



Problems of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine and Ways to Overcome Them

Published on May 29, 2025

Maksym Taran

This blog calls attention to the roles of charitable and volunteer organizations, communities, and state and local authorities in addressing the basic needs of IDPs in Ukraine. It also highlights programmatic areas where volunteer organizations and local and national governments can better collaborate to improve support for Ukraine's sizeable IDP population. Internal displacement since 2014 has resulted in a surge in the number of charitable organizations in Ukraine, making them one of the primary stakeholders in addressing the needs of IDP. Despite their significant role, many NGOs still encounter obstacles in their daily operations. This author makes several suggestions for improving how government and volunteer organizations can work together for the benefit of IDPs.

For more than a decade, Ukraine, as a state, has been in a zone of increased turbulence and struggle for its independence, authenticity, and identity. Existential challenges, including [the Revolution of Dignity in 2013](#), the annexation of Crimea, [the occupation of part of the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions](#), [the conduct of the anti-terrorist operation \(ATO\)](#) and [the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022](#) have become drivers for societal development, the formation and change of the worldview of citizens, social unity, and the desire for democratic development based on the European principles and values. At the same time, economic problems, the lack of comprehensive reforms, corruption, and the inertia of government bodies have remained constant companions for Ukraine on this path. Unfortunately, the struggles of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have not been an exception to the abovementioned challenges.

The invasion on February 24, 2022, created a second significant wave of IDPs following on from the 2014 wave. This second wave saw millions of Ukrainians to relocate from the combat zones, their surrounding territories and from Russian occupied territories to safer regions of the Ukraine. The first to come to the rescue of IDPs were charitable and volunteer organizations.

Most of these organizations had worked during the 2014 and 2015 conflict and were experienced in addressing the basic needs of not only displaced people from the Donetsk and Lugansk regions but also of low-income citizens who remained in communities not controlled by Ukraine during the first years of the [anti-terrorist operation \(ATO\)](#). It should be noted that the help and support of volunteer organizations during that period were essential for most IDPs, as public authorities and local governments were unable to fully address all the needs of forced migrants, who required the most basic essentials: housing, food, and clothing. Therefore, the considerable efforts of these organizations, both local and foreign, made it possible to address the social and humanitarian needs of displaced persons. Comprehensive support for IDPs, primarily through the provision of humanitarian aid and housing, employment opportunities, and the organization of various training and educational courses for displaced persons has become the primary focus of NGOs and charitable organizations. Volunteer organizations, like [Right to Protection](#), [Everyone Can Help](#), [Rehabilitation Center “Maidan Hospital”](#), [Foundation of Good Deeds](#), [Ukrainian Association of Specialists in Overcoming the Consequences of Psychotraumatic Events](#) and other NGOs, created in the first years after the [Revolution of Dignity](#), continue their activities to assist. In addition to organizing humanitarian aid, these volunteer organizations have provided medical and psychological support to IDPs and taken an active part in addressing social security and employment issues, including problems related to pension and social benefits payments as well as IDP registration ([Vashkovich and others, 2022](#)).

The [full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022](#) led to a new wave of the volunteer movement's rise in Ukraine, in which hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians participated. A large number of new charitable and volunteer organizations are being created in Ukraine at both the national and local levels to assist the military and displaced persons. Thus, in 2021, the number of registered charities in Ukraine was 792, and during 2022 alone, 4,365 new charitable and volunteer organizations were created (Taran, 2023).

These organizations continue to address the basic needs of IDPs, including collaborating with central and local governments. Despite improving coordination

between authorities and volunteer organizations, the latter still encounter difficulties in their daily operations. Some of the main problems hindering volunteers in assisting IDPs are an "insufficient level of assistance to displaced persons by authorities, resistance of officials and conservatism of state structures, inadequacy of the regulatory framework regarding ensuring the rights of IDPs and volunteer activities, [and] insufficient control over the use of material resources provided to IDPs by volunteers" ([Vashkovich and others, 2022](#), pp.86-87). However, to more effectively resolve the social and humanitarian problems of IDPs and integrate them into new territorial communities, it is necessary to amend Ukrainian legislation. These amendments should aim to fully regulate the status of volunteers and the procedure for assisting IDPs, as well as establishing closer interactions between volunteer organizations and local authorities, especially regarding employment and resolving the issue of providing housing for displaced persons, since, for various reasons, a significant portion of IDP are likely to remain permanently in new territorial communities.

The increased number of IDPs has also changed the role of local government, as well as local self-government bodies, which have gained experience in providing material support to IDPs. Local authorities have introduced monthly social welfare benefits, organized access to the labour market for IDPs through employment centers giving material incentives for entrepreneurs to hire IDPs, and introduced special courses, seminars, and vocational training to help IDPs obtain or improve their professional skills. An example is the implementation of the project [*Strengthening Competitiveness and Integration of Internally Displaced Persons into the Economic Activity of the Region in Modern Realities in Kyiv and Ivano-Frankivsk Regions*](#), created by the non-profit [International Foundation of Development \(Kyiv\)](#) with the support of the Representative Office of the [Center for International Private Entrepreneurship \(CIPE\)](#), [Kyiv City Council](#), and [Kyiv City State Administration](#). Under this project, free training courses have been organized for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Kyiv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions since 2023, aiming to support and improve IDP integration into the local economic life of these areas. Additionally, on these [two-month courses](#), IDPs can acquire skills to start new businesses. Another example is the government initiative introduced in early April 2022, which offers government financial support to entrepreneurs for hiring IDPs. In 2023, 10,000 businesses took advantage of this program and hired approximately 14,000 IDPs, who collectively received compensation of UAH 181 million (USD 4.3 million). The program remains operational, and in 2024, UAH 350 million (approximately USD 8.4 million) was to be allocated for the program ([Goydenko, 2024](#)).

The central Ukrainian government supports IDPs by providing social welfare. IDPs are entitled to monthly government direct payments of UAH 2,000 (USD 48) per adult and UAH 3,000 (USD 72) per child and person with disabilities, relatively low amounts, especially considering that most host communities have been unable to meet the urgent needs of the displaced due to limited material and financial resources. In 2022, the total amount received by IDPs was approximately UAH 57 billion (equivalent to USD 1.3 billion). Although the amount increased to UAH 73 billion (USD 1.7 billion) in 2023, it returned to the 2022 level of approximately UAH 57 billion (USD 1.3 billion) in 2024, providing social benefits to only 2.5 million out of the 4.9 million registered IDPs. This reduction in social welfare for IDPs is attributed to the decrease in the revenue portion of the Ukrainian state budget and the requirements set by partner states to rationalize these payments ([Pavlenko, 2024](#)). For example, a significant proportion of IDPs who found housing and employment were no longer eligible for government assistance. Starting from June 1, 2024, IDPs who did not want to seek employment and were not registered at employment centers were deprived of government financial support ([BusinessUA, 2024](#)). These updates to the provision of state financial assistance to IDPs resulted in only 1.5 million IDPs receiving social welfare for an amount equivalent to USD 625 million as of June 23, 2024 ([Halesevych, 2024](#)). The total amount of government financial assistance to IDPs since the beginning of the Russian full-scale invasion is UAH 145 billion (USD 3.5 billion).

Despite multiple stakeholders' efforts to address the basic needs of IDPs, there is still room for improvement. Along with the issues of housing, finding jobs and inadequate social welfare payments, another problem impacting IDPs is their lack of awareness of their entitlements due to poor government communication about those policies. Many IDPs do not know their rights and opportunities, including programs at the national level that could provide financial support for business creation or employment. Also, IDPs lack the psychological support necessary for adaptation in a new community.

The state program [«Відновлення»](#) (E-Recovery) addresses housing issues by providing certificates to Ukrainians who have lost their homes, allowing IDPs to choose their own new locations and properties ([Gorinov and Drapushko, 2022](#)). However, it is worth noting that since [the Declaration of Independence of Ukraine](#) in 1991, five hundred villages have disappeared from the map, and, according to the Institute of Demography and Social Research, about two dozen rural settlements die out yearly. An unknown number of the remaining formal

settlements have only two to three residents, mostly of retirement age. The primary reason for this is that people leave due to a lack of employment opportunities and in frontline regions, due to the risks to their lives ([Pavlenko, 2022](#)). Therefore, most IDPs prefer not to resettle in rural areas, which creates concentrations of IDPs in urban and peri-urban areas leading to an imbalance in IDPs' distribution within the country.

In conclusion, all the stakeholders should continue their collaboration in support of IDPs during the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war. Their efforts should aim to create and develop special training programs for IDPs that would address long-term needs and the possibility of resettlement and adaptation in new territories, restore vocational training for IDPs, implement special programs providing affordable credit and mortgage rates that would allow IDPs to settle in rural areas and start farming business, and so on. Nevertheless, providing IDPs with housing should remain the primary prerogative of officials and host communities. These measures would enable a significant portion of IDPs to better integrate into new territorial communities and thus reduce migration to other countries.

Maksym Taran, a Doctoral Student of Hryhoriy Skovoroda University in Pereyaslav and Executive Director of the Center for Applied Historical Studies, investigates problems in the volunteer movement in Ukraine. His research focuses on the reasons for the emergence of Ukraine's volunteer movement, its formation as a socio-political phenomenon, the territorial distribution of the volunteer movement, the impact of volunteering on the political life of the country, and the participation of volunteer organizations in assisting IDPs.

References

- BUSINESSUA. 2024. “What Has Changed for IDPs since June 1?” https://businessua.com/finance/97003szo-zminilosya-dlya-vpo-z-1-cherivnya.html#google_vignette
- GORINOV P., DRAPUSHKO R. 2022. *Volunteer Activity in Ukraine: Social and Legal Research*. Kiyv, State Institute of Family and Youth Policy
- GOYDENKO, T. 2024. “The State Compensated Entrepreneurs with UAH 181 million for Employing IDPs in 2023.” <https://delo.ua/economy/za-pracevlastuvannya-vpo-derzava-kompensovala-pidprijemcyam-181-mln-grn-427954/>
- HALESEVYCH, A. 2024. “\$625 Million for Payments to Displaced People: Where Will Ukraine Obtain This Money?” https://24tv.ua/economy/viplati-dlya-vpo-vereshhuk-poyasnila-zvidki-ukrayina-vzyala-625_n2581866
- <https://suspilne.media/204424-sela-prividi-comu-znikaut-ukrainski-naseleni-punkti/Movements of People into the Economic Activity of the Region in the Current Realities of Kyiv and Ivano-Frankivsk Regions.”>https://kyivcity.gov.ua/oholoshennia/pro_bezkoshtovni_kursi_v_ramkakh_proyektu_posilennya_konkurentospromozhnosti_ta_integrat_siya_vnutrishno-peremischenikh_osib_do_ekonomichno_diyalnosti_regionu_v_suchasni_kh_realiyakh_u_kivskiy_ta_ivano-frankivskiy_oblastyakh/
- PAVLENKO, A. 2024. “Changes for Displaced People in 2024: How Many IDPs Will Lose Support?” <https://tsn.ua/groshi/zmini-dlya-pereselenciv-2024-roku-skilki-vpo-zalishatsya-bez-dopomogi-2500477.html>
- PAVLENKO, L. 2022. “Ghost Villages — Why Ukrainian Eettlements Are Disappearing.” <https://suspilne.media/204424-sela-prividi-comu-znikaut-ukrainski-naseleni-punkti/>
- TARAN, M. 2023. “Peculiarities of the Activities of Volunteer Organizations in Ukraine in Providing Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons.” The 9th International Scientific and Practical Conference “Modern Problems of Science, Education and Society” (November 6-8, 2023) SPC “Sciconf.com.ua”, Kyiv, Ukraine. p.1059-1065.

VASHKOVICH, V., VASILENKO, O., KARABIN, T., LAZUR, Y., MANZYUK, V.,
ROSHKANYUK. V. 2022. *Volunteer Manual*. Odessa, Helvetica