

Ukraine Civil Society Forum

Recommendations on Displaced Persons

Fellows of Salzburg Global Seminar gathered in Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg, Austria, on 4-8 June 2023 for a program held as part of Salzburg Global's [Ukraine Civil Society Forum](#).

At the meeting, several working groups set out priorities for the country, including concrete recommendations for stakeholders to support the rights, return, and reintegration of displaced persons and refugees, addressing both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term perspectives, including the ultimate physical reconstruction and social integration of liberated territories as part of a Ukraine-wide project of national identity.

Civil society plays a critical role in supporting the state and its citizens not only during wartime but also in planning for the physical and political reconstruction after the end of hostilities. In the context of Ukraine, in which 5.9 million people are internally displaced and another eight million have fled to neighboring countries, civil society will have a significant role to play in supporting displaced persons and refugees, as well as the reintegration and rebuilding of de-occupied territories after the war. Over the longer-term, civil society will also need to play a crucial role in any and all peace and reconciliation efforts, including in the development of a post-war and Ukraine-wide national dialogue project.

With so many people displaced inside and outside Ukraine and the economy on a wartime footing, it remains essential to keep civil society leaders supported and connected to one another and with other strategic actors in the international donor, development, political, and private sectors. A connected and resilient civil society sector in Ukraine will create opportunities for dialogue on different levels of society to develop a shared vision for post-war reconstruction and national dialogue, including different social and historical narratives that help shape an inclusive identity for Ukraine.

However, international and domestic conferences on Ukraine have shunted civil society to side events or have featured representatives of governments, donor countries, or international organizations speaking at rather than listening to civil society. Salzburg Global Seminar's Ukraine Civil Society Forum intends to ensure that Ukrainians themselves will be equipped with a way to move forward and to elevate the voices of Ukrainian civil society, and in particular women, in discussions on the future of Ukraine.

WORKING GROUP ON DISPLACED PERSONS

The Working Group on Displaced Persons analyzed the needs of two target groups: internally displaced persons (IDPs) and externally displaced persons (EDPs). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there are 5.4m IDPs in Ukraine and about 8.1m refugees or EDPs outside of Ukraine (IOM, April 2023), which represents about 35% of the pre-war population of Ukraine. It explored both the immediate challenges of adaptation and integration into the host communities, as well as long-term strategic goals aimed at creating conditions for the safe return of displaced persons to their places of residence.

It stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation between civil society groups working directly with Ukrainian diaspora and refugees, as well as internally-displaced persons and their host communities, to address both immediate needs as well as coordinating planning for their eventual return home when appropriate.

CHALLENGES FACED BY DISPLACED PERSONS

- Insecurity:
 - IDPs:** the threat of shelling; landmines; unexploded ordnance; the presence of weapons not only among military personnel, but also among civilians; lack of bomb shelters; damaged roads and social infrastructure; no guarantees for safe evacuation of civilians.
 - EDPs:** risk of violence, exploitation, or harassment, particularly in overcrowded camps or urban areas; clashes with pro-Russian communities, Russian co-presence anxiety.
- Lack of complete and reliable information and coordination regarding the rules of interaction in the host communities; information on assistance for displaced persons (for EDPs).
- Lack of institutional support from the Ukrainian government for EDPs.
- Lack of access to social housing for both IDPs and EDPs.
- Lack of work, business and other income-generating opportunities for both IDPs and EDPs.
- Lack of access to basic services: healthcare, mental health and trauma healing programs, education, social welfare services for EDPs.
- Social integration/social cohesion: discrimination, stigmatization, and language barriers hinder ability of displaced persons to access services, find employment, and build social relationships.
- Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves humanitarian assistance, protection measures, support for livelihoods, access to education and healthcare, psychosocial support, and efforts to promote social cohesion and inclusion.
- While the barriers and enablers to integrate IDPs and EDPs often coincide, the needs and profiles of displaced persons strongly differ, thereby the level of required support by local authorities and communities will depend upon the local situation. As such, solution models should be localized and based on the needs of the population and the situation in each area, requiring a combination of an area-based and a people-centered participatory approach.

LONG TERM GOALS (WHAT NEEDS TO BE ACHIEVED AFTER THE WAR, WHICH WILL REQUIRE ACTIONS/POLICIES TO START NOW?)

- Create favorable conditions for voluntary return of as many displaced persons as possible to Ukraine.
- Create favorable conditions for voluntary return of as many displaced persons as possible to the regions of residence before the Russian invasion.
- Promote the formation of inclusive collective identity of Ukrainians and cohesion of Ukrainian society.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

The group identified six areas of action:

- Security in the current place of stay
- Information and coordination
- Institutional support to EDPs
- Housing and property
- Employment
- Social cohesion

Security in the current place of stay

This component refers not only to protection from missile attacks and other war threats but also to measures such as establishing adequate policing, ensuring physical protection, and addressing the risk of conflict or criminal activities, abuse and neglect particularly for vulnerable groups.

Recommendations

For Civil Society

- Organization and inclusion in the community security working groups representatives of local self-governments, police, civic activists, IDPs, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Formation of rules for coexistence in places of compact settlement; information campaigns; organization of a bomb shelter system.
- Ensuring the participation of civil society in the creation of policies and procedures.
- Comprehensive support (psychological, social, legal) for people with disabilities in places of compact settlement with the aim of adaptation, integration and avoidance of marginalization.

For Government

- Security audit in all communities of Ukraine.
- Provision of community security working groups activities' sustainability with allocation of appropriate human and financial resources and participation of representatives of local self-governments.
- Implementation of human-centered transitional justice mechanisms that provide a sense of security and justice on de-occupied territories.
- Humanitarian demining.
- For the International Community
- The presence of international organizations to reduce risks and record human rights violations and to provide suggestions for overcoming them.
- Ensuring humanitarian security.
- Advocacy for the participation of civil society in the development of transitional justice.

Information and coordination

Displaced individuals need access to accurate and timely information about available resources, services, and support networks. Effective coordination among humanitarian organizations, government agencies, and community leaders is crucial to ensure that information reaches those in need and that assistance is properly organized and distributed.

Recommendations

For Civil Society

- Inclusive distribution of humanitarian aid.
- Feedback mechanisms so that assistance is provided as needed.
- Information about services according to gender, age characteristics and possible vulnerabilities.

For Government

- Support for participatory democracy, in particular via local democracy agencies (LDAs).
- Creation and development of a transparent system of communication and exchange of information between representatives of local self-governments, businesses and civil society to discuss key decisions and mechanisms.
- Coordination of efforts both within the community and at the regional and national levels.
- Providing access to information about services according to gender, age characteristics and vulnerabilities.
- Promotion of tools for participatory democracy, in particular with the participation of displaced persons and women.
- Coordination of the phased return process (priority return of persons of those specialties that are demanded for the recovery process; prevention of excessive load on the infrastructure during the recovery process).

For Private Sector

- Restoration of communications and the Internet in the de-occupied territories.

For the International Community

- Providing resources and support and expertise about coordination and accountability of different actors.

Institutional support to EDPs

Creation of intergovernmental platforms between Ukraine and the countries temporarily hosting EDPs in order to ensure protection of rights of displaced persons and conditions for their safe return to Ukraine after the end of the war.

Recommendations

For Government

- Creation of a department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the support and return of EDPs.
- Cooperation of the Government of Ukraine with other governments and Ukrainian diaspora to inform about the actual humanitarian conditions in Ukraine and to facilitate the return of EDPs when it is safe to do so.
- Promotion of return of citizens to Ukraine through the embassies and communities of Ukraine.

Housing and property

Secure possession of property rights for land, housing and other real estate property as well as an ability to manage the property while being displaced are the necessary conditions for the safe return and active engagement of the displaced people with the place of their origin.

The following directions for policy response and implementation actions are identified as the top priority:

- i) Involvement of displaced persons in the design of the recovery plan and economic recovery;
- ii) Assurance of protection and restitution of the legitimate property rights.

Recommendations

For Civil Society

- Provision of legal assistance (primary and secondary) and case management for the recovery of damages and restitution of property rights.
- Informing displaced persons in Ukraine and abroad about their rights and procedures for protection of their property rights, about the application procedure for compensation of damages and restitution of rights, and involvement of the right holders in the process of property restoration.
- Involvement and control over the discussion of community recovery plans, considering the needs and opinions of displaced persons, other community members and representatives of civil society.

For Government

- Create a clear and user-friendly procedure for protection and restitution of legitimate property rights to housing, land, commercial real estate, and other property in occupied, de-occupied, and war-affected territories.
- Informing displaced persons about the procedures and available support resources for protection and restitution of property rights, and about the procedure for receiving the compensation for damaged property, as well as about the involvement in the process of property restoration and management.
- Creation of a regulatory framework and allocation of funding for the infrastructure of remote property management (trust) during the reconstruction and the mechanism for providing temporary housing for returnees.
- Creation of an information hub on all issues related to property rights, restitution and compensation.

For the International Community

- Provision of help in solving problems with housing abroad (banks of standard contracts; information hubs with housing opportunities; identification of areas where there is no social housing and search for organizations, resources; dissemination of information about emergency assistance with housing).
- Financing of housing reconstruction programs.
- Promoting and supporting the claims for compensation of losses of Ukrainian citizens and of Ukraine in international courts, supporting the claims for reparations and repurposing of Russian assets abroad for the compensation of losses.

Employment

Supporting employment means creating opportunities for skills training, job placement, and entrepreneurship, both within the displaced community and in the host communities.

Recommendations

For All Actors

- Creation of programs to encourage the return of business (micro-grants, tax benefits, loans).
- Support for courses on entrepreneurial activity in the de-occupied territories including on social entrepreneurship.
- Creation of new jobs for elimination of the consequences of the Russian invasion and reconstruction (Army of Reconstruction).
- Using big data to find opportunities for return and work and repurposing in different regions.
- Restoration of logistics and production networks.

Social Cohesion

Formation of a culture of respect for different identities, design a program of adaptation, integration and return of IDPs and EDPs; working with social gaps through inclusive dialogue, communication campaigns, public policies.

Recommendations for social cohesion between Ukrainians in Ukraine and Ukrainians Abroad

For Government

- Support the formation of Ukrainian collective identity through the dialogue of cultures and tolerance towards other cultures by the means of education.
- Engage media in educational work on issues of understanding and social cohesion, amongst others, through social media campaigns.
- Coordination of Ukrainians abroad through online (informational portals, communicational projects) and offline hubs (Ukrainian Houses, around churches and schools) for maintaining links and social cohesion.
- Collection of information about displaced Ukrainians abroad by the state (displacement statistics, communication with representatives of other states).

For Civil Society

- Encourage EDPs not planning to return to Ukraine to actively engage with the political, societal and economic life of their host countries. Harmonious integration within their host country coupled with a strong connection to the civil society in Ukraine will ensure that Ukrainian narratives are promoted and understood in their host countries.
- Initiate dialogue between Ukrainians about different experiences of living in war and coping approaches, acceptance and respect for different experiences. Discuss strategies for further joint interaction.
- Working with divisive narratives both on the state and civil society levels.
- Promotion of family and community mediation.
- Promotion of the Ukrainian language and culture (concerts, events, literary clubs, Ukrainian cinema, language courses, libraries), creation of a platform with a calendar of events about Ukrainian culture.
- Support public diplomacy.

Recommendations for social cohesion between Ukrainians in Ukraine and Ukrainians Abroad

For Government

- Formation of common identity and tolerance to other cultures and experience through education.
- Development of a basic culture of dialogue in order to discuss problematic moments, challenges and fears, as well as existing conflicts.
- Involve mass media in educational work in matters of building understanding and social cohesion in communities.
- To work with children and youth on the topic of understanding and appreciation of differences in kindergartens, schools and universities.

For Civil Society

- Organizing safe spaces for discussing important and sensitive topics in communities.
- Creation of mobile groups consisting of a facilitator and a psychologist.
- Public communication campaign aimed at social cohesion.