiting the enterprise.

The program will consist of the following preliminary modules:

Module 1. Introduction to the digital environment, digital transformation with business.

Module 2. Business models

Module 3. Entrepreneurial thinking

Vinnytsia

The Veteran Development Center (VDC) has been operating at VNTU since August 2023. Supported by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine and the International Organization for Migration, the VDC aims to reintegrate veterans and their families by developing professional skills, retraining, and promoting employment.

VNTU plays a crucial role by implementing a pilot project to introduce veteran assistants, offering short-term training in «Organization of Work for Specialists Supporting War Veterans and Demobilized Persons.» This program, developed to meet the Ministry's requirements, equips specialists with practical skills in veteran support, focusing on regulatory frameworks and the functions of state and local authorities in veteran rights protection. The program's duration is 180 hours. From August 25 to March 1, 2024, the VDC trained 65 veteran assistants from various territorial communities. The experience of VNTU's VDC in creating short-term programs will be applied for the work with IDPs.

The IDPs will be offered the "Social entrepreneurship" micro-credential program for the city's community is an important tool for developing entrepreneurship and increasing the economic viability of the local community. This program will focus on:

- Entrepreneurship development: to create an enabling environment for the development of social enterprises. It provides entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge and skills to start and manage a business.
- Social responsibility: Social entrepreneurs solve social problems and contribute to improving the quality of life in the community. The curriculum helps them understand the importance of social responsibility and put it into practice.
- Partnerships and sustainable connections: to facilitate connections between entrepreneurs, NGOs and government agencies and to share experiences and resources.
- Financial literacy: The training program provides entrepreneurs with knowledge of financial management, budgeting, and financial reporting.
- Support for innovation: The program promotes the development of innovative ideas and entrepreneurial projects in the community.

The involvement of social entrepreneurs from among IDPs in the training program helps to create sustainable businesses that solve social problems and contribute to the development of the city.

The program «Social entrepreneurship and information technology in business» will consist of the following modules:

Module 1: Peculiarities of business creation:

Module 2: Organization of business technologies

Module 3: Developing practical skills of a social entrepreneur

Odesa

SUNPU has experience in conducting various programs and trainings that have a short duration. For example:

- professional development in various types (courses, internships, etc.) and forms (in-person, distance) for managers, teachers, researchers, and specialists in the socio-economic sphere
- summer and winter schools; master classes, trainings, coaching, workshops, scientific and methodological seminars on professional development, methods of teaching professional subjects, inclusion and psychological support of the educational process
- scientific research, scientific conferences, seminars on topical issues of professional development of managers and specialists in the socio-economic sphere.

The new micro-credential program "Business and Technology: A New Start" will be developed for IDPs to integrate and adapt to local community and achieve economic independence.

The program consists of obligatory and selective modules covering such topics as: digitalization, Conflict mediation, Start-up, entrepreneurship and others.

The educational program can significantly help internally displaced persons in Odesa region in several important ways:

- Increasing self-awareness and self-development will help to understand individual strengths and weaknesses, identify potential and promote its development.
- Psychological support will help develop emotional and stress management skills.
- Increasing stress tolerance will help IDPs cope with the psychological difficulties arising from displacement.
- Developing adaptation skills to respond effectively to change and uncertainty.
- Conflict management will teach how to resolve conflicts peacefully and find compromises.
- Entrepreneurship will provide the knowledge and skills to establish their own business.
- Economic independence: Assistance in creating sources of income.
- Digital literacy: Improving knowledge and skills in using modern technologies.
- Empowerment: Access to new forms of learning, work, and social interaction.
- Financial literacy: Learning the basics of doing business and managing finances.

In this way, the program will help IDPs not only adapt to new conditions, but also develop new skills that will facilitate their integration into society, improve their living standards and personal development.

Alignment of selected specialization with regional labour market trends

The selection of specializations for retraining IDPs by Ukrainian universities is strategically motivated by the need to align educational programs with the evolving demands of regional labour markets. These specializations were chosen based on analyses of both the existing skills of IDPs and the specific economic needs of the regions where they have relocated (for detailed analysis, see report on TURBO Stakeholders: mapping multiple needs and methods of assessment).

Ukrainian labor market has undergone significant shifts due to the war, resulting in a mismatch between the skills of the labour force and the current demands in different regions. This situation is exacerbated by the geographical relocation of businesses from conflict zones to safer areas, primarily in the western and central regions of Ukraine.

The most required positions across different Ukrainian regions reflect the local economic demands shaped by the ongoing conflict and business relocations (Sudakov and Lisohor, 2023; National Qualifications Agency, 2023; National Institute for Strategic Studies, 2023). In Lviv, there's a strong need for sales managers, client relationship managers, and social entrepreneurs. Ternopil and Chernivtsi regions focus on roles like accountants and business administrators, while Chernihiv seeks web developers and project managers. Kyiv demands software developers and telecommunications specialists. Vinnytsia prioritizes sales managers and accountants, and Odesa emphasizes the need for digitalization specialists and entrepreneurs. These demands highlight the necessity for targeted retraining programs to align IDPs' skills with regional market needs. In particular:

1. With a significant number of businesses relocating to Lviv, there is an increased demand for roles in business management, social services, and entrepreneurship. This demand has led to the development of the «Social Entrepreneurship in Social Services» program at LPNU, focusing on equipping IDPs with skills in social service provision, digital tools, and project management.
2. The labour market in Ternopil shows a need for skills in entrepreneurship, management, and accounting. WUNU's program on «Entrepreneurship» is designed to address these needs by offering training in business management, strategic planning, and financial literacy, thus empowering IDPs to establish and manage their own businesses.
3. Given the lack of large industrial enterprises in Chernivtsi and a focus on entrepreneurial development, YFCNU developed the «Integrated Development: from Adaptation to Entrepreneurship» program. This program aims to support the social and psychological adaptation of IDPs while enhancing their entrepreneurial capacities.
4. The Chernihiv region, affected by ongoing conflict and with a shifting economic landscape, requires skills in digital services and business management. CPNU's «TURBO: Educational Program for Small and Medium Business Development» focuses on providing IDPs with essential skills in web development, project management, and social entrepreneurship. The program also includes significant psychological support to help IDPs adapt and thrive in their new environment.
5. As a hub for IT and digital services, Kyiv city has a strong demand for digital business skills. KNU responded by developing the «Business in a Digital Environment» program, which prepares IDPs for roles in digital transformation and IT business analysis.

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6. Vinnytsia, with its growing focus on supporting veterans and its strategic location, requires a workforce skilled in social entrepreneurship and business management. VNTU's «Social Entrepreneurship and IT in Business» program is designed to foster entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and social responsibility among IDPs, ensuring they are equipped to start and manage businesses that contribute to the local economy.
 7. The demand for digital literacy and entrepreneurship in Odesa region led to the development of the «Business and Technology: A New Start» program at SUNPU. This program is designed to enhance digital and entrepreneurial skills, crucial for economic independence in the digital age.

In addition to being tailored to meet regional labour market demands, these programs also incorporate the socio-psychological support necessary for IDPs, many of whom face significant challenges due to their displacement. The inclusion of psychological support and social adaptation components ensures that the training addresses both the professional and personal development needs of IDPs, making them more resilient and better equipped to integrate into new communities.

Summary

The novelty of the new model is in universities' leading role in developing and co-producing (with the contribution of non-academic partners – local NGOs) programs in the field of business and management for IDPs, which has not been systematically addressed before. This approach will help to obtain new and/or improve previously acquired professional competencies of IDPs mostly based on practical training, thus increasing the chances of employment and competitiveness in the labour market. As discussed above, IDPs need to get support in adapting socially, professionally and psychologically to the new community. This requires complex actions to reduce the negative impact of the socio-psychological consequences of displacement from temporarily occupied territories or from territories where hostilities were/are being conducted to another region. Moreover, strengthen the capacity of IDPs for self- realisation through employment or the opening of small businesses. Therefore, the program is co-produced in a close cooperation between universities and local NGOs (that will provide specialised training in employment and psychological assistance).

The structure of the program is framed as a combination of educational and training modules, social-psychological adaptation to increase IDPs' motivation, business training, consultations on job search and employment. The programmes will include the following components:

1. Forming knowledge, skills and competencies in the field of business and management, integrated into developed micro-credentials through training by HEIs.
2. Socio-psychological adaptation of IDPs to overcome experienced stress, increase their psychological resilience and gain the motivation to actively search for work and entrepreneurship, conducted by seven NGOs experienced in working with civilian people affected by war, located in the same regions as the partner university.
3. Collaboration between universities, NGOs and local businesses in the employment of IDPs, through their participation in seminars to study the labour market of the region

where they currently reside, job search methods, writing resumes and attending job interviews, as well as visiting the enterprises.

Developing micro-credentials, their further testing and institutionalisation will contribute to the integration of Ukrainian HEIs in the EU educational space.

IDPs face problems with employment for several reasons: psychological (stress and depression) and low motivation, expectations of a quick return to the place of their previous residence (up to 20%), and the lack of compliance of the previously acquired profession with the labour market needs in the new region.

All universities participating in the TURBO project have experience in organizing certified programs lasting from 30 hours (1 credit) to 210 hours (7 credits). These are purely educational programs. Given their participation in the NUPASS project, universities have experience in comprehensively addressing the problem of social and professional adaptation of war veterans and their families. The previously applied project model provides a basis to address the educational need (i.e., professional retraining), as well as psychological and legal adaptation, and assistance in getting employed or starting a business.

Each university selected an area of retraining for IDPs under the micro-credentials and proposed a draft of the program with a total duration of 500 academic hours, including 360 hours of professional retraining and 140 hours of social adaptation (including psychological assistance and enhanced employability). The summary of programs is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The programs planned for IDPs by Ukrainian universities

University	Program Title	Objective	Key Competencies
LPNU	Social Entrepreneurship in Social Services	Develop competencies for social entrepreneurship	Understanding social services, digital tools, project management
WUNU	Entrepreneurship	Develop entrepreneurial skills and business management	Managerial skills, strategic planning, financial literacy
YFCNU	Integrated Development: from Adaptation to Entrepreneurship	Support professional, social, psychological adaptation and entrepreneurial capacity	Business planning, management, social responsibility
CPNU	TURBO: Educational Program for Small and Medium Business Development	Provide digital and business skills to boost employment and economic independence	Web development, financial decision-making, project management
KNU	Business in a Digital Environment	Equip students with digital business skills and psychological support for entrepreneurial activities	Digital business strategies, IT business analysis, leadership
VNTU	Social Entrepreneurship and IT in Business	Foster entrepreneurship, social responsibility, and financial literacy	Business planning, financial management, team building
SUNPU	Business and Technology: A New Start	Enhance self-awareness, psychological resilience, and entrepreneurial skills	Emotional intelligence, conflict management, digital literacy

After official approval by the Academic Council of the university, the curricula are published, and the partners are ready to enrol IDPs. Upon completion of the program, the university issues a document certifying its completion.

The proposed specializations by Ukrainian universities for the retraining of IDPs are aligned with regional labour market trends. By focusing on the specific needs of each region and the evolving economic landscape, these programs aim to bridge the skills gap, enhance the employability of IDPs, and contribute to the economic recovery of war-affected regions in Ukraine.

2.2. Ways for ensuring the sustainability of retraining and social adaptation programs

Across the various universities involved in the project, there is a notable consistency in identifying potential funding sources for programs aimed at supporting IDPs.

Common funding avenues include state and local authorities, such as the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the State Employment Service, and regional state administrations. Many universities also tap into resources provided by local employment centers, often through voucher systems that cover training costs. Furthermore, international organizations, such as the UN Refugee Agency, the International Organization for Migration, and the European Union, are frequently cited as significant contributors through grants and technical support. Charitable foundations and NGOs, including the Renaissance Foundation and Caritas Ukraine, as well as international financial institutions like the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, are also commonly mentioned. Additionally, stakeholders from private sector are encouraged to fund retraining programs and provide resources for internships and employment opportunities for IDPs.

While these common funding strategies are employed across most universities, specific deviations based on regional needs and unique institutional strategies are noteworthy:

LPNU has developed an educational program titled «Social Entrepreneurship in the Provision of Social Services» and emphasizes the role of the Lviv Regional Employment Center in providing training vouchers. This university has noted that as of January-March 2024, 1,200 IDPs were registered with the center, with 46 receiving vouchers for training, a program not universally highlighted by other institutions.

WUNU focuses on economic sustainability through entrepreneurship and employment support, reporting a significant vocational training initiative that resulted in an 86% employment rate post-training. Their approach also includes a micro-credential program model designed for IDPs' social and professional adaptation, a model they argue is beneficial for other vulnerable groups as well.

YFCNU offers a microcredit program specifically tailored to the regional economy of Chernivtsi, addressing the unique needs of IDPs in the border region. This program, «Organization and Management of Entrepreneurial Activities,» is framed as a quick and effective tool for integrating IDPs into the community and is supported by a comprehensive array of local, national, and international funding sources.

CPNU highlights the need for long-term economic sustainability in their programs, securing funding from sources such as the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and international organizations. They also stress the importance of business partnerships in training personnel with specific competencies.

KNU aligns its funding strategies with local labour market needs, leveraging the strategic development programs of the Kyiv City State Administration and the Kyiv Regional Military Administration. They emphasize the necessity of quality assurance accreditation by the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAQA) to secure state budget financial support.

VNTU proposes the «Social Entrepreneurship and Business Technologies» program, with funding sources largely mirroring those of Lviv Polytechnic but with a distinct focus on the Vinnytsia region's labour market needs.

SUNPU introduces the «Business and Technology. New Start» program, which is notable for the significant number of IDPs registered at the Odesa Regional Employment Center and receiving training vouchers. Their program specifically addresses popular professions within the region, such as nursing, preschool education, and various trades.

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