

Situation Analysis of Children in Ukraine 2024

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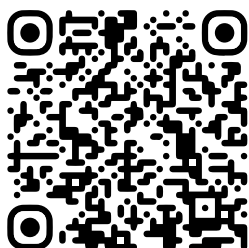
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6-year-old Sashko from the town of Ukrainka goes to the international Ukrainian-Slovak border checkpoint in March 2022. In the beginning of the full-scale war, thousands of families were crossing borders with neighbouring countries every day, fearing for their children's safety.

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome	MoSP	Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine
CCFUCDU	Coordination Centre for Family Upbringing and Childcare Development	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
CDCP	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention	NBU	National Bank of Ukraine
CEDAW	Convention on The Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women	NGCA	Non-Government Controlled Areas
CPiE	Child Protection in Emergency	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	NHSU	National Health Service of Ukraine
CRM	Child Rights Monitoring	NSSA	National Social Services Agency of Ukraine
CwD	Children With Disabilities	NUSh	New Ukrainian School
DTP3	Diphtheria Tetanus Toxoid and Pertussis Vaccine	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education	OO	Ombudsman's Office Of Ukraine
ECI	Early Childhood Intervention	OPG	Office of Prosecutor General of Ukraine
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region	OSCE	Organization For Security And Co-Operation in Europe
EI	Early Intervention	PHC	Primary Health Care
EVM	Effective Vaccine Management	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
GBViE	Gender-Based Violence In Emergency	PLHIV	People Living with HIV
GCA	Government Controlled Areas	PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission of HIV
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
GHG	Greenhouse Gas	RDNA3	Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment in Ukraine
GHI	Global Hunger Index	SBC	Social and Behavioural Change
HCF	Healthcare Facility	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
HCWM	Healthcare Waste Management	SEN	Special Educational Needs
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	SSSU	State Statistics Service of Ukraine
HV	Home Visiting	TransMonEE	Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	UN CRC	The UN Committee on The Rights of The Child
IDSS	Institute for Demography and Social Sciences of The National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
IPC	Interpersonal Communication	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
IPC	Infection Prevention And Control	UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
IRC	Inclusive Resource Centre	VAC	Violence Against Children
LtoE	Learning to Earning	WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
MCH	Maternal and Child Health	WFP	World Food Programme
MCV2	Measles-Containing Vaccine Second-Dose	WHO	World Health Organization
MhGAP	Mental Health Gap Action Programme		
MHPSS	Mental Health And Psychosocial Support		
MIS	Medical Information System		
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine		
MoH	Ministry of Health of Ukraine		

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2. Introduction

Purpose of the Analysis

The Situation Analysis of children's rights and wellbeing is an equity-focused, rights-based analytical narrative report. It is designed to inform policy dialogue and partnerships to improve the lives of children by building a shared understanding of the key problems facing Ukraine's children and adolescents in the conditions of a full-scale war.

The primary aim, therefore, is to consider the context of Ukraine and the enabling environment for children's rights, as well as specific areas of children's rights: health and nutrition; education; protection; participation; and, a safe and clean environment. It also aims to contribute to further shaping the national development agenda and to accelerate the achievement of national and international development goals regarding children and adolescents, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Situation Analysis should look critically at the progress that policy and programme interventions have made towards at-scale coverage for all vulnerable groups; the adequacy of policy delivery and, when relevant, emergency response, particularly in terms of budget; and resources for leaving no child behind.

Methodology

The research is led by UNICEF with the goal of advocating for the protection of children's rights, helping with their basic needs, and expanding opportunities so children can reach their full potential. The report examines the Ukrainian context and represents Ukrainian realities. It remains faithful to the principles of human rights, gender equity, and children's rights as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Ukraine ratified on 28 August 1991. The report also adheres to the commitment to leaving no one behind under the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

The report primarily relies on analysis of secondary data, both quantitative and qualitative.

Sources include:

- Desk review of existing nationally and internationally available data and evidence on selected topics published in studies, research, evaluation, and survey reports.
- Desk review of data, programme reports, and analysis generated by UNICEF, including studies, research, and evaluations.
- Desk review and comparative analysis of available legislation, social policy, government strategies, and budget allocation; and analysis of public expenditure documents.
- Background notes on specific topics where UNICEF and other actors working with or for children do not have or have limited knowledge for a comprehensive Situation Analysis (e.g., gender analysis of disparities, environmental/climate issues affecting children, mental health issues, migration, and so on).
- Key informant interviews, including with those who shape and implement public policies.

This Situation Analysis, therefore, utilised determinant analysis, considering the remaining bottlenecks and emerging barriers to improving the enabling environment, access to quality services and demand for quality services, and identification of areas that require focused support.

Target Audience

The Situation Analysis is intended for use by a wider audience, including government bodies, development partners, civil society, ombudspersons, children and adolescents, academia, private sector actors, the media, and others.

Ethical Considerations

The Situation Analysis authors complied with ethical guidelines, such as UNICEF's guidance on children in research, to avoid any form of stigma, discrimination, or harm to children or participants. The research strictly followed the professional research standards and ethical aspects of the Code on Market and Social Research of the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research. The research complies with the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection, and Analysis, as well as the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), by integrating human rights, gender, and equity in accordance with the relevant UNEG guidelines. In addition, all the key areas in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines have been taken into account – integrity, accountability, respect, and beneficence. The team was transparent, regarding the purpose of the Situation Analysis and all actions taken to achieve the goals.

March 25, 2023. Lyman, Ukraine.

Three-year-old Diana is on a walk. Usually she is forced to shelter with her family from the ongoing shelling in a dark, damp basement.

"We hope for the better, but the war made us be prepared for the worst," says Tetiana, mother of two. "Here, we always have a supply of medicine, water and food for several months."

Lyman is a frontline city in eastern Ukraine that has been surviving the ongoing hostilities. Over the last year, 85 per cent of the housing stock has been destroyed, and every single educational institution has been damaged. Furthermore, some areas of the city still lack electricity, water and heating.



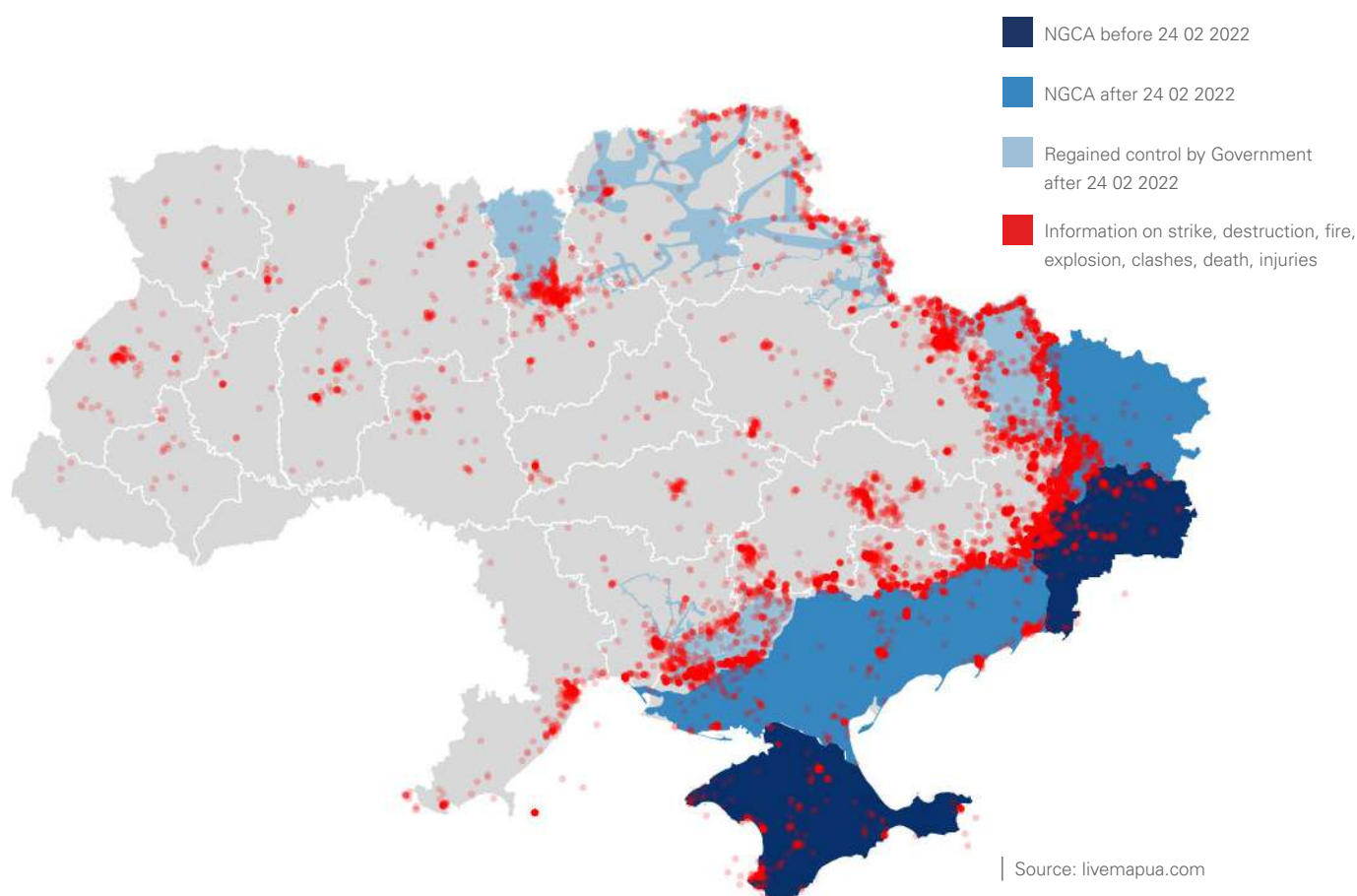
3. Country Overview

Children in Ukraine have been living through several significant shocks for over a decade. The annexation of Crimea and a localised war in the east of Ukraine have caused loss of life, and an economic, humanitarian, and displacement crisis since 2014. The COVID-19 pandemic and related economic downturn caused unprecedented lockdown, severely impacting children's rights to education, and putting serious strain on the well-being of families.

On 24 February 2022, the war in Ukraine escalated, turning into a full-scale war and creating a humanitarian and child rights catastrophe. The war has resulted in death and injuries. People have been massively displaced from the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine to the west of the country and into neighbouring countries. There has been severe destruction and damage to homes and civilian infrastructure, including essential services for children, such as schools, kindergartens, youth centres, integrated social services, and health facilities.

As of March 2024, 600 children have been verified by the United Nations as killed and 1,357 injured.

Figure 1. Areas in Ukraine controlled and not controlled by the Government (as of February 2024)



As the frontline stabilised in 2023, almost 18 per cent of Ukrainian territory have been NGCAs, including about 65,000 square kilometres of land since February 2022.¹

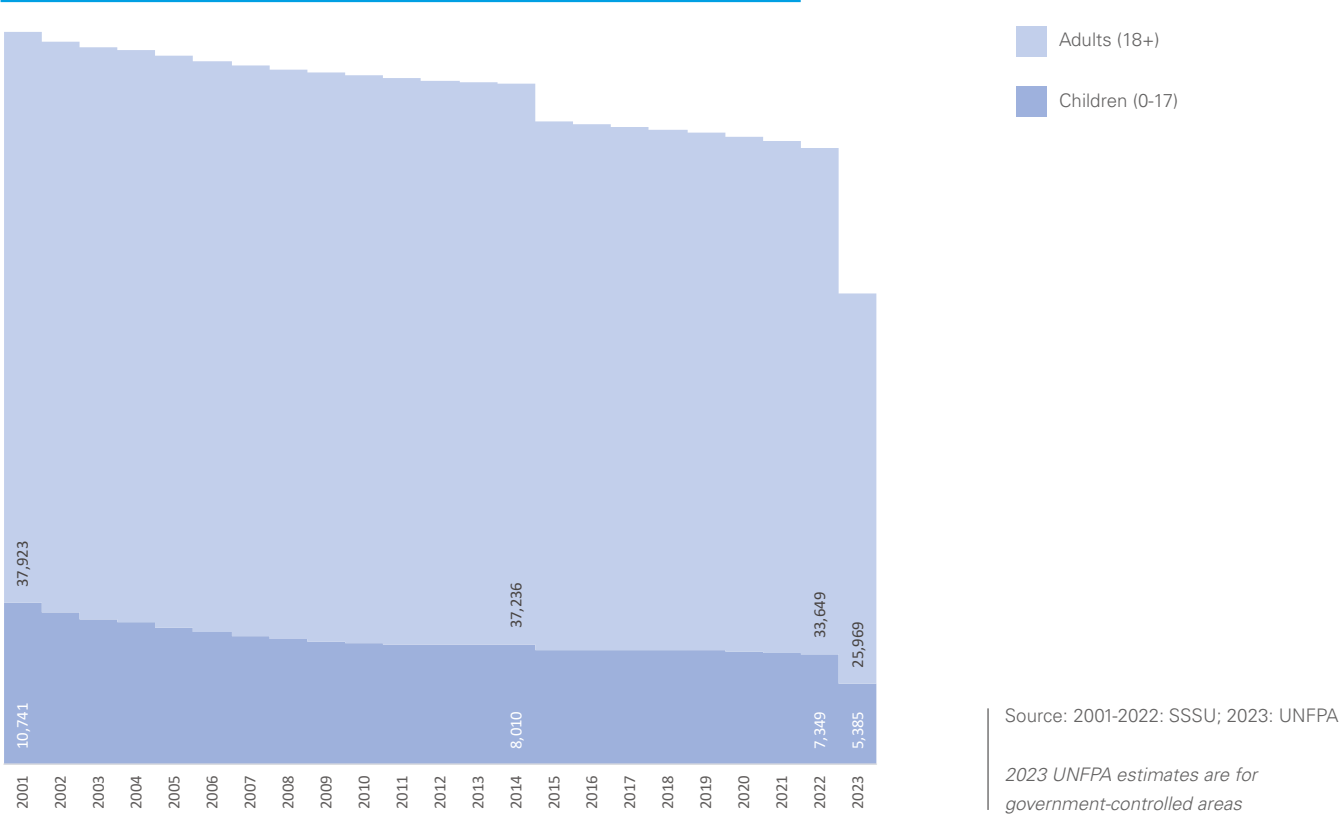
¹ Foreign Affairs, 2024

Demographic Profile

Ukraine has had an aging and shrinking population since the beginning of the 1990s. As of the 2001 census, the total population of Ukraine was 48.7 million people. In 2014, before the annexation of Crimea, the population naturally shrank to 45.2 million. Excluding the 2.5 million population of Crimea, there were about 42.8 million people in the country.

According to the latest available data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in early 2022, the population of Ukraine was 40,997,698, with 54 per cent female and 46 per cent male (21,990,719 and 19,006,979 respectively).² By July 2023, an estimated 32 million people lived in government-controlled areas,³ compared to 41 million people (including uncertain estimates for non-government controlled areas [NGCA] of Donetsk and Luhansk regions) at the beginning of 2022.⁴

Figure 2. Population change in Ukraine, 2001-2023, thousands



DATA GAP

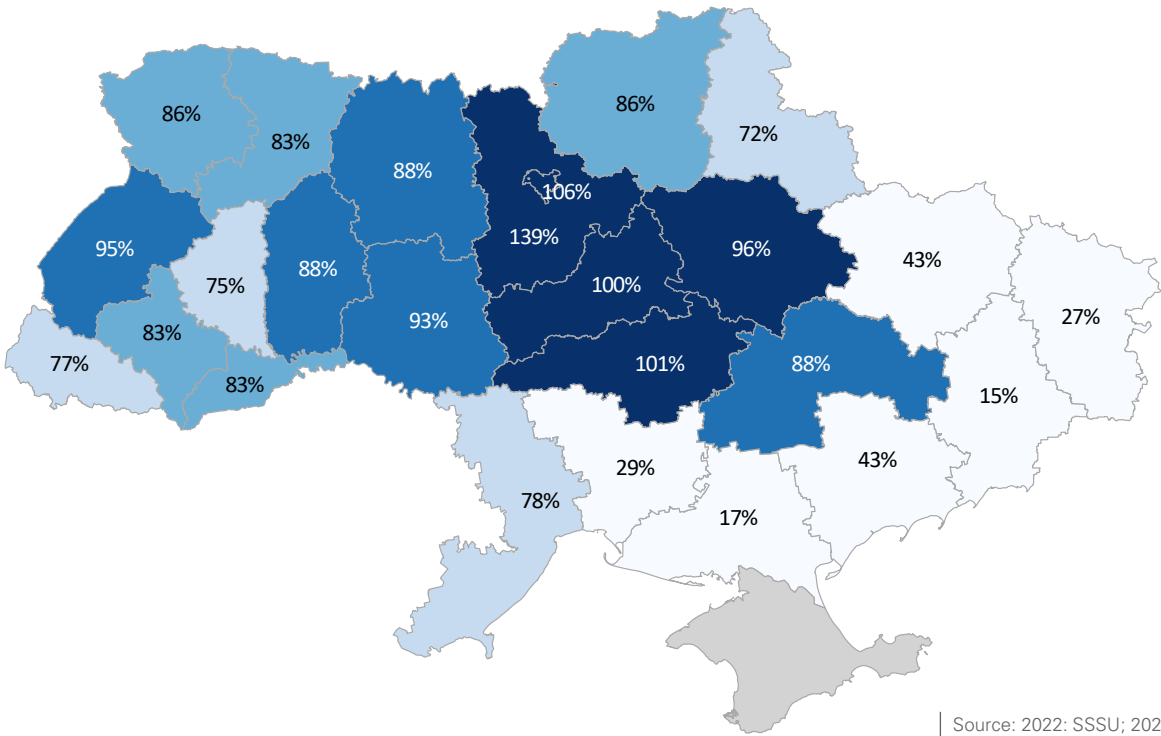
OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The primary source of information about the population of any country is the population census, which was held in Ukraine only once since its independence in 1991, in 2001. Absence of census for such a long period of time led to increasing uncertainty as per number and composition of Ukraine’s population. With the beginning of the full-scale war, and introduction of martial law, the most accurate demographic information published by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine – data on births and death were stopped being published. Reasons: both sensitivity and accuracy. Publication of many official statistics indicators may resume after three months after the end of martial law, according to the Law of Ukraine “On the protection of the interests of subjects submitting reports and other documents during the period of martial law or a state of war”. It provisions that individuals, entrepreneurs, and entities are exempt from submitting reports during the martial law period and three months afterward.

² State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024
³ UNFPA, 2023
⁴ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2022

Due to massive refugee flow and NGCAs, the number of children (age 0-17) dropped by 26 per cent since January 2022, by about 2 million children. About 40 per cent of Ukrainians, or over 14 million, have fled their homes at least for some period of time due to war.⁵ About 6.5 million are refugees,⁶ of which 34 per cent are estimated to be children.⁷ 3.7 million people remain internally displaced in Ukraine.⁸ Approximately 630,000 displaced children have returned to their place of origin.⁹ Approximately 700,000 children live in NGCA,¹⁰ experiencing intense shelling and severe constraints to their basic needs.

Figure 3. Number of children in July 2023 (UNFPA data) as percentage of January 2022 (SSSU data)



Source: 2022: SSSU; 2023: UNFPA

DATA GAP

METHODOLOGICAL DRAWBACKS IN ESTIMATING POPULATION

Comparison of data from pre-war official statistics and more recent UNFPA population estimates (using various sources, such as mobile phone usage and administrative data) may reveal drawbacks in official statistics. For historic (pre- and post- full-scale war) data, there could be undercounting of population in some areas (e.g., in Kyiv City and Kyiv region, bigger urban areas), and apparently overcounting population in other rural areas. Internal migration has been poorly accounted for, compared to registration of births and deaths.

While children, like all the population, are concentrated in districts of major and larger cities, the share of children has very strong regional discrepancies. The highest share of children in the population is in north-western areas of Volyn and in Transcarpathia (Zakarpattia), and in western parts of Ukraine, in general. This reflects the general fertility rate situation in Ukraine and the different age structures.

⁵ IOM, 2024
⁶ IOM, 2024
⁷ UNESCO, 2023
⁸ IOM, 2024
⁹ Save the Children, 2024
¹⁰ UNFPA 2023

Figure 4. **Total number of children by district (raion), 2023**

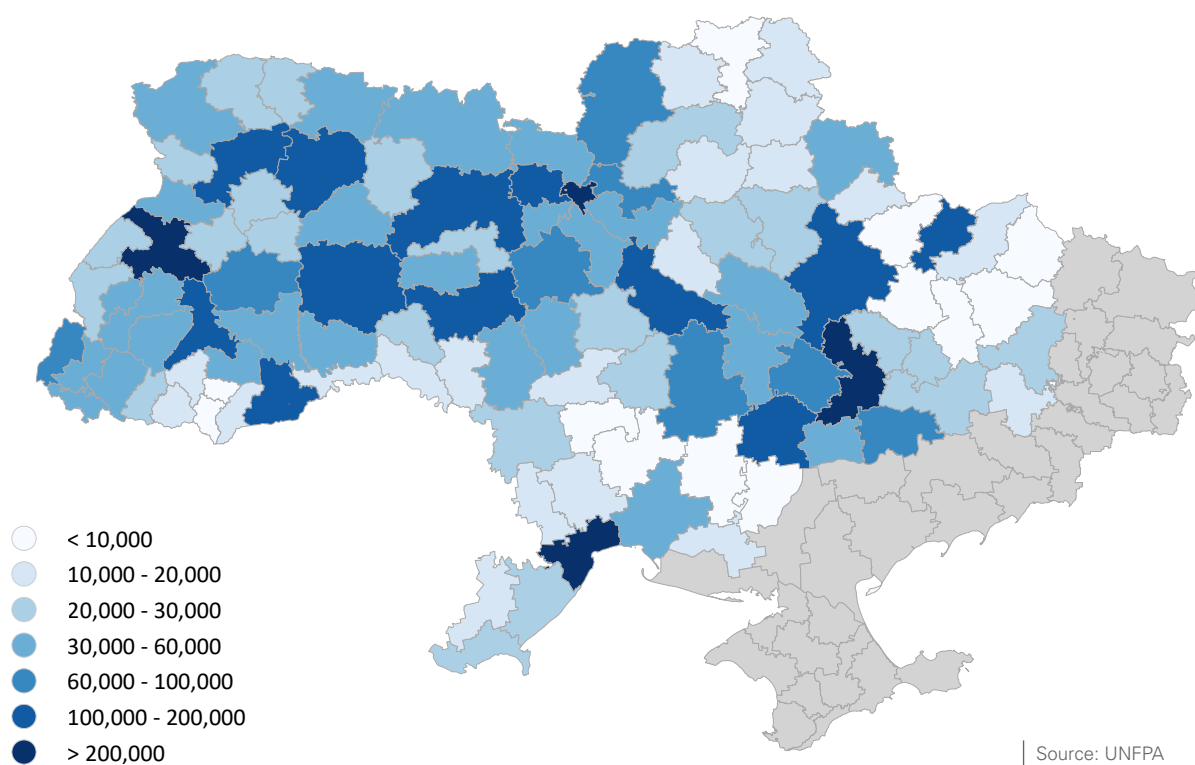


Figure 5. **Share of children in population by district (raion), 2023**

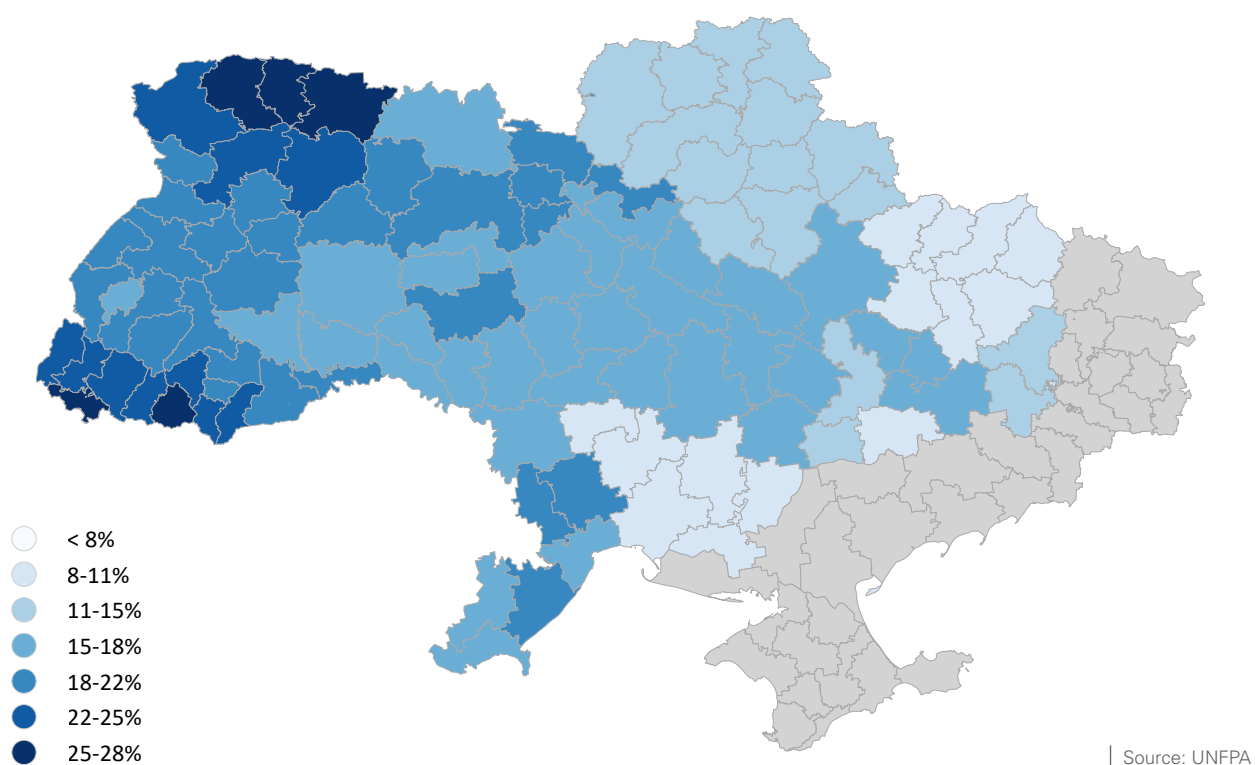
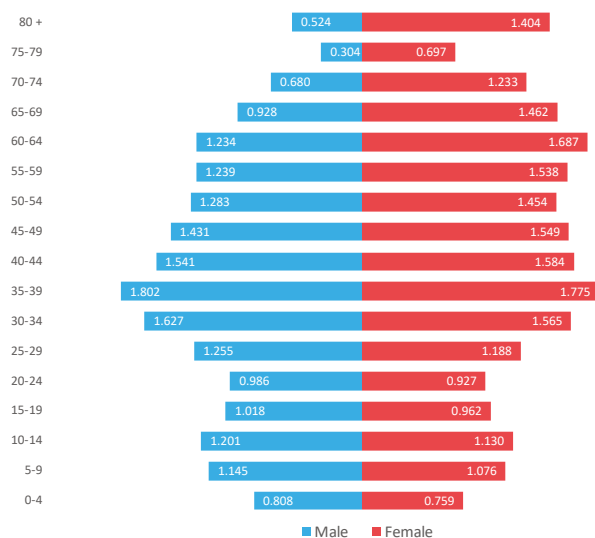
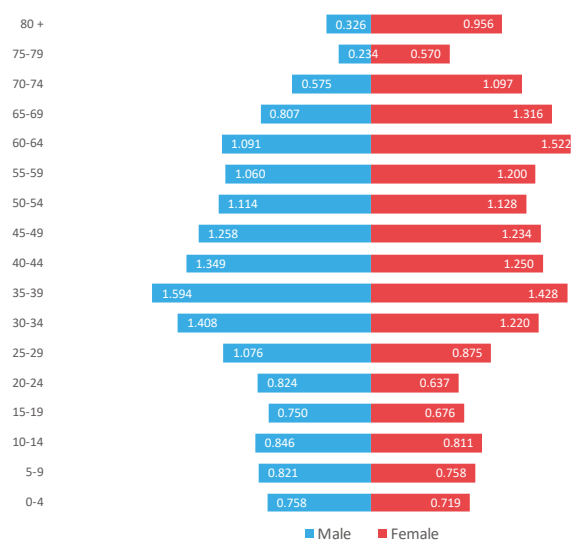
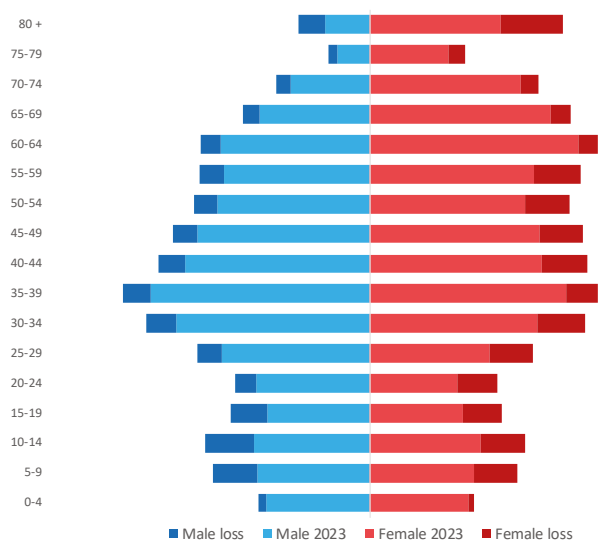


Figure 6. Possible changes in age-sex structure between 2022-2023, millions persons
2022 SSSU official estimates

2023 UNFPA estimates

Estimated population loss 2022-2023 by sex and age groups


| Source: SSSU, UNFPA

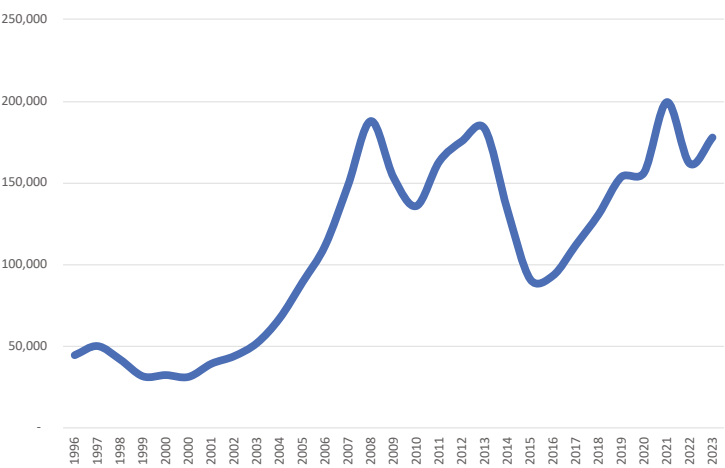
Political Economy and Governance

Ukraine’s governance structure is characterised by a multi-tiered system that involves central and local authorities. The central government, based in the capital city of Kyiv, oversees the nation’s overall policies and administration. Regions within Ukraine are further subdivided into oblasts (regions), raions (districts), and local hromadas (communities).

The decentralised system aims to empower local authorities in decision-making processes, particularly in areas that directly impact citizens, including child welfare. Local governments possess varying degrees of autonomy, contributing to a more responsive and tailored approach to addressing the unique needs of children in different regions.

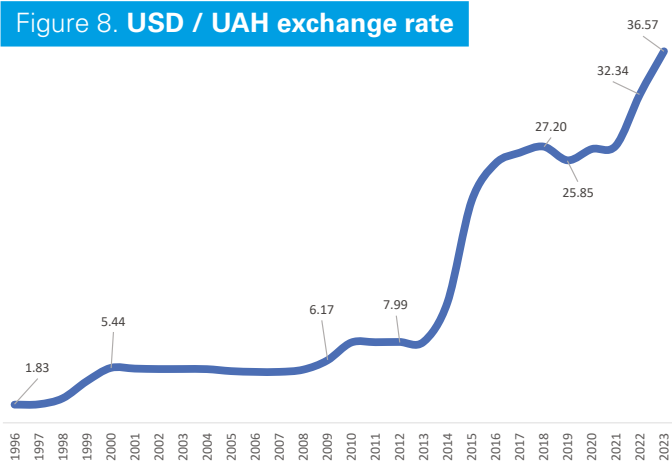
Five days after the escalation of the war in February 2022, Ukraine submitted its application for European Union (EU) membership. In June 2022, the European Commission recommended that Ukraine should be given the perspective to become a member of the EU and that the country be granted candidate status.¹¹

Figure 7. Ukraine GDP, million USD



Source: SSSU
Actual prices

Figure 8. USD / UAH exchange rate



Source: National Bank of Ukraine
Annual average

After the attempted annexation of four additional regions of Ukraine (Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhyya, and Kherson) in September 2022, Ukraine formally applied to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Main economic indicators

Ukraine’s gross domestic product (GDP) has experienced multiple sharp drops and consequent recoveries in the last 20 years. Both GDP drops and rapid foreign exchange rate changes were triggered by major external events.

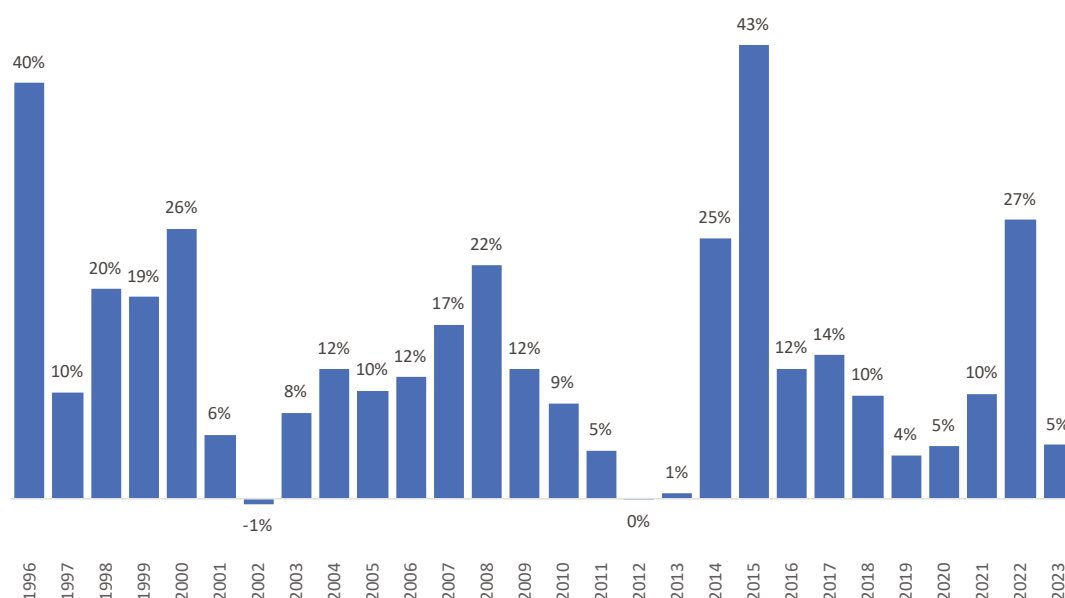
- 1998:** Asian and Russian financial crises
- 2008:** Global financial crisis (credit crunch)
- 2014:** Annexation of Crimea and start of the war in Donbas
- 2022:** Escalation of the war

Ukraine has also experienced significant fluctuations in its inflation rate over the years, with a recent spike of 27 per cent in 2022, and comparative stabilisation (5 per cent) in 2023.

¹¹ European Commission, 2023

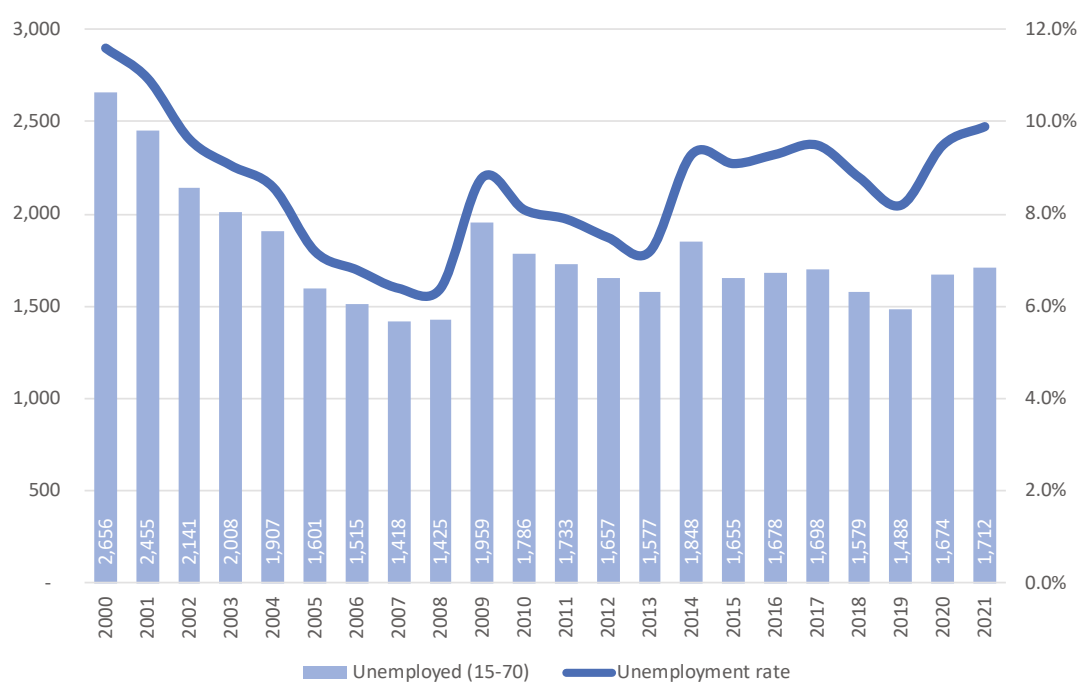
The economic growth rate in 2024 is expected to increase insignificantly. According to the draft State Budget for 2024, the real GDP growth forecasted by the Ministry of Economy was at 5 per cent, while an average inflation rate was projected at 13.8 per cent.

Figure 9. Consumer price indices December to December of last year, % (inflation)



Source: SSSU

Figure 10. Total number of registered unemployed (thousand persons) and unemployment rate (ILO methodology)



Source: SSSU

Figure 11. **Average monthly salary, USD**

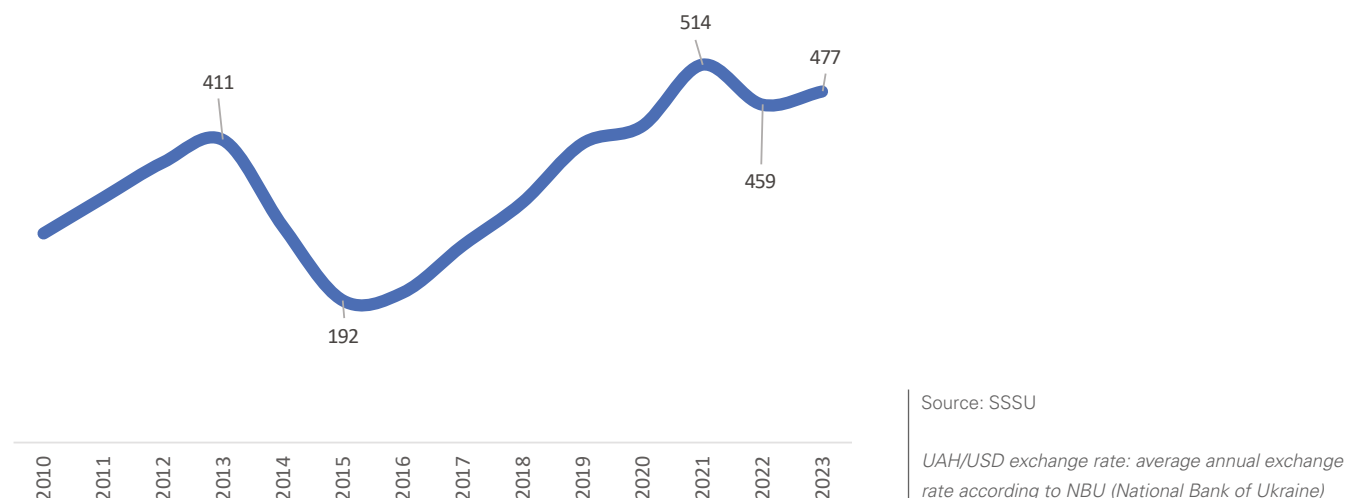
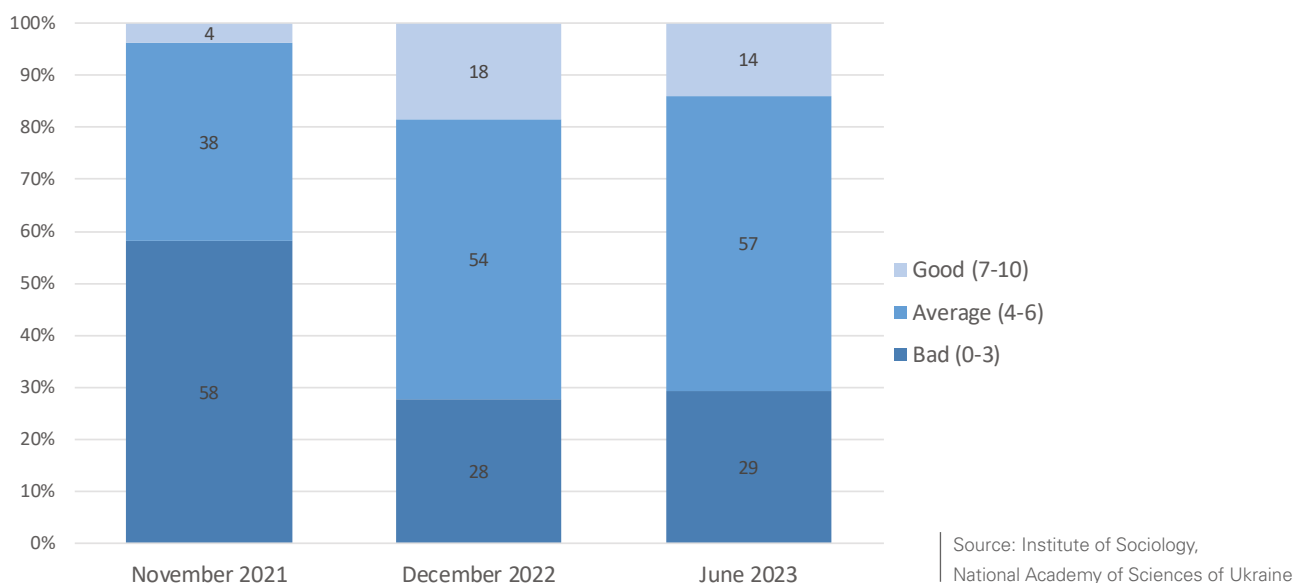


Figure 12. **Evaluation of economic situation by population**



Meanwhile, the forecast produced by the NBU is less optimistic. It envisages real GDP growth of 3.5 per cent and an average inflation of 10.6 per cent in 2024. The new forecast is based on the assumption that the export of goods through seaports on the Black Sea will be unavailable for Ukrainian companies until mid-2024.^{12, 13}

The income levels of the population (in average monthly salaries) dropped by 11 per cent from 2021 to 2022¹⁴. Despite this, the population's perception of economic situation actually improved significantly in 2022, compared to 2021¹⁵.

¹² Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

¹³ National Bank of Ukraine, 2023

¹⁴ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

¹⁵ Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2023

European integration of Ukraine

On 28 February 2022, five days after the escalation of the war, Ukraine submitted its application for EU membership. On 17 June 2022, the European Commission issued its opinion and recommended to the European Council that Ukraine should be given the perspective to become a member of the EU and that the country be granted candidate status on the understanding that seven steps, mainly in the rule of law area, were taken.¹⁶

On 14 December 2023, the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with Ukraine. The country is one of nine current EU candidate countries, along with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Türkiye.

Preceding this, in 2014, Ukraine and the EU signed an Association Agreement, which entered fully into force on 1 September 2017, after a long process of ratification.¹⁷

In order to fulfil the requirements of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, a new Law “On Official Statistics” was developed. It entered into force on 1 January 2024. According to the law, the National Statistical System must comply with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, taking into account the acquis of the EU in the field of statistics (Chapter 18).

In February 2024, the European Council has endorsed a modification to the EU’s budget. This change would allocate EUR 50 billion in macro-financial aid to Ukraine. This assistance will be administered through the Ukraine Facility programme from 2024 to 2027. Of this amount, EUR 39 billion will be allocated to the state budget to strengthen macro-financial stability.¹⁸

Decentralisation reform

Decentralisation reform in Ukraine is a series of reforms that started in 2014 to give more power and resources to local authorities. The reform aims to improve regional development, local self-government, and regional policy.

Figure 13. **Old raions (districts) and cities of regional significance – before 2020**



Figure 14. **New raions (districts) – after 2020 (NUTS 3 EU standard)**



¹⁶ European Commission, 2023

¹⁷ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2017

¹⁸ Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, 2024

Between the 2015-2020 administrative reform, significant decentralisation took place, which included:

- Amalgamation of territorial communities (hromadas) from over 11,000 small and less able local councils.
- Enlargement of districts (raions – subregional administrative units).
- Bringing order and uniformity to the administrative-territorial division.

Budget and fiscal reform was carried out, providing local enlarged communities with substantial financial resources. Ukraine has 1,469 communities in 136 districts within 27 regions. The cities of Kyiv and Sevastopol have special status, and are effectively both regions and communities in themselves.

Figure 15. **Old communities – before 2015**

Figure 16. **New communities – after 2020**



These changes significantly enhance the accountability of the entire governance landscape. The reform in local self-governance granted significant powers and financial resources to communities (hromadas), equivalent to those of regional cities. Now, these communities can allocate part of personal income tax into their budgets and retain income from various taxes. Furthermore, they have direct connections with the State budget and receive transfers to fulfil delegated powers (e.g., education subvention for providing secondary school education). These adjustments have resulted in a significant increase in local budget revenues, enhancing the influence and responsibility of communities. Additionally, hromadas gained the ability to engage in external borrowing, being able to independently select institutions and establish urban planning policies.

DATA GAP

LACK OF COMMUNITY (HROMADA) LEVEL DATA

Before decentralisation reform, the deepest level of disaggregation for most statistical data and information was at the level of raion (district) and the cities “of oblast significance” (a city with the status of a district). There were 677 such administrative units, which provided a good level of disaggregation. There are now 136 large districts, which may provide just slightly better data breakdown than regions (oblasts). While it is essential to have data and statistics available on the level of the new amalgamated territorial communities (hromadas), official statistics are limited by the statistical confidentiality requirement. The concept of municipal statistics, and a respective draft law, are being currently developed¹⁹.

¹⁹ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2024

Public Finance

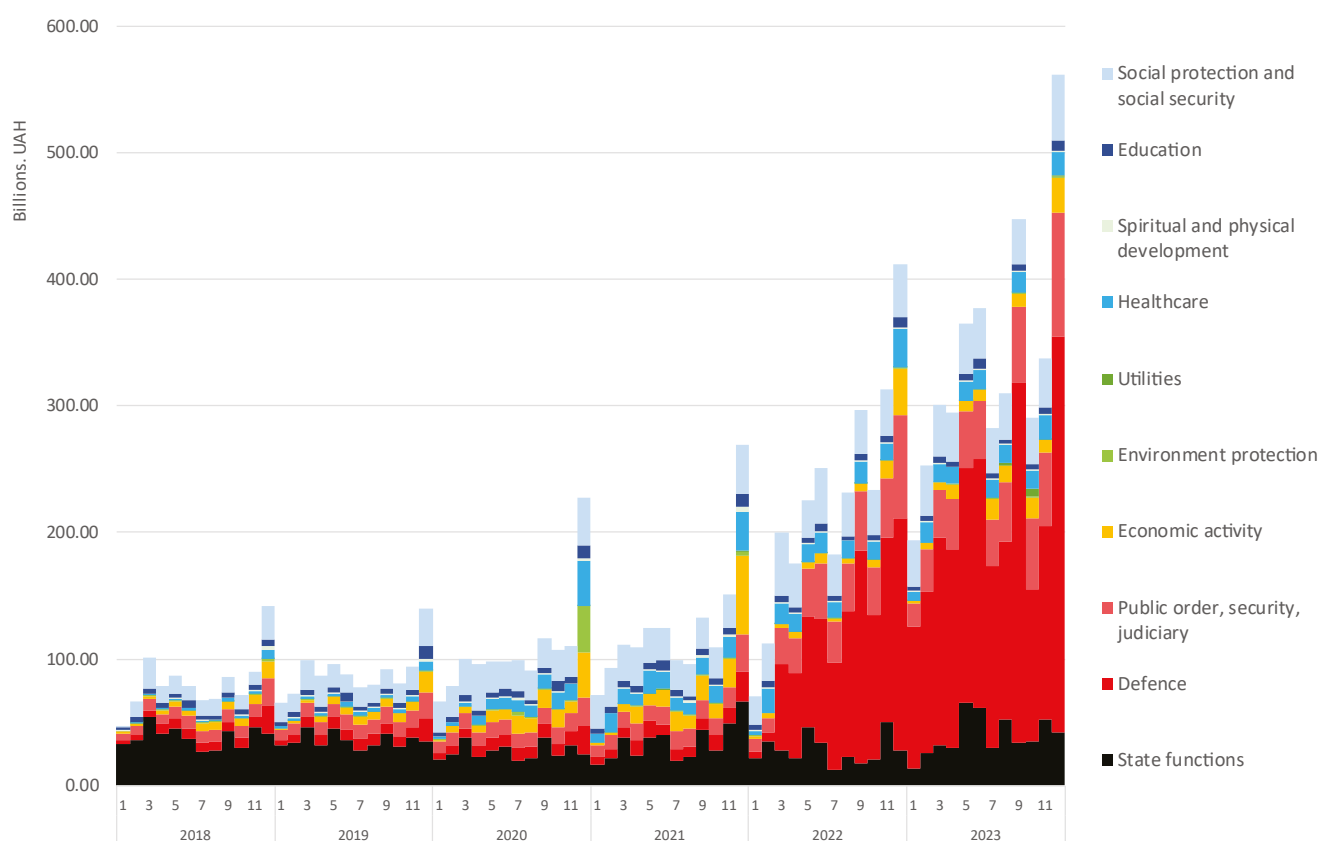
The pre-war years in Ukraine saw budget growth and positive finance management, but challenges in funding transparency and revenue administration improvements.^{20,21,22}

A staggering 57 per cent of State budget expenditures in 2023 was directed to defense. Another 13.8 per cent of the budget were spent on ensuring public order, security, and the judiciary.

Budget expenditures

Annual defence spending increased by almost nine times between 2021-2022, and by an additional 84 per cent between 2022-2023.

Figure 17. **State budget expenditures, monthly, UAH billions, 2018-2022**



Source: openbudget.gov.ua

²⁰ Better Care Network, 2020

²¹ WHO, 2020

²² European Commission, 2023

Figure 18. Consolidated budget expenditures (state and local budgets combined), 2018-2023 in UAH and USD

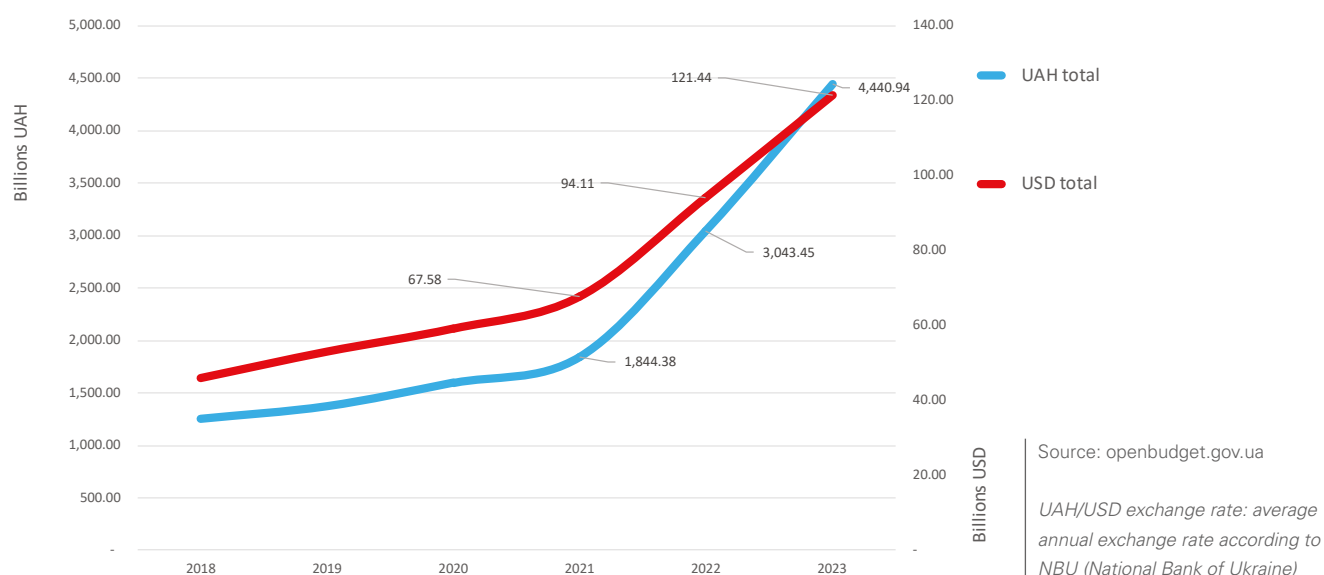
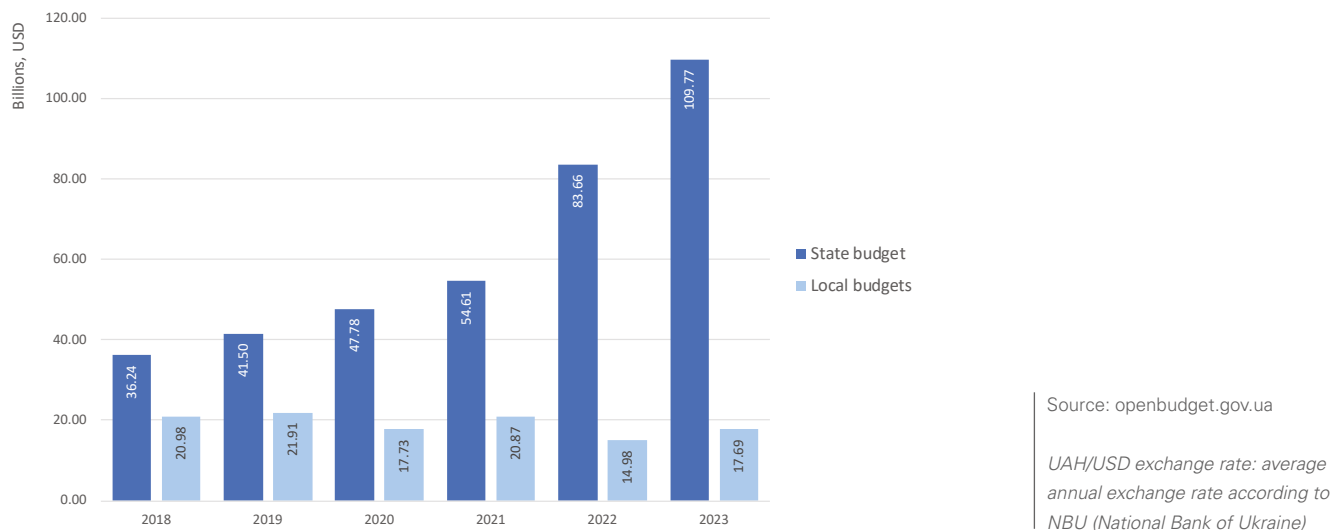


Figure 19. Consolidated budget expenditures composition (interbudget transfers not excluded), 2018-2023, USD



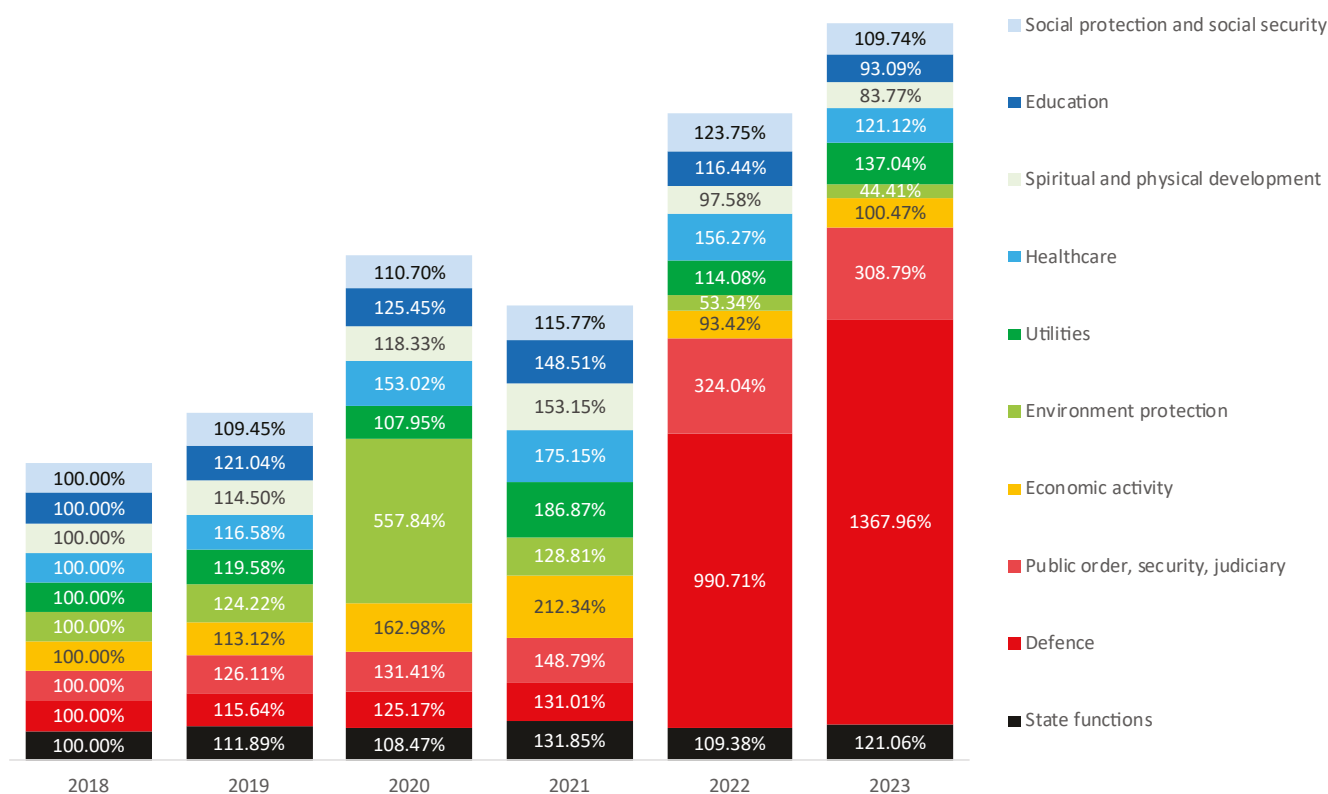
The total consolidated budget (State and local budgets together) in UAH grew almost 2.5 times between 2021-2023. In USD equivalent, it increased by only 56 per cent.

Figure 20. Shares of different budget categories in the consolidated budgets, 2018-2023

Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Defence	7.78%	7.55%	6.91%	37.55%	47.23%
Social protection and social security	23.49%	21.73%	19.92%	14.96%	11.58%
Order, security, judiciary	10.32%	10.00%	9.55%	14.93%	13.32%
Education	17.43%	15.81%	16.97%	9.55%	6.95%
State functions	14.83%	12.84%	13.70%	8.16%	7.86%
Economic activity	11.26%	16.47%	15.91%	5.14%	5.57%
Health care	9.37%	11.02%	11.04%	7.07%	4.90%
Utilities	2.52%	2.02%	3.08%	1.35%	1.59%
Spiritual and physical development	2.30%	1.99%	2.35%	1.11%	0.87%
Environment protection	0.71%	0.57%	0.58%	0.17%	0.14%

Source: openbudget.gov.ua

Figure 21. Percentage change of consolidated budgets categories, USD. Baseline: 2018



Source: openbudget.gov.ua

UAH/USD exchange rate: average annual exchange rate according to NBU (National Bank of Ukraine)

Consolidated budget spending on education in 2023 represented 73.6 per cent of what was spent in 2021; healthcare spending was 79.7 per cent of 2021 spending (in USD equivalent). Only social protection expenditures had increased (in USD equivalent), compared to 2021.

Figure 22. Consolidated budget spending on social protection, healthcare, and education, 2018-2023, UAH

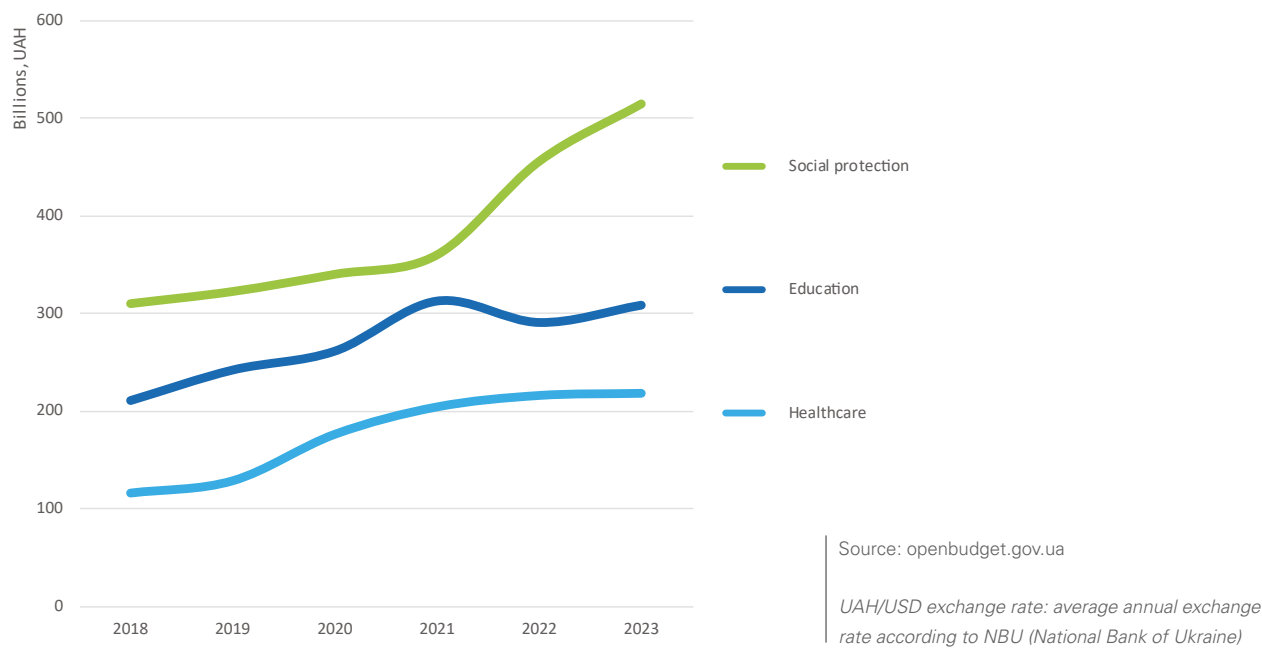
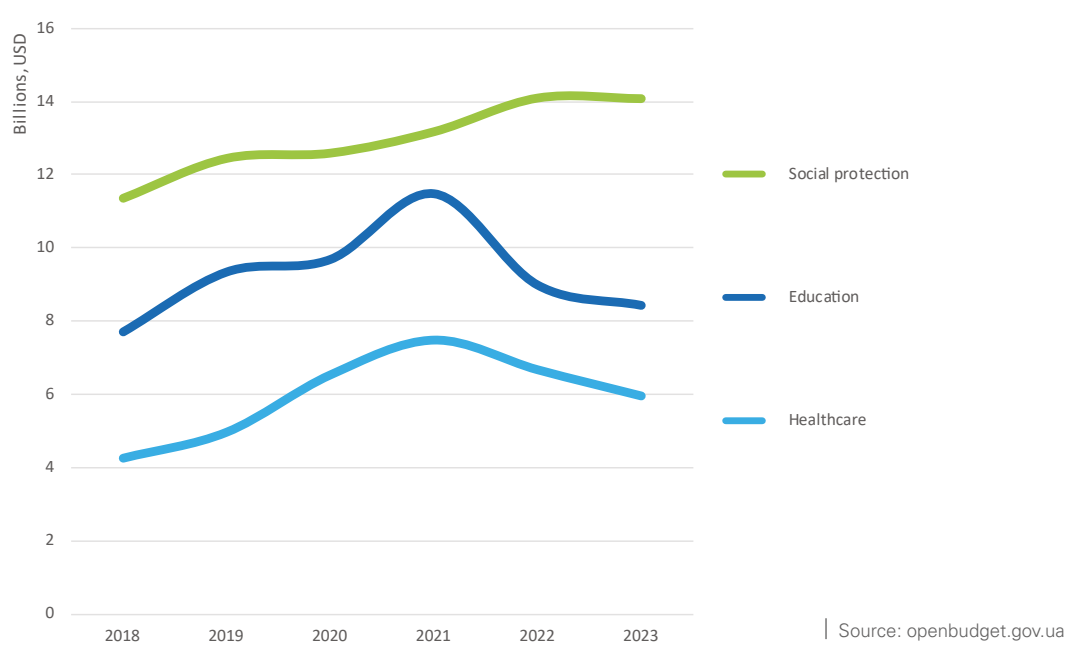


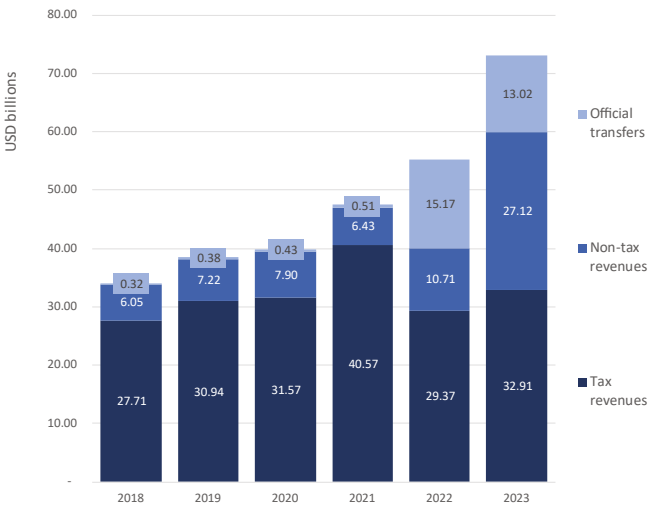
Figure 23. Consolidated budget spending on social protection, healthcare, and education, 2018-2023, USD



State budget revenues

At the same time, budget revenues were to a great extent supported by grants, borrowing, and other foreign financial assistance (reflected in part in the official transfers category and non-tax revenues on the chart below).

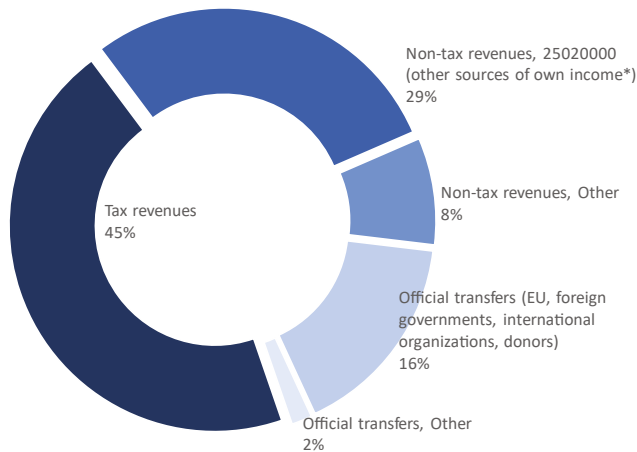
Figure 24. Revenues of the state budget by source, 2018-2023, US



Source: openbudget.gov.ua

UAH/USD exchange rate: average annual exchange rate according to NBU (National Bank of Ukraine)

Figure 25. Revenues of the state budget by source, 2023

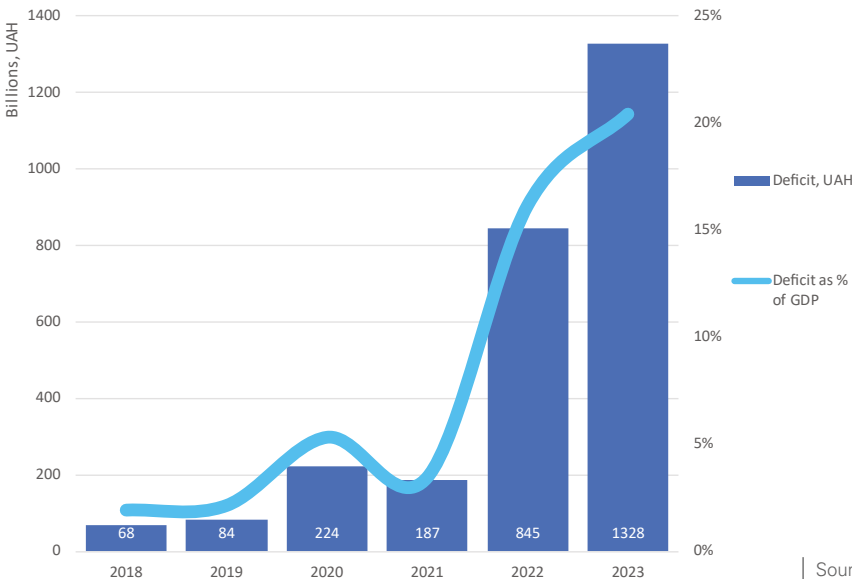


Source: openbudget.gov.ua

* Code 25020000 of non-tax revenues includes (among others) charitable donations, grants, and gifts.

The budget deficit in 2023 reached 20 per cent of GDP (an increase of 4 percentage points from 2022).

Figure 26. Consolidated budget deficit, 2018-2023, billions UAH, % of GDP



Source: openbudget.gov.ua

2024 budget outlooks

The total state budget allocations for 2024 are prospected at UAH 3,309 billion, or USD 87 billion (at 38 UAH / USD exchange rate). About 15 per cent of expenditures will go to social protection and social support, 6 per cent to health, and 5 per cent to education (including local transfers).²³

Within social protection, the following expenditures are worth noting:

- Social protection of citizens in difficult life circumstances: UAH 88.7 billion (+UAH 2.6 billion, or +3 per cent, to 2023).
- Social protection of children and families: UAH 27.6 billion (+3 per cent to 2023) for more than 1.6 million recipients.
- Social protection of persons with disabilities and children with disabilities: UAH 6.7 billion (+88 per cent to 2023).
- Support for low-income families: UAH 20.2 billion (+30 per cent to 2023) for more than 250,000 families. In 2024, transfer values for assistance to low-income families will be increased by 10 per cent (for able-bodied persons, from 45 per cent to 55 per cent, for children from 130 per cent to 140 per cent).
- Housing subsidies and benefits to citizens: UAH 49.9 billion (+32 per cent to 2023) for 3.2 million households. Starting from 2024, these subsidies will be paid from the Pension Fund of Ukraine.
- New budget program for the “Development of the system of social services”: UAH 1.1 billion.
- Rehabilitation and recreation for children who need special attention and support: UAH 0.3 billion (+6.7 per cent to 2023).
- Deinstitutionalisation and ensuring the education of children in family or close to family settings (transfer to local budgets): UAH 575.3 million. This constitutes a 57-fold increase to 2023, although it represents only 74 per cent of the 2021 budget allocation.

Education:

- Teacher salaries: UAH 103.2 billion (+UAH 15.6 billion, or +17.9 per cent, to 2023).
- Shelters and safe conditions for students and teachers: UAH 2.5 billion (+UAH 1.0 billion, or +66.7 per cent, to 2023).
- The “New Ukrainian School” program: UAH 1.5 billion (not funded in 2022 or 2023).
- Education for persons with special educational needs: UAH 0.3 billion (as in 2023).
- Equipment for creating educational and practical centres of modern professional and technical education: UAH 0.5 billion (not funded in 2022 or 2023).
- Restoration and modernisation of food blocks in schools: UAH 1.5 billion (new program).

Health:

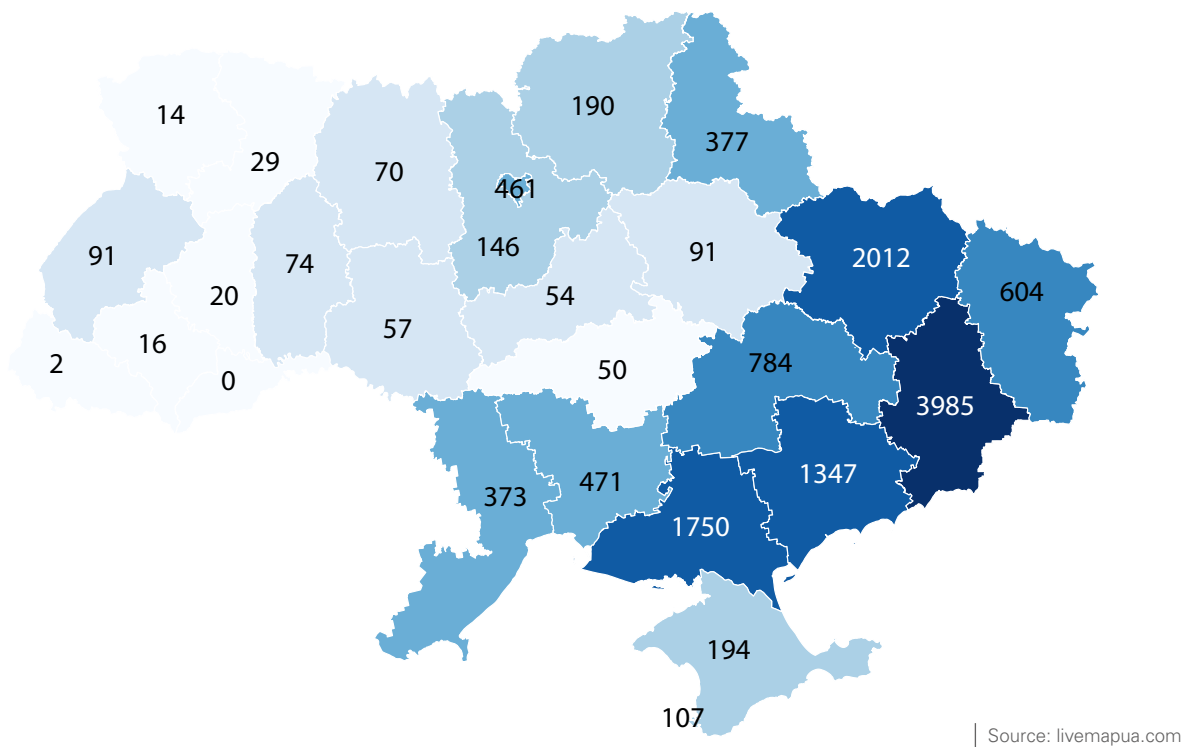
- Medical guarantee program: UAH 158.8 billion (+UAH 16.0 billion, or +11.2 per cent, to 2023):
- New service for increasing access to reproductive technologies: UAH 1.5 billion.
- Public health and epidemic control measures: UAH 4.9 billion (+UAH 1.1 billion, or +29.6 per cent, to 2023).
- Shelters and safe conditions for healthcare institutions: UAH 1.0 billion (new program).

²³ UNICEF, 2023

Humanitarian Risk Profile

In 2023, ongoing fighting continued to devastate parts of Ukraine, causing extensive damage to civilian infrastructure, such as homes, schools, hospitals, and essential utilities. Kherson Region experienced disruptions in essential supplies due to catastrophic flooding from the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in June 2023.

Figure 27. Number of reported bombings, explosions, destructions, fighting, as of February 2024 ²⁴



In 2024, 14.6 million people would need humanitarian assistance in Ukraine – a staggering 40 per cent of the population. Some 6.3 million people have fled the country and remain refugees, mostly across Europe.²⁵

As of 31 December 2023, recovery and reconstruction needs are estimated at almost US\$486 billion, considering an (ambitious) 10-year period to meet them.²⁶ By February 2024, at least 1,242 medical facilities, 3,809 educational institutions, 1,108.5 ²⁷ km of water networks, and 301 youth centres were verified as damaged or destroyed.

War-related trauma affects millions across Ukraine, leaving 20 per cent of children in need of sustained humanitarian and social assistance, and residents affected by active hostilities and the internally displaced experiencing more difficulties in accessing social services.²⁸ Gender-based violence risks have escalated, placing vulnerable populations, particularly women and older individuals, at the forefront of challenges.

²⁴ Liveuamap, 2024

²⁵ OCHA, UNCHR, 2024

²⁶ World Bank, 2024

²⁷ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2024

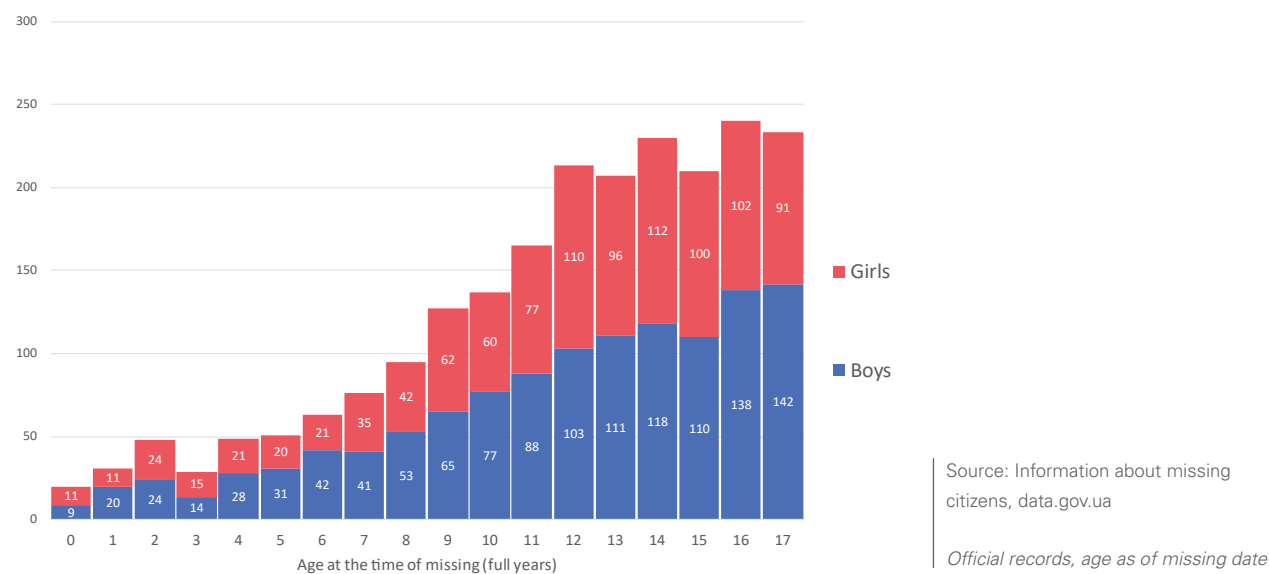
²⁸ UNICEF, 2023

Risks of injury and death

Since the war in Ukraine escalated in 2022, 600 children have been verified by the United Nations as killed and 1,357 children have been verified as injured.²⁹ Children and adolescents in conflict zones face grave physical dangers. Eighty-seven per cent of child casualties were caused by explosive weapons. Airstrikes, shelling, and explosive weapons have wreaked havoc on essential services, such as energy supply, hospitals, schools, and water facilities. The risk of unexploded mines adds to the peril. These conditions result in injuries and fatalities, making it difficult to access urgent necessities, such as healthcare, food, and transportation.

A total of 2,034 children were registered as missing from 2022-2023 (1,106 boys and 928 girls).

Figure 28. Children missing during 2022-2023, disaggregated by age and sex



Almost 70 per cent of them disappeared in February 2022, according to the open data of the State Registry of Missing People.³⁰

Risk of distress and trauma

The enduring war in Ukraine significantly impacts children’s mental health, putting approximately 1.5 million at risk of depression and anxiety, according to the Child Protection AoR Strategy for Ukraine for 2023-2024.³¹ Factors like frequent shelling, separation from family and friends, school closures, and exposure to violence contribute to their declining well-being. The absence of safe spaces exacerbates vulnerability, leading to abuse and exploitation. Around 250,000 children regularly face shelling, making them susceptible to PTSD. Urgent comprehensive mental health support is crucial.

Risks of separation

Approximately 4 per cent of households nationwide have at least one child not living with the family. This rate is even higher in war-affected areas, particularly in the eastern regions. The reasons for separation are diverse, including displacement and the loss of caregivers. Children may move out for education, marriage, or live with foster families or friends. Unfortunately, the lack of coordinated systems for tracing and reuniting families increases the risk of permanent separation. Whether temporary or lasting, separation exposes children to protection risks, especially when alternative care lacks proper sanitation, shelter, and safety. Even children with parental care face vulnerabilities due to displacement and associated challenges.

²⁹ UN News, 2024
³⁰ Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2024
³¹ CP AoR, 2023

Gender Profile

Ukraine has committed to key international obligations to accelerate gender equality. The country ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)³² in 1981; accepted its Optional Protocol in 2003; adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action³³ in 1995; adopted the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security³⁴ in 2000; joined Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality³⁵ in 2020; and, ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence³⁶, or Istanbul Convention, in 2022. In May 2022, the government signed the Framework for Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations on the Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Also, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was ratified in 2014 and entered fully into force in 2017, and envisions ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in different spheres.

Ukraine has also adopted important national legislation, strategies, programmes, and action plans aimed at advancing gender equality in the country. Several articles of the 1996 Ukraine Constitution³⁷ aim for the equality of women and men. Ukraine adopted the law on ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men³⁸ (2005); law on preventing and combating discrimination³⁹ (2012); law on preventing and combating domestic violence⁴⁰ (2017); amendments to the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes of Ukraine⁴¹ to implement provisions from the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2017); amendments to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men during military service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations⁴² (2018); and, Election Code with gender quota requirements of 40 per cent in national, sub-national, and local elections, with the exception of village, settlement, and city councils in amalgamated communities with up to 10,000 voters, where the gender quota remains 30 per cent⁴³ (2019). Ukraine adopted the Gender Equality Communications Strategy⁴⁴ (2020); Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality Action Plan⁴⁵ (2020); National Action Plan to implement the UNSCR 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” 2021-2025;⁴⁶ State Programme on prevention and elimination of domestic violence and gender-based violence 2021-2025;⁴⁷ Strategy for the implementation of gender equality in education 2022-2030;⁴⁸ State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men 2022-2030;⁴⁹ and, National Strategy to Close the Gender Pay Gap 2023-2030.⁵⁰

In 2019, the Ministry of Finance issued the Guidelines on Gender-Responsive Budgeting.⁵¹ Gender-responsive budgeting has been incorporated into several legislations and strategies, including the Public Finance Management System Reform Strategy for 2022-2025.⁵² In 2017, the Ministry of Health abolished order No.256 banning women from being employed in 458 professions.⁵³

Since 2021, both men and women in Ukraine can take unpaid three-year childcare leave.⁵⁴ Women can take 126 days of a paid leave for pregnancy and childbirth (70 days prior to the expected childbirth date and 56 days after childbirth). A man whose wife has given birth to a child can receive a one-time paid leave up to 14 calendar days. It is also possible to establish reduced working hours for men who have children under the age of fourteen or a child with a disability, and fathers raising children without a mother, in particular in case the mother is staying long term in a medical institution.

In 2017, the Government of Ukraine assigned the Vice Prime Minister on EU and Euro-Atlantic Integration with the functions and responsibilities to coordinate the state gender equality policy⁵⁵ and introduced the post of

³² UN Treaty Body Database, 1981

³³ Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995

³⁴ UN Security Council, 2000

³⁵ French G7 Presidency, 2019

³⁶ Council of Europe, 2024

³⁷ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2019

³⁸ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

³⁹ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2014

⁴⁰ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

⁴¹ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2018

⁴² Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2018

⁴³ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2022

⁴⁴ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2020

⁴⁵ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2020

⁴⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2020

⁴⁷ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2021

⁴⁸ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022

⁴⁹ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022

⁵⁰ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2023

⁵¹ Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, 2019

⁵² Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022

⁵³ Ministry of Health of Ukraine, 2017

⁵⁴ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2021

⁵⁵ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2017

Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy.⁵⁶ In 2020, the Gender Equality Commission was set up to coordinate the work of executive bodies to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men.⁵⁷

Despite positive developments in this field, gender inequality still exists in many areas and people often have stereotypical views about the role of women and men in society.

According to the Rating Sociological Group study⁵⁸ (2021), respondents consider cooking (64 per cent) and household chores (56 per cent) to be women's responsibilities. 30-40 per cent of respondents indicated parity, and only 3 per cent of respondents believe that these responsibilities are men's.

Women often shoulder a disproportional responsibility for unpaid domestic work. In Ukrainian society, gender stereotypes and perceptions of gender roles frequently uphold patriarchal social norms. According to quantitative survey data, women dedicate an average of 36.2 hours per week to caring for children, compared to 14.8 hours for men.⁵⁹

According to a study⁶⁰ (May 2023), the household chores of cleaning, cooking, and childcare would cost, per month, at least UAH 41,000 (schedule based), or UAH 117,394 (24/7, 31 days a month, without weekends or holidays off).

Men have low involvement in childcare. According to a UNFPA survey⁶¹ (2023), only 20 per cent of respondents (16 per cent of mothers and 25 per cent of fathers) indicated an even distribution of responsibilities for raising children. According to estimates by non-governmental organizations in Ukraine, approximately 25,000 fathers, or 3-4 per cent of all fathers, took childcare leave.⁶²

Women make up 92 per cent of all single parents, which makes up to 20 per cent of all households.⁶³ Since the start of the full-scale war, many women have become the main and sometimes only breadwinner of their family, in addition to being the only caregiver. According to IOM, 59 per cent of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are female.⁶⁴ It is estimated that 90 per cent of those who have fled abroad are women and children.

Deep-rooted patriarchal norms in Ukraine perpetuate gender discrimination. Stereotypical gender roles hinder women's equal participation in decision-making and access to resources. Women are still underrepresented in high-level positions. Only 21 per cent of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine are women,⁶⁵ while the share of women among the population before the escalation of the war in 2022 was 54 per cent.⁶⁶

From childhood, men are taught not to show emotions and to "let off steam" with alcohol and tobacco or by behaving violently. As a result, men practice risky behaviours and do not seek medical help often. Men are more likely to be diagnosed with a heart attack or stroke. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine for 2021, 84 per cent of the total number of suicides were committed by men.⁶⁷ This activity affects their average life expectancy, which is 10 years less than that of women (68 years vs. 78 years),⁶⁸ and this difference is one of the largest in the world.

Toxic masculinity has many manifestations, including the preference for physical force, which often leads to various forms of violence. There is a high level of gender-based violence in Ukraine. According to an OSCE study⁶⁹ (2019), 67 per cent of women over the age of 15 have experienced physical, psychological, or sexual

⁵⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2017

⁵⁷ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2020

⁵⁸ Rating Group, 2021

⁵⁹ CARE International, 2023

⁶⁰ Work.ua, 2023

⁶¹ UNFPA, 2023

⁶² Bureau of Social & Political Developments, 2018

⁶³ United Nations Ukraine, 2021

⁶⁴ IOM, 2023

⁶⁵ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2024

⁶⁶ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2022

⁶⁷ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2022

⁶⁸ UNFPA, 2024

⁶⁹ OSCE, 2019

violence. According to the Ministry of Social Policy,⁷⁰ during 2023, almost 270,000 reports of domestic violence were received, which, in relation to the population, is significantly higher than figures before the escalation of the war.

Official government statistics are not available past 2021, due to the war. At that time, the labour force participation rate for women was 47.8 per cent; while for men, it was 62.9 per cent. Among women 15 to 24 years of age, the labour force participation rate was 28.1 per cent; while among men of the same age, it was 33 per cent.⁷¹ The gender pay gap in Ukraine was about 19 per cent.⁷²

The war intensifies gender-based violence and widens gender gaps in employment and wages.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has triggered notable changes in gender roles and responsibilities. Women find themselves taking on additional unpaid work, driven by increased unemployment and family separation. Men, when they leave to fight in the war, acknowledge shifts in household dynamics, with women assuming roles traditionally held by them. This change includes tasks such as household repairs, seeking support, and managing various responsibilities. Men, however, reported an increased collaboration on shared tasks they would typically be responsible for to support the household. Adolescent girls, particularly in war-affected areas, note a rise in unpaid care work, impacting their education and leisure time. These changes underscore the profound effects of the war on daily life and societal dynamics.⁷³

⁷⁰ [Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2023](#)

⁷¹ [State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2021](#)

⁷² [Liga.net, 2023](#)

⁷³ [CARE International, 2023](#)

11-year-old Bohdan lives in Izyum, in Ukraine's Kharkivska region, a city that has endured near-total destruction over two years of conflict. Last year, the local school was shelled and is now closed, and his classmates have fled.

"The war changed my life a lot," says Bohdan. "I don't attend school anymore, I avoid places where there could be mines and don't go far for walks or summer swims in the river. Before the war, Izyum was whole. Everyone was happy and kind, and now everything is broken, and there's no one left. Many friends have departed."

Amid the horrors of war, the boy has stopped caring about not having his own bedroom and even jokes about it.

"Sleeping in the kitchen is warmer because of the stove," he says. "Plus, you won't go hungry."

During winter, Bohdan's entire existence revolves around his home and yard due to the danger of landmines. With education in his region restricted to online classes, his only connection to teachers and classmates is via a small phone screen.

"My school is in ruins," he says, sadly. "I wish I could return there to see my friends and stroll around. But online studying is tough due to potential electricity and internet outages. Using my phone for studies is challenging as the battery runs out, and I can't hear the teacher well. Besides, my eyes get tired and worsen."



3. Enabling Environment

Legislation and Policy

International Agreements

Ukraine ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on 27 February 1991.⁷⁴

Ukraine has signed most of the core UN human rights treaties and has been subject to regular reporting process:

- the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights,
- the International Convention on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights,
- the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women,
- Convention Against Torture,
- two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OP CAC) and the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OP SC).

Three aspects from UN documents remain to be incorporated into Ukrainian laws:

- Guiding principles on alternative care for children, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2009,⁷⁵
- General Comment No. 5 on independent living and inclusion into the life of a community, adopted by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in October 2017,⁷⁶
- Guidelines for deinstitutionalisation, including during emergency situations, adopted by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in October 2022.⁷⁷

Also, the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in the Field of Intercountry Adoption is still unratified.⁷⁸

As part of Association Agreement Ukraine signed with the European Union, the parties agreed, inter alia, to work together for child protection, to effectively abolish child labour, to strengthen maternal and child health, and to improve control over use of alcohol by children.⁷⁹

Since the escalation of the war, there have been reports of thousands of children in Ukraine being forcibly transferred within NGCAs or to the Russian Federation and, in some cases, adopted. Additionally, obstacles prevent their return to Ukraine and reunification with families.^{80 81}

⁷⁴ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

⁷⁵ UNICEF, 2010

⁷⁶ United Nations, 2017

⁷⁷ OHCHR, 2022

⁷⁸ Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), 1993

⁷⁹ EUR-Lex, 2023

⁸⁰ OHCHR, 2023

⁸¹ ICC, 2023

Recommendations of the European Commission of 8 November 2023 also outline steps that are crucial for safeguarding the well-being of children and promoting their healthy development:

- Strengthen the Best Interests Assessment.
- Develop clear procedures and criteria for assessing the best interests of the child.
- Ensure these guidelines apply to children in need of care and protection.
- Prioritise the child's best interests as a primary consideration.
- Integrate Social Services Enhancement.
- Strengthen integrated social services to prevent family separation.
- Support alternative family placements.
- Facilitate the reintegration of children from institutions into families.
- Allocate additional resources to create a robust minimum package of social services.⁸²

National Laws and Policies

The Government of Ukraine is continuing to take measures aimed at bringing domestic legislation and practice in line with its international obligations to protect the rights of children and young people.

A normative and legal framework that mandates that state and local self-government safeguard the rights and well-being of children includes:

- Family Code of Ukraine;⁸³
- Comprehensive Law of Ukraine "On Childhood Protection",⁸⁴ defining a child as an individual under 18 years old, unless legally considered an adult earlier;
- Law of Ukraine "On bodies and services for children and special institutions for children";⁸⁵
- Law of Ukraine "On ensuring organizational and legal conditions for social protection of orphans and children deprived of parental care";⁸⁶
- Law of Ukraine "On the main principles of youth policy";⁸⁷
- National Youth Strategy 2030.⁸⁸

Between 2014 and 2018, 11 laws on childhood protection were adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine; the President of Ukraine made three decrees; the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine issued 21 resolutions and eight ordinances; 26 departmental by-laws were adopted by ministries and other central executive bodies; and, two state social programmes were initiated.

In May 2018, the "National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child" State Social Programme until 2021 was approved.

The Human Development Strategy for the period until 2025 was approved on 2 June 2021 (Presidential Decree 225/2021).⁸⁹

⁸² European Commission, 2023

⁸³ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

⁸⁴ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

⁸⁵ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

⁸⁶ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

⁸⁷ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

⁸⁸ President of Ukraine, 2021

⁸⁹ President of Ukraine, 2021

Child Rights Governance and Stakeholders

- Three key bodies oversee child rights protection: The Ministry of Social Policy, the National Social Service, and the State Service on the Issues of Children.
- The Ministry of Social Policy is tasked with formulating and implementing state policies related to social welfare, children’s rights, family issues, and social services. Nevertheless, its dual role in policy formation and implementation sometimes leads to conflicts, as highlighted in the Concept of Optimisation of Central Executive Bodies.
- As outlined in its regulations (including children’s rights), the National Social Service oversees compliance with legislative requirements in social support provision.
- The State Service on the Issues of Children focuses on child protection, family support, children’s health, and adoption, albeit with some overlap in responsibilities with the National Social Service.
- The Ministry of Education and Science ensures that every child, particularly those in conflict zones, has access to education.
- The Ministry of Health ensures that every child has access to quality healthcare.
- The Ministry of Justice of Ukraine formulates policies regarding the protection of children’s rights in the justice system, and plays a key role in contributing to and facilitating the introduction of services for children in the sphere of justice.
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs works to stop and address any violence against children, even during conflicts, and offers the necessary emotional support and recovery programs.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs protects children’s nationality and legal status, particularly in NGCAs.
- The Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine is responsible for support to conflict-affected children, including coordinating the return of forcibly transferred children to Ukraine.
- The Ministry of Finance of Ukraine ensures that the interests and needs of children are reflected in public budgets.

NEW INSTITUTION

In September 2023, a new institution was established:⁹⁰ the State Service on the Issues of Children, with a particular mandate and functions:



Child Rights Protection – implements state policy related to child rights, including orphans and children deprived of family care.



Social Support – provides social support to families with children.



Health and Recreation – works on improving health and recreation opportunities for children.



Family-Based Care and Adoption – facilitates the development of family-based care and adoption.

Coordination and monitoring functions:

- Coordinates activities for the executive power bodies related to child rights protection.
- Analyses draft legal acts for compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Monitors adherence to child protection legislation by local executive power bodies, self-government, enterprises, organizations, and individuals.
- Monitors and evaluates child rights protection and the implementation of state policies.

Database management responsibilities:

- Keeps records on orphans and children deprived of family care, prospective adoptive parents, children in difficult life conditions, and children in patronage families.
- Maintains a “databank” on orphans, potential adoptive families, guardians, and foster parents.

Information systems used:

- Centralised IDP database.
- Centralised social sphere database.
- Centralised databank on disability.
- State registry on health and recreation facilities for children.
- Other relevant information resources.

⁹⁰ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2023

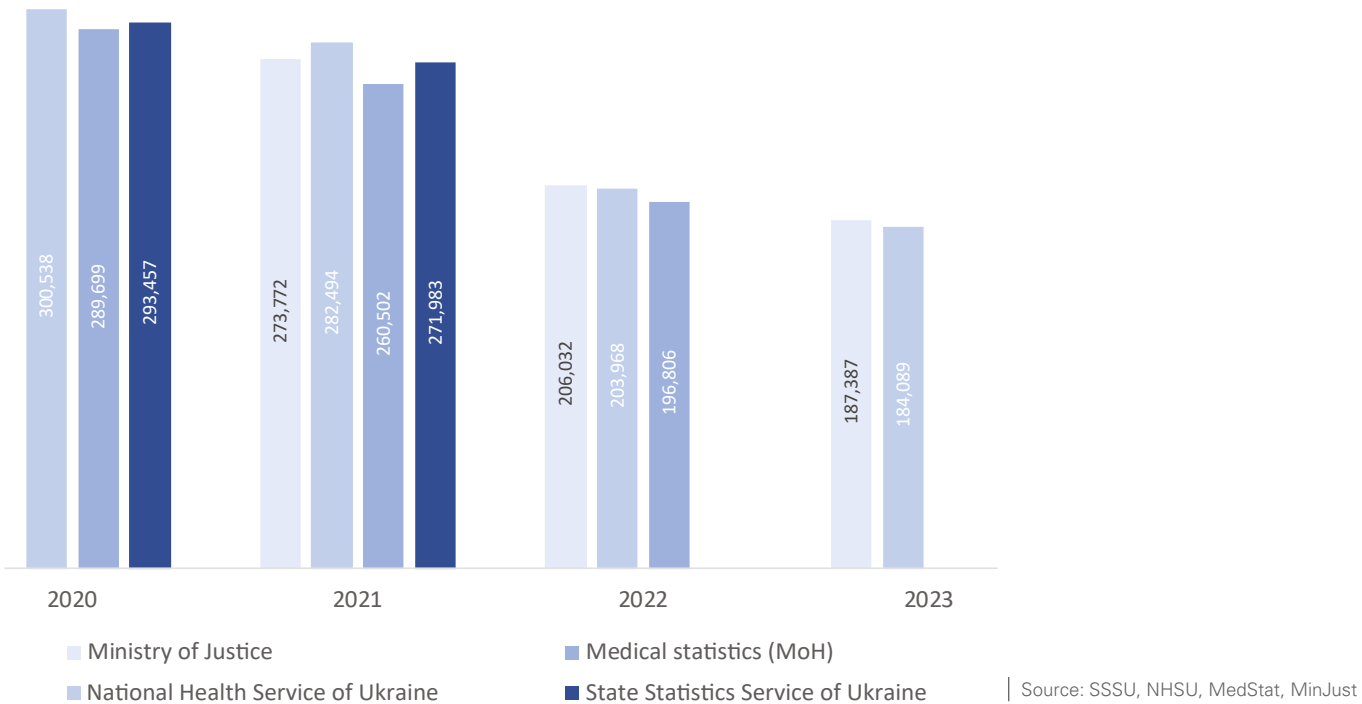
Data and Evidence on Children

In Ukraine, the lack of disaggregated data on critical child-related issues remains a challenge. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has emphasised that there is a lack of statistics regarding children at risk of torture, domestic violence, abuse, and ill-treatment, as well as limited information on child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, minority groups, and refugee children.⁹¹ For example, certain sub-groups of children, such as those in pre-adoption placements, are often excluded from the overall count of children in alternative care. Consequently, the reported statistics may not fully encompass all children in such circumstances. When it comes to collecting data on children with disabilities, Ukraine relies primarily on administrative data sources.⁹² This approach, while providing valuable insights, may have limitations in comprehensively capturing the diverse experiences and needs of children with disabilities, especially during the war.

Coordination issues between government bodies, each collecting its own data, impede effective analysis and planning for child welfare. The lack of consolidated data undermines the ability to address child welfare concerns, hindering program evaluation and planning.⁹³

The state of the national SDG monitoring mechanisms plays a pivotal role in achieving sustainable development goals. The State Statistics Service of Ukraine leads efforts in data collection, analysis, and reporting. Coordination among various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and academia, needs improvement. In addition, modernising statistical processes, adopting innovative methodologies, and integrating new data sources are essential. Strengthening basic official statistics, particularly at the subnational level, is vital for accurate monitoring. Finally, enhancing data dissemination and communication ensures that the relevant information reaches policymakers, researchers, and the public. By addressing these challenges, Ukraine enhances its national SDG monitoring framework and contributes to sustainable development on a global scale.⁹⁴

Figure 29. Number of livebirths: discrepancies among different data sources



⁹¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011

⁹² UNECE, 2022

⁹³ UNECE, 2022

⁹⁴ Human Rights Watch, 2023

The biggest challenge in terms of data availability is lack of official, reliable, detailed population data.

The primary source of information about the population of any country is the population census, which was held in Ukraine only once since its independence 1991, in 2001. No census for such a long period of time has led to increasing uncertainty as per the number and composition of Ukraine's population. With the escalation of the war and introduction of martial law, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine stopped publishing data on births and death, the most accurate demographic information. The reasons stated was both sensitivity and accuracy. Publication of many official statistical indicators may resume within three months after the end of martial law.

Comparison of data of pre-war official statistics and more recent UNFPA population estimates (using various sources, such as mobile phone usage and administrative data) may reveal drawbacks in official statistics. For historic (pre-full-scale war) data, there could be undercounting of population in some areas (e.g., in Kyiv City and Kyiv Region, bigger urban areas), and apparent overcounting of population in other / rural areas. Internal migration has been much more poorly accounted for, compared to registration of births and deaths.

Before decentralisation reform, the deepest level of disaggregation for most statistical data and information was the raion (district) level and cities "of oblast significance" (essentially, a city with the status of district). There were 677 such administrative units, which provided a rather good level of disaggregation. There are 136 large districts now, which may provide just slightly better data breakdown than oblasts (regions). While it would be logical to process data on the level of the new amalgamated territorial communities, official statistics are limited by the statistical confidentiality requirement. The concept of municipal statistics and a respective draft law are being currently developed.

Despite progress, there are gaps in systematic statistical observations for youth. Collecting and reporting sub-national data on adolescents is essential for informed program planning and implementation efforts. Ensuring comprehensive and accurate data collection across different spheres (e.g., health, education, employment, etc.) is crucial to address the specific needs of Ukrainian youth (14-35). After leaving the education system, youth become largely invisible.

Medical statistics provide valuable insights into many child-related issues. There are, however, numerous drawbacks in place, such as lack of disaggregation by region, sex, age, or health status; lack of ability to combine disaggregation dimension (e.g., data could be available disaggregated by sex and by separate age groups separately, but not by sex and age groups simultaneously). The same issues apply to published statistics in other domains: education, criminal (prosecutor's office statistics), judicial statistics, etc. In this context, the potential use of e-Health individual patient-level data would be invaluable.

Child Rights Monitoring

A comprehensive child rights monitoring (CRM) system is crucial for tracking a country's progress in line with CRC commitments, making evidence-based policy decisions and ensuring timely support to those in need, utilising reliable and disaggregated data for proper analysis and response planning.

The Ministry of Social Policy is the central authority in CRM and child protection, though there are significant financial, human resources, and operational challenges, hindering its ability to fully carry out its mandate for child rights monitoring.

Numerous government bodies (both temporary and permanent), councils, and coordinating HQs have been established with the mandate to monitor child rights (to a greater or lesser extent), such as:

- Inter-Ministerial Commission on Childhood Protection (mostly inactive since 2020).
- Coordination Headquarters for the Protection of Children's Rights under Martial Law (2022).
- Coordination Council for Child Protection and Safety (operating under the Office of President), which conducts meetings on an ad-hoc basis (2022).
- State Service of Ukraine on Children's Issues (2023), not fully functioning yet.

Parliamentary committees are not taking full advantage of their key strategic position as a CRM stakeholder to question the government on its child rights record. Child Rights Ombudspersons (Commissioner of the President of Ukraine on Children's Rights and Deputy Commissioner for Human Rights of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine) play an important role in child rights monitoring.

Currently, coherent state policies on CRM are absent. The lack of a unified state CRM, family policy, and childhood policy contributes to fragmentary efforts in safeguarding children's rights. Discrepancies in the overall vision of child rights protection processes at national, regional and local levels lead to uncoordinated implementation and enforcement of policies. An inefficient system for managing processes related to child rights protection exacerbates challenges in ensuring the well-being of children. Without robust management structures in place, effective monitoring and enforcement of child rights are compromised. The lack of a comprehensive system for monitoring the realisation of policies, plans, and programmes aimed at safeguarding children's rights undermines efforts to assess progress, identify gaps, and address challenges effectively.

In November 2018, Ukraine, as a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, presented to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child the country's Consolidated V and VI Periodic National Report on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention for 2011 to 2017. The Consolidated Report sets out both the country's achievements on the path towards ensuring the rights of the child and the key challenges.

In 2018, the Alternative CRC report was developed by Ombudsman office; a shadow CRC report was developed by the Child Rights Network of NGOs.

In May 2018, the "National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child" State Social Programme until 2021 was approved. The Programme defines state policy measures to ensure the rights of the child in the following key areas:

- Creating favourable conditions for the life and development of a child;
- Ensuring equal opportunities for all children;
- Strengthening the family institution and the formation of responsible parenthood;
- Protecting children from violence;
- Creating a child-friendly justice system;
- Considering the best interests and opinions of children in decision-making;

- Ensuring the protection of the rights and interests of children in conditions of military action or armed conflict;
- Creating a safe informational space for children;
- Intensifying the role of the territorial community in solving the issues in ensuring children's rights in the condition of decentralisation;
- Promoting international cooperation.

The initial draft of the Concept for the National Action Plan to Implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child for the upcoming period was formulated in 2021. However, this draft remains incomplete.⁹⁵

Even before the escalation of the war, there was insufficient and inadequate disaggregated data on child-related issues in Ukraine. The most recent census was in 2001, resulting in a lack of accurate population figures. Similarly, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine carried out the last Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2012, meaning that there has been a serious deficiency in up-to-date information on children that has hindered monitoring of progress towards SDGs and CRC commitments. This situation has only worsened since the escalation of the war. Due to martial law and subsequent constraints preventing the SSSU household surveys, there is limited accurate disaggregated data on children's well-being, including disaggregation by age, sex, and geography.

Ukraine's reliance on administrative data for collecting information on children with disabilities may not fully reflect their varied experiences and needs, tends to overlook those not formally registered. As a result of decentralisation reform, the quality of disaggregation of statistics worsened. At the same time, there is no uniform statistics system on the level of hromadas (communities). The concept of municipal statistics and a respective draft law are being developed currently.

CRC CONCLUDING OBSERVATION⁹⁶ DATED 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention:

The Committee is deeply concerned that the armed attack by the Russian Federation since 24 February 2022 has had a devastating effect on people in Ukraine, particularly children, and has since created major obstacles to the implementation of all the rights of the child defined in the Convention and its Optional Protocols. In this regard, the Committee commends the efforts of the State party to mitigate the adverse effects of the armed conflict on children, but is nevertheless gravely concerned about multiple credible, corroborated, and consistent reports of gross violations of children's rights since the beginning of the armed conflict, including killings of children, mass displacement of children internally and outside the country, and the destruction of homes, schools, hospitals, and water and sanitation systems, committed mainly by the Russian Federation. While noting that the State party has no access to areas controlled by armed forces of the Russian Federation and affiliated armed groups, the Committee reminds the State party that the rights under the Convention and its Optional Protocols apply to all children at all times and that it bears the primary responsibility to protect its population, and encourages it to continue to take all possible measures to protect its children, especially those in vulnerable situations.

Main areas of concern and recommendations:

The Committee reminds the State party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: the right to life, survival and development, violence against children, children deprived of a family environment, children with disabilities, mental health and internally displaced, asylum-seeking and refugee children.

While noting the exceptional situation in the country due to the armed attack by the Russian Federation, a number of the Committee's recommendations in the present concluding observations refer to the situation concerning children's rights after 24 February 2022, while other recommendations concern the situation that has been ongoing since the last review by the Committee in 2011.

⁹⁵ UNICEF, 2021

⁹⁶ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2022

There is also a lack of consolidated data between Ministries that do not have formal data sharing agreements or mechanisms. Decentralisation and other parallel reforms (health, education, deinstitutionalisation, and public administration) do not take children's well-being into account, nor do they demonstrate interlinkages between one another.

The absence of universal coverage in data collection further limits evidence-based policymaking, with various vulnerable groups (such as children with disabilities, Roma children, and those in NGCAs, and others) being excluded from official statistics.⁹⁷

The current state of CRM in Ukraine suggests that the country faces significant challenges in monitoring and achieving goals of upholding child rights. Despite commendable efforts, vulnerable groups remain excluded from official statistics.⁹⁸

Even where data is collected, and even publicly available, use of data and information for evidence-based policy making and budgeting is insufficient. State authorities have limited capacity to analyse the data being collected to make informed policy decisions.

⁹⁷ [Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2022](#)

⁹⁸ [Human Rights Watch, 2023](#)

On 8 July 2024 in Kyiv, a health care worker walks beside buildings that were damaged in an attack that hit Okhmatdyt hospital, Ukraine's largest children's medical centre.

UNICEF provided immediate assistance to the hospital such as emergency water and hygiene supplies.



4.The Rights of Children (Analysed Dimensions)

Health and Nutrition

Health System

The war has caused approximately US\$1.4 billion in damage to the health sector in Ukraine.⁹⁹ According to data provided by the Ministry of Health, there were 9,925 public facilities in the health sector before the war. Of those, 1,718 (12.5 per cent of all facilities) have been partially or fully damaged as of the current assessment.¹⁰⁰ The losses in the health sector are estimated to be US\$17.8 billion and the total recovery and reconstruction needs are estimated to be US\$14.2 billion over 10 years.¹⁰¹

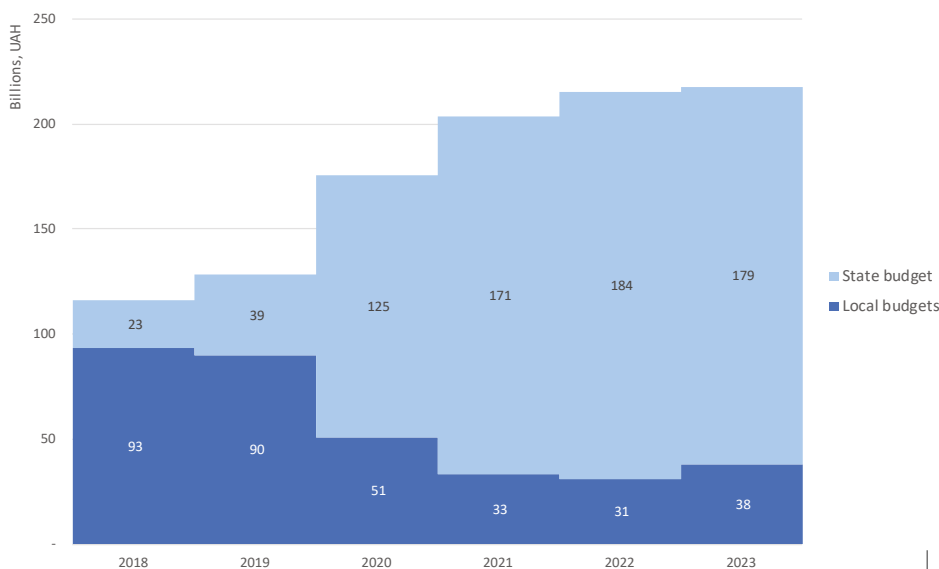
The collapse of the Kakhovka Dam in June 2023 had very substantial impacts on the health sector, disrupting delivery of essential health care and public health services.

At the same time, the healthcare system has demonstrated a good level of resilience since the start of the full-scale war.¹⁰² According to one expert interviewed, international organizations initially streamlined their efforts in a classic emergency response modality (i.e., substituting for local healthcare system when it collapses). Quickly it became apparent that the demand was relatively low and that there was no need to substitute for the healthcare system.

Finance

Consolidated budget spending on healthcare in 2023 represented 79.7 per cent of 2021 spending (USD equivalent).¹⁰³

Figure 30. Consolidated budget expenditures on healthcare, billions UAH



Source: openbudget.gov.ua

⁹⁹ World Bank, 2024
¹⁰⁰ Ministry of Health of Ukraine, 2024
¹⁰¹ World Bank, 2024
¹⁰² WHO, 2024
¹⁰³ Open Budget, 2024

Figure 31. Consolidated budget expenditures on healthcare, billions USD

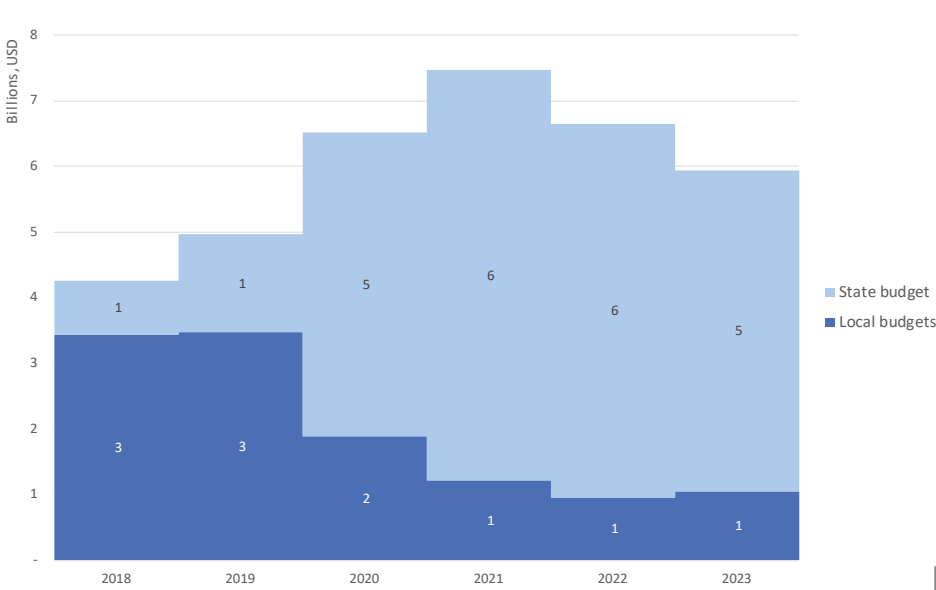


Figure 32. State budget expenditures on healthcare, billions USD

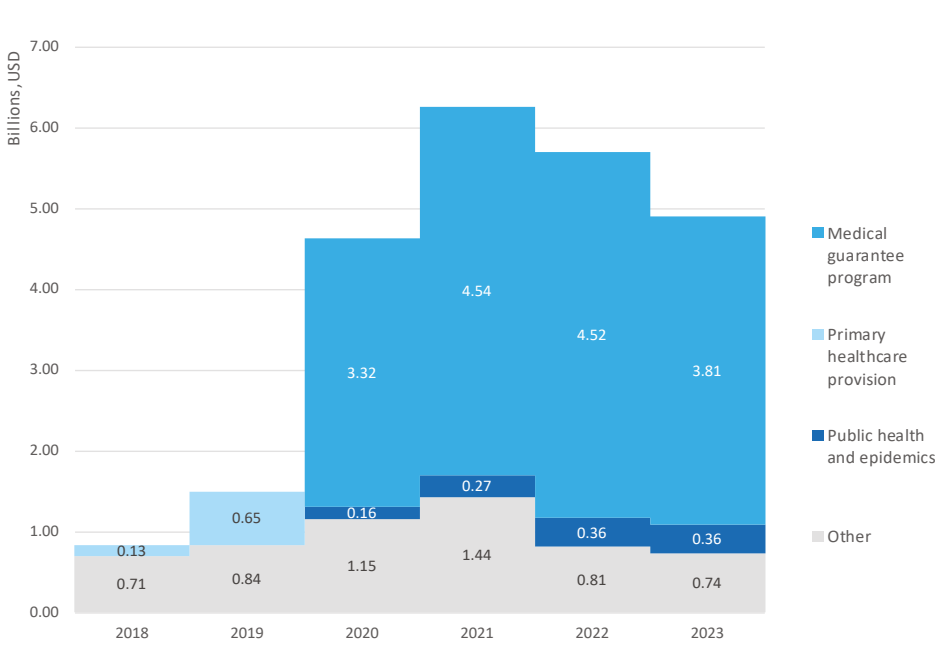
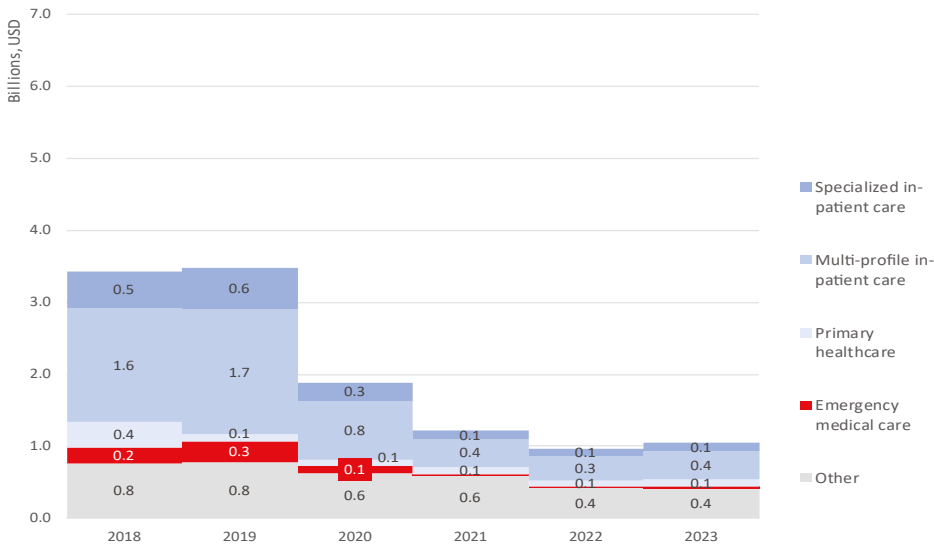


Figure 33. Local budgets expenditures on healthcare, billions USD



Healthcare reform

Despite the war, healthcare reform has continued, after a major paradigm shift (“money follows the patient”) and introduction of the National Health Service of Ukraine (new single purchasing agency) in 2018.

Figure 34. Number of active declarations (patients registered with primary healthcare)

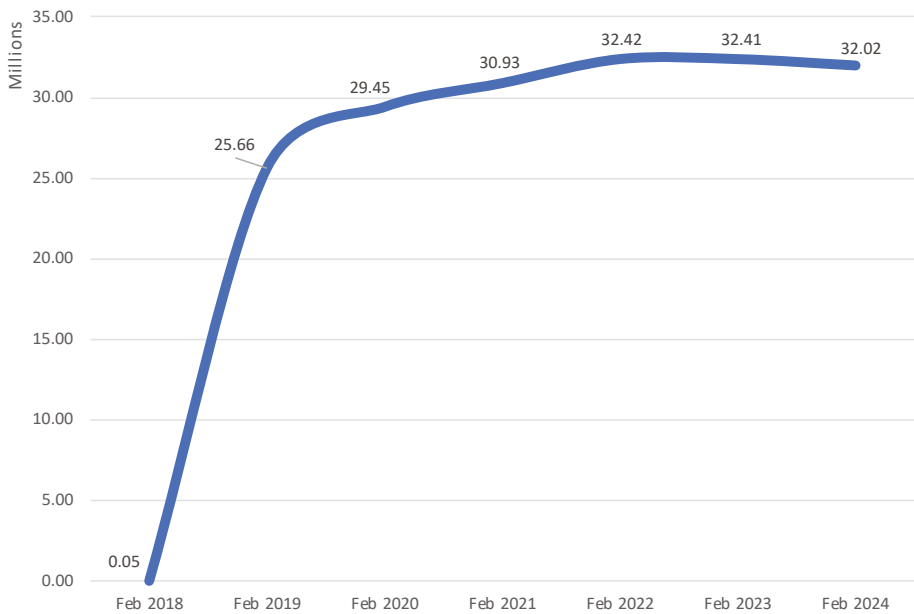
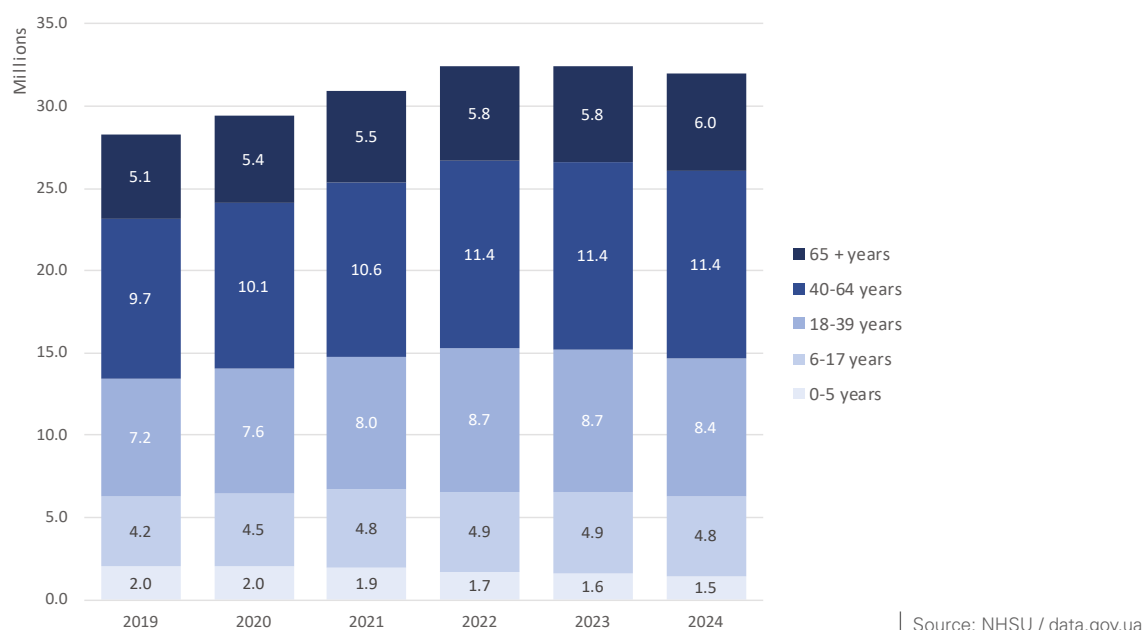


Figure 35. Number of active declaration by age groups

The first stage of reform also took place in 2018, with the introduction of the primary healthcare level, and family doctors and paediatricians, funded on a per capita basis, according to the number of patients signed up by contract (“declarations”) with specific family doctors.

The second stage of reform started in 2020, with secondary healthcare (hospital) reform, with payments set for specific services for specific conditions or diseases provided for specific patients. This was all possible by introducing an e-Health system. With the primary function being a basis for carrying out payments, the database holds enormous amounts of clinical data important for healthcare-related analysis. Both levels operate under the Program of Medical Guarantees funded through the state budget.

Data

In Ukraine, there are two parallel health data systems: the National Health Service (NHSU) and the State Medical Statistics. The NHSU publishes some data as open data, while the State Medical Statistics was reorganised and integrated with the Public Health Centre. However, these systems are not always complementary and often conflict with each other, especially when analysing specific indicators, as indicated during key informant interviews.

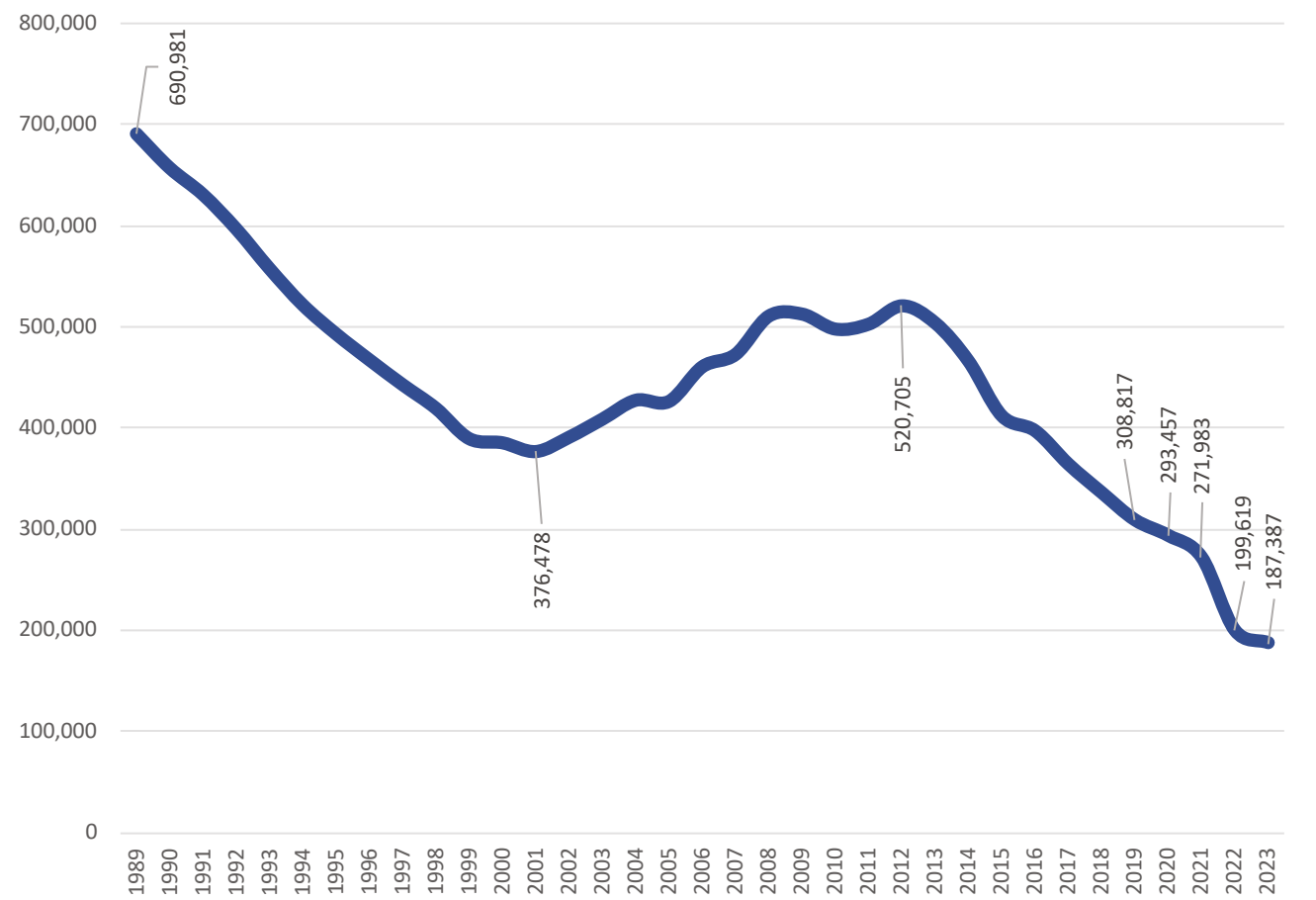
According to experts interviewed, issues regarding healthcare data include:

- Underutilisation of collected data, especially for policy development and operational optimisation. Providers often view the e-Health system primarily as a financial reporting tool.
- Incomplete or incorrect e-Health data. NHSU has often turned a blind eye on data quality during the war.
- Lack of integration between the medical information Systems (MIS) and lab tests. Automating this process would enhance efficiency by eliminating manual data entry burdens for doctors.
- Patients lack easy access to their own electronic health records and important data.
- Inaccurate data and limited analytics. Absence of a dedicated analytical centre exacerbates this issue.
- Resource constraints and low salaries, despite enthusiastic efforts by the NHSU.
- Lack of stringent control and penalties for data entry fraud.

Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

Peaking at 520,705 livebirths in 2012, the number of births in Ukraine has been steadily declining for over a decade. After the escalation of the war in 2022, the number of births dropped 28 per cent – to around 200,000 livebirths in 2022 and around 187,000 in 2023.

Figure 36. Total livebirths in Ukraine, 1989-2023

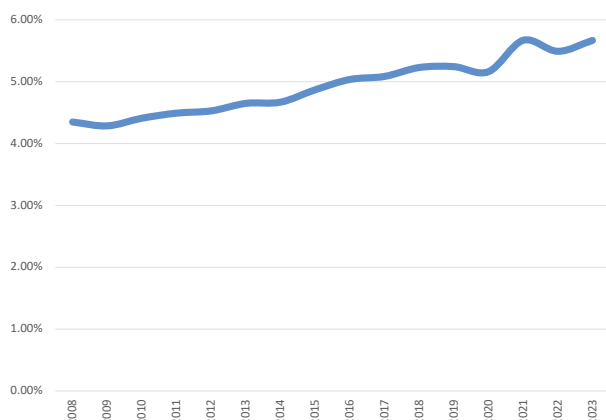


Source: SSSU, Medical Statistics, Ministry of Justice

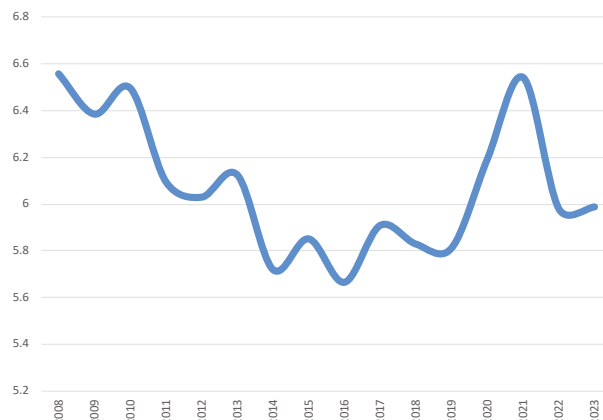
DATA GAP

The official data on births and deaths are closed for publication (suspended the publication of statistical information during the period of martial law, as well as for three months after its end), the numbers can be extrapolated from other sources – such as medical statistics ¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁴ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023

Figure 37. Share of premature babies among livebirths

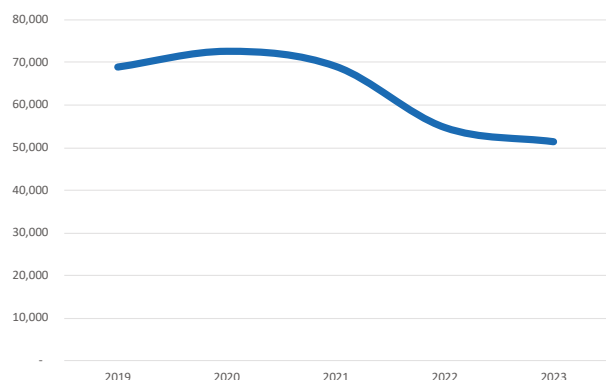
Source: Medical statistics / MoH

Figure 38. Stillbirth rate (per 1000 total births)

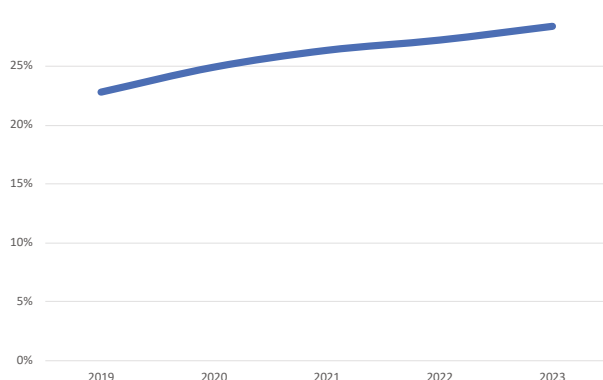
Source: Medical statistics / MoH

The share of premature babies among livebirths has been constantly rising, from 4.29 per cent in 2009 to 5.67 per cent in 2023. The absolute number of the stillbirth rate is also rising after a steady decline until 2016 and a spike of 2020-2021 (probably due to the COVID19 pandemic). The number of stillbirths dropped by 30 per cent in 2022, from 1,715 to 1,201.

The c-section rate has also been constantly increasing, reaching over 28 per cent of all births in 2023.

Figure 39. Total number of c-sections performed

Source: Medical statistics / MoH

Figure 40. Share of c-sections of all births (livebirths and stillbirths)

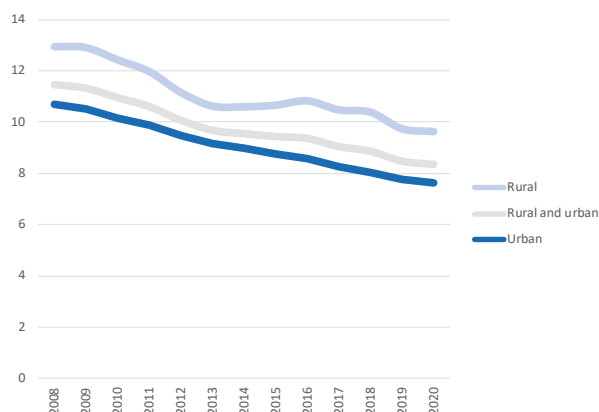
Source: Medical statistics / MoH

The total child mortality (under 5 years of age) decreased for 13 years, from 11.80 per 1,000 live births in 2008 to 8.13 in 2020. Under age one mortality dropped from 9.89 to 6.77. But there is, unfortunately, a lack of recent data due to martial law.

During 2008-2020, the child mortality rate among all age groups was higher in rural areas than in urban areas. In 2020, for rural areas, the mortality rate for 0-4 years old was 9.64 per 1,000 live births, and 7.64 for urban areas. The trend most probably continued in 2022 and 2023. The neonatal mortality rate was estimated at 5 deaths per 1000 live births (2021), showing a slightly higher prevalence than the European Region.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ World Bank, 2022

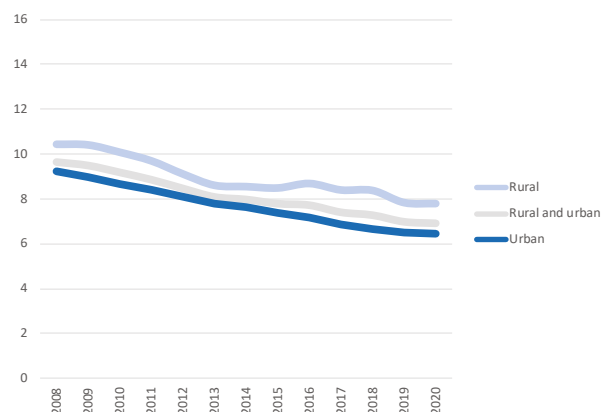
Figure 41. **Under 5 (0-4 years) mortality rate, 3 year rolling average, 2008-2020**



Source: SSSU

number of children died before age of 5 per 1000 livebirths (3 year rolling average)

Figure 42. **Infant (0-11 months) mortality rate, 3 year rolling average, 2008-2020**

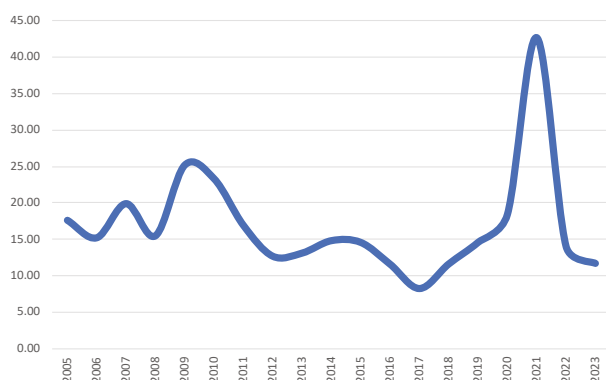


Source: SSSU

number of children died before age of 1 year per 1000 livebirths (3 year rolling average)

Maternal mortality, despite the war, shows a somewhat downward trend (14 deaths per 100,000 livebirths in 2022), after a 2020-21 spike.¹⁰⁶

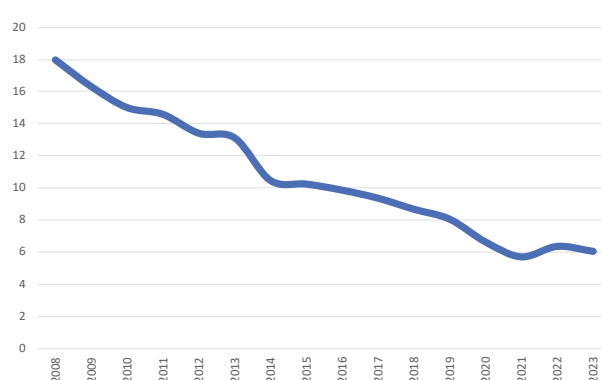
Figure 43. **Maternal mortality rate**



Source: Medical statistics / MoH

number of maternal deaths per 100 000 livebirths

Figure 44. **Abortions per 1000 women of reproductive age**



Source: Medical statistics / MoH

Abortion rates generally display a steady downward trend (though uncertainty around the number of women of reproductive age [15-49] should be considered).

The number of births decreased unequally for different regions. The war-affected (both since 2014 and since 2022) have suffered the most. At the same time, areas like Kyiv Region and Kyiv City saw relative increase in 2023.

Child mortality rates also differ greatly by region. Historically, the highest level of child mortality for the ages of 0-4 years old is in Zakarpattia (13.25 deaths per 1,000 livebirths, average for 2008-2020), Kirovohrad, and Donetsk Regions. The lowest rate is in Kyiv Region (7.21, average for 2008-2020), Kyiv City, Poltava, and Ternopil Regions.¹⁰⁷

The availability of maternal and newborn services in the country was estimated at 88.6 per cent in 2023, with lower availability in conflict-affected regions, such as Donetsk and Kherson.¹⁰⁸

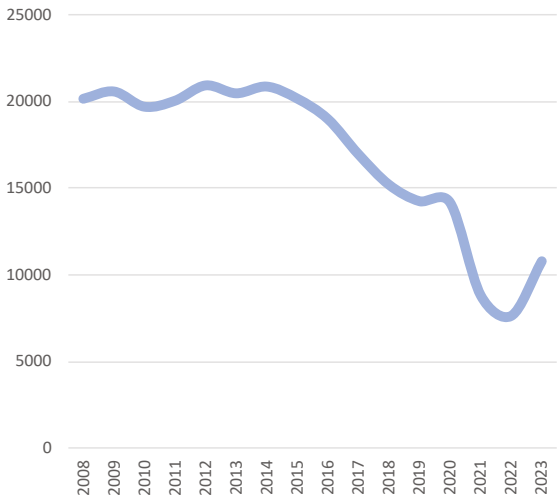
¹⁰⁶ Medical Statistics of MoH of Ukraine, 2024

¹⁰⁷ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

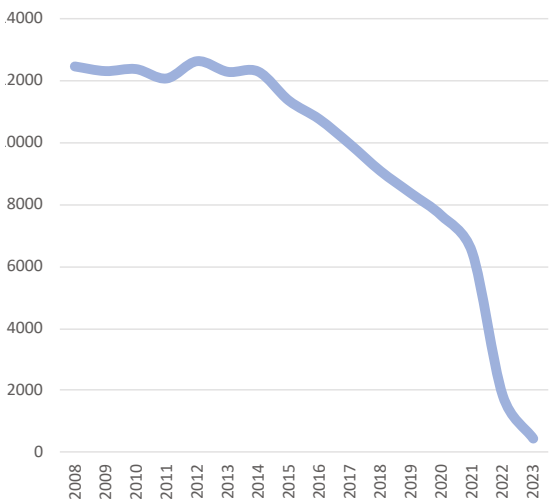
¹⁰⁸ WHO, 2023

Figure 45. Number of births in selected regions, 2008-2023

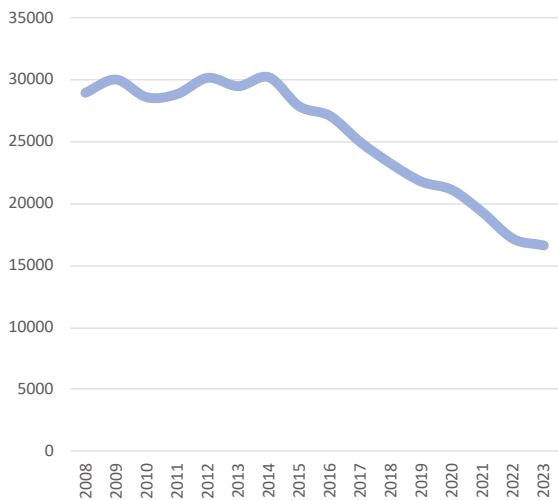
Kyiv region



Kherson region



Lviv region



Source: SSSU, Medical Statistics, Ministry of Justice

Average life expectancy at birth (70.42 years) has practically not changed since 1990, and even slightly dropped in 2021 (to 69.77). Under-one mortality steadily decreased from 14.9 deaths per 1,000 in 1993 to 6.7 in 2000. Under-five mortality dropped from 12.9 in 2003 to 7.9 in 2020.

According to an interviewed expert, there is a lack of industry standards for caring for neonatal pathologies, leading to regional variations in outcomes. But proactive doctors who follow foreign protocols tend to achieve better results. At the same time, another key informant stressed that greater focus is required on the practical implementation of maternal care regulations and standards, which are generally thorough, evidence-based, and in line with international recommendations.

As indicated in expert interviews, in situations where a woman faces a high perinatal risk due to personal or foetal complications, it is crucial to travel to the appropriate regional centre for childbirth, even if it is far away. Opting for specialised care significantly increases the chances of both the mother and child remaining healthy and safe. However, in regions lacking attention from local leadership, financial concerns prioritise childbirth over optimal care, resulting in adverse outcomes. Local doctors may lack qualifications, risking inadequate treatment, especially for premature infants, whose transport increases the risk of long-term disabilities. Moreover, post-delivery transfer is an indirect indicator that childbirth occurred at a lower, inappropriate level of perinatal care.

The WHO recommends a minimum of 500 births per healthcare facility, annually. In Ukraine, according to 2011 MoH regulations, the recommended minimum number of births per healthcare facility is 400. However, meeting even this threshold has become challenging. The existing maternity infrastructure, initially

built for higher birth rates, now faces challenges due to underutilisation, bringing risks to both mothers and infants. Inexperienced doctors, lacking sufficient practice, compromise the quality of care during childbirth, and impact maternal and child health.

In addition to proper referrals and early appointments for mothers to specialised, but more distant, clinics, there is also the option for high-expertise professionals to travel to patients. In Ukraine, the lack of standardised processes results in inconsistent access to specialised neonatal assistance, compared to countries where institutions invite doctors from other clinics when needed.

Despite the declining number of children being born in Ukraine and the respective decline of declarations (primary healthcare “contracts”) for newborns, the level of child development monitoring during the first year has been increasing. According to NHSU data, the share of children who received at least four primary healthcare consultations during the first year of life (out of those who were born in a previous year) increased from 52 per cent in 2021 to 80 per cent in 2023.¹⁰⁹

DATA GAP

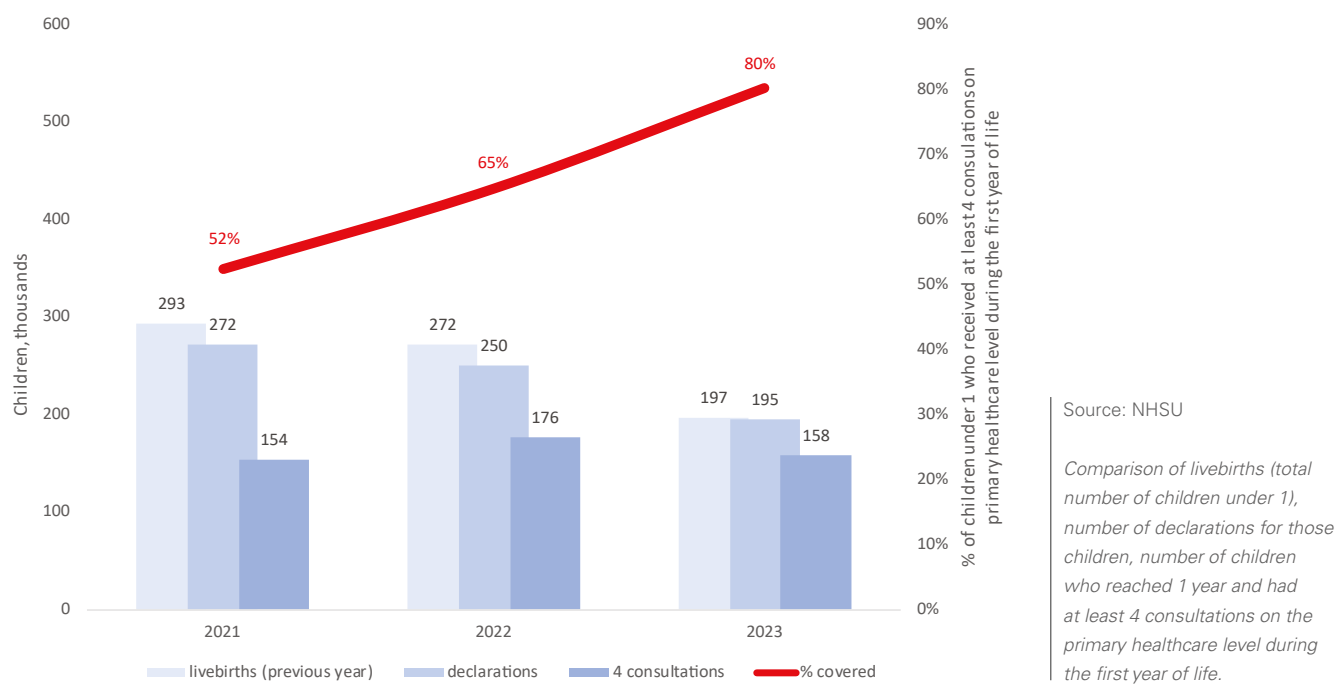
LACK OF DATA DISAGGREGATED BY HEALTHCARE PROVISION LEVEL

When evaluating perinatal care, the critical factor to consider is the location of childbirth. Perinatal care encompasses three levels:

- **Uncomplicated Pregnancies:** These involve routine pregnancies without significant risk factors.
- **Moderate-Risk Situations:** These include pregnancies with certain risk factors that require closer monitoring.
- **High-Risk Cases:** These are pregnancies with substantial risks to the mother or baby.

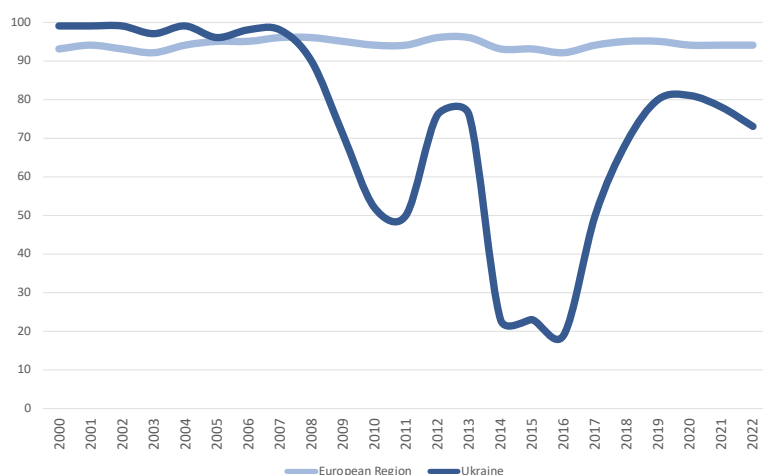
Typically, women with high perinatal risk are referred to regional perinatal centres for specialised care. For example, in Vinnytsia Region, there were slightly fewer than 8,000 deliveries. However, specific data on how these women are distributed across the different care levels is not readily available from statistics. To address this gap, a comprehensive analysis would involve examining primary medical records, medical histories, and exchange cards for pregnant women.

Figure 46. Monitoring of child development during the first year of life at the primary healthcare level



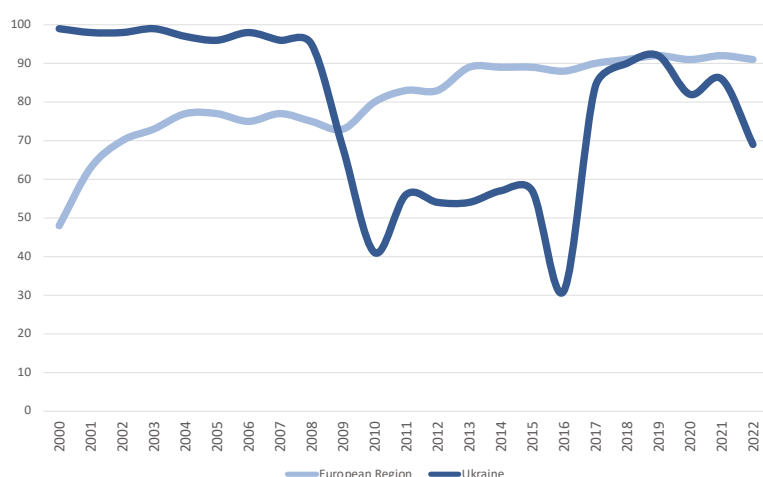
¹⁰⁹ National Health Service of Ukraine, 2024

Figure 47. MCV2 vaccine coverage, %, 2000-2022



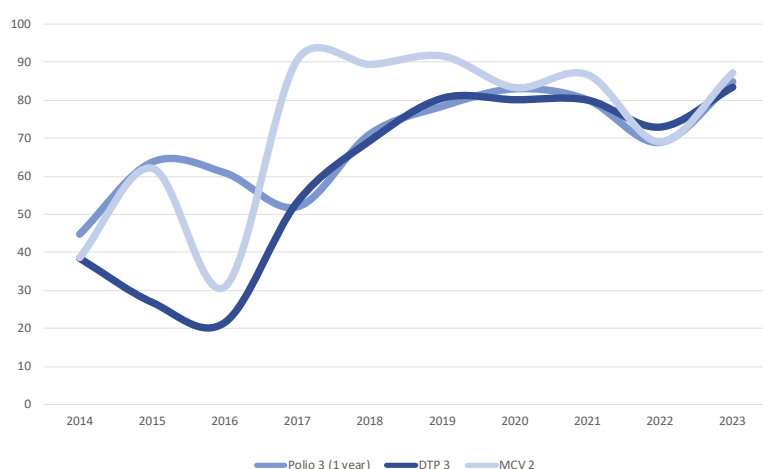
Source: WHO Immunization Data portal¹¹²

Figure 48. DTPCV3 vaccine coverage, %, 2000-2022



Source: WHO Immunization Data portal¹¹²

Figure 49. Selected vaccination rates, %, 2014-2023



Source: UkrVac / MoH PHC

Immunisation

Ukraine has one of the lowest vaccination coverage rates in the World Health Organization's (WHO) European Region,¹¹⁰ remaining below the 95 per cent threshold in 2023. The share of children receiving, however, their second dose of measles vaccine increased from 69 to 87 per cent between 2022-2023.¹¹¹

After falling to among the lowest in the world in 2016 (e.g., diphtheria tetanus toxoid and pertussis (DTP3) vaccines - 21.5 per cent, measles-containing-vaccine second-dose (MCV2) - 31 per cent), coverage with key vaccines increased to 80-87 per cent in 2021. The rates dropped by 10-17 percentage points in 2022, with a reversal (stabilisation) in 2023.¹¹³

According to the UkrVac database, coverage of MCV2 grew from 69.1 per cent in 2022 to 87.3 per cent in 2023, DTP3 - from 72.9 per cent to 83.4 per cent, and Polio 3 (1 year) - from 68.9 per cent to 84.9 per cent.¹¹⁴

Immunisation rates are not statistically different by gender. At the same time, there are regional discrepancies.

¹¹⁰ WHO, 2024

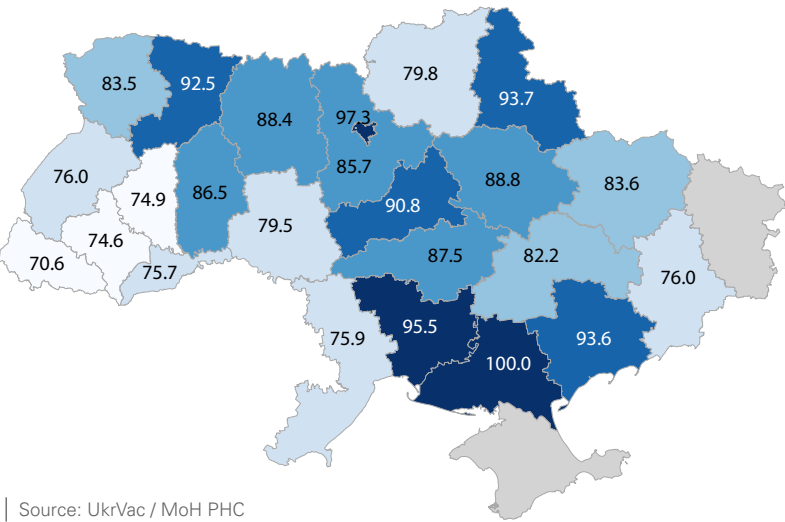
¹¹¹ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2024

¹¹² WHO, 2024

¹¹³ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2024

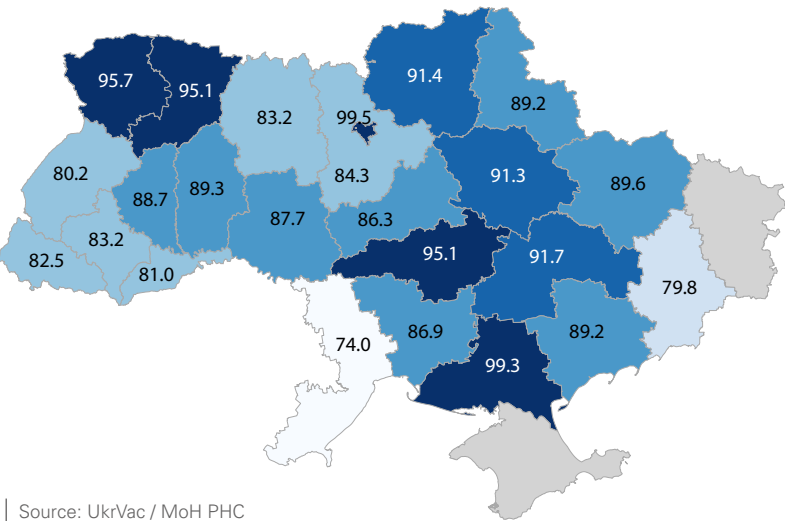
¹¹⁴ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2024

Figure 50. **DTP 3 vaccination rates, %, by regions, 2023**



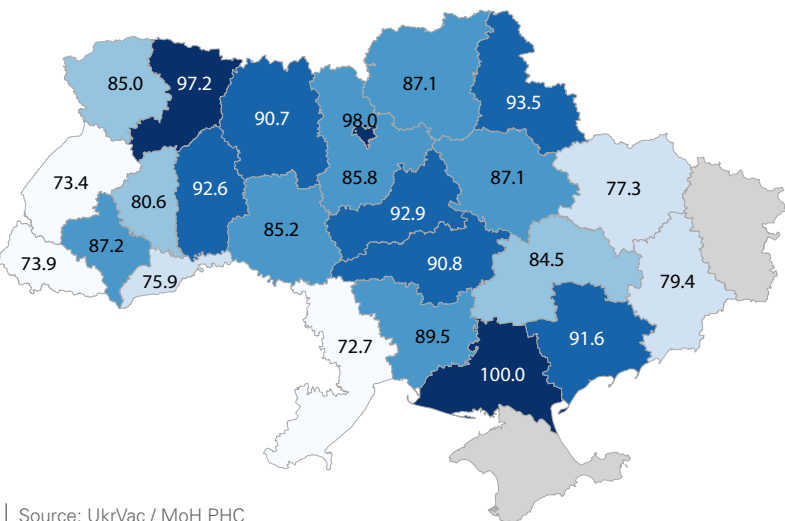
Source: UkrVac / MoH PHC

Figure 51. **MCV 2 vaccination rates, %, by regions, 2023**



Source: UkrVac / MoH PHC

Figure 52. **Polio 3 (1 year) vaccination rates, %, by regions, 2023**



Source: UkrVac / MoH PHC

For DTP3, in 2023 the indicator of 80 per cent was not reached in the following regions: Chernihiv (79.8%); Vinnitsia (79.5%); Lviv (76%); Donetsk (76%); Odesa (75.9%); Chernivtsi (75.7%); Ternopil (74.9%); Ivano-Frankivsk (74.6%); and, Zakarpattia (70.6%). The lowest vaccination rates for MCV2 vaccines were in Chernivtsi (81%); Lviv (80.2%); Donetsk (79.8%); Odesa (74%). For Polio-3 vaccine, the lowest rates were in the following regions: Donetsk (79.4%); Kharkiv (77.3%); Chernivtsi (75.9%); Zakarpattia (73.9%); Lviv (73.4%); and, Odesa (72.7%).¹¹⁵

The key issues with immunisations are summarised below based on interviews with several healthcare experts.

The state’s efforts related to immunisation are generally commendable. Political will and strong support from doctors contribute to this success. The Ukraine’s Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) play a crucial role in leading immunisation efforts at the regional level. However, challenges remain, including insufficient licenses for regional vaccine warehouses and weaknesses in forecasting and needs assessment. Updated approaches are needed to address wartime challenges. Approximately 80 per cent of the regional CDCP lack the ability to obtain licenses. In some cases, there are insufficient premises; and in other cases, premises do not meet the specified requirements.

The current policy formation and implementation process in Ukraine faces challenges in forecasting, prediction, and needs assessment. Relying solely on State Statistics figures from early 2022 is insufficient, especially given the wartime context. Urgent updates are necessary to address these critical issues and adapt to the changing landscape.

¹¹⁵ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2024

Vaccination data collection exists separately from e-Health, and vaccine supply data is yet another monitoring system. The immunisation program relies on an outdated database called UkrVac, which is mandatory only for municipal institutions. However, UkrVac data is not fully comprehensive due to limited representation from private entities. Additionally, the eHealth system, intended for monitoring and analysing vaccination planning, has architectural limitations that hinder effective analysis and real-time monitoring of vaccination execution. Unfortunately, during the ongoing war, population data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, which determines vaccine needs, is unavailable. For vaccines linked to birth rates, historical births are estimated, but this number is expected to decline due to ongoing population dynamics. Decisions at the regional level in Ukraine suffer due to limited, inaccurate, or unprepared statistical data, including subnational decision-making within individual regions. While there is political will for better data analysis and evidence-based decision-making, appointing someone without knowledge is not feasible; training is needed.

The idea of tying financial incentives for family doctors to their patients' immunisation levels is promising, but measuring coverage remains challenging. Healthcare institutions receive incentives for exceeding 95 per cent vaccination compliance; yet, in 2022, no facility achieved this target comprehensively. Effective management requires indicators that lead to payment reductions in case of not reaching vaccination targets. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing war, there is virtually no system in place for overseeing medical standards and quality control. Patients can only turn to law enforcement authorities when specific medical violations occur. Licensing regulations lack effective control, especially regarding vaccination oversight. The primary level, where direct patient interaction occurs, seems to be the weakest link, and collaboration between primary and subnational structures needs improvement.

In Ukraine, there are sufficient vaccines available, which is positive. Experts and the government recognise the need for change and aim to expand the immunisation schedule. However, challenges persist. Nationally, the vaccine supply remains secure even during wartime or crises, but inefficiencies in utilisation exist. Efficient distribution and administration at the subnational level remain critical, as stockpiles sometimes go untapped.

The monitoring and control of cold chain conditions for vaccine storage and transportation need improvement. While progress has been made, a comprehensive nationwide monitoring system is still lacking. Despite wartime challenges, approximately 5,000 modern, WHO-qualified units with monitoring sensors have been installed, representing significant progress considering the pre-war data of around 11,000 sites providing services. The Ministry of Health faces difficulties in vaccine distribution and cold chain adherence. Although the original plan was for the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to deliver vaccines to all healthcare institutions, this did not fully happen. Some regions have set up inter-district hubs, but healthcare institutions still collect vaccines directly from the regional stockpile.

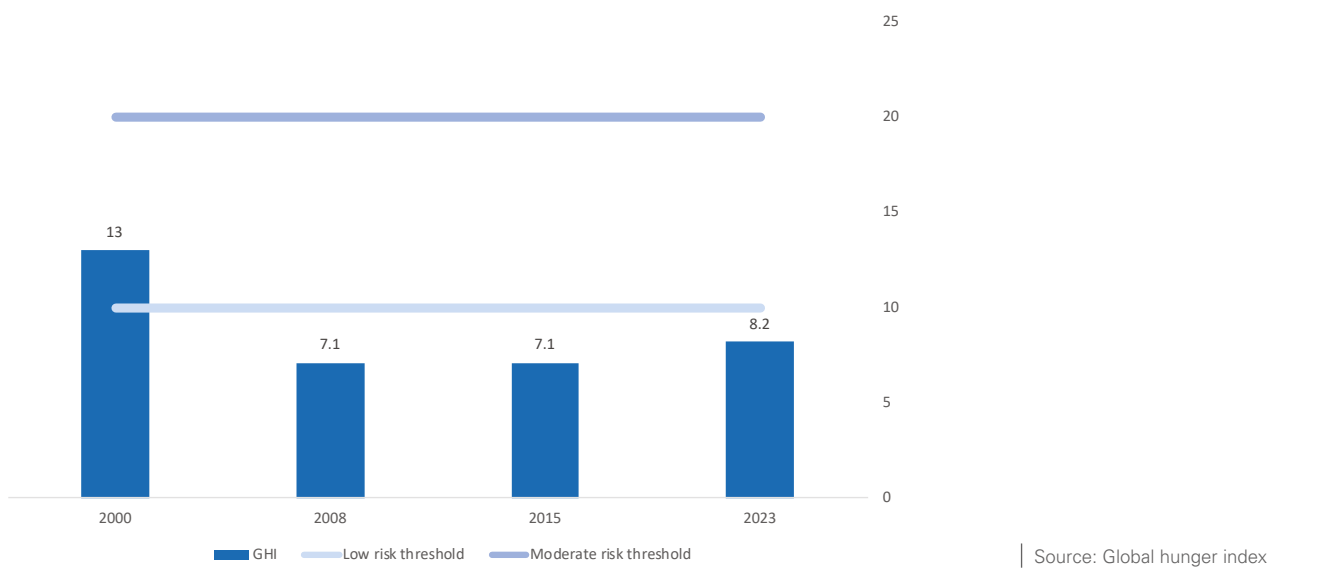
Attitudes toward vaccination have improved, even during wartime. The COVID-19 experience has reduced fear, and people now trust healthcare professionals more. Challenges persist among certain medical specialists, such as neurologists, gynaecologists, and cardiologists, who are not particularly inclined toward vaccination. Some obstetricians may not proactively recommend vaccinations to pregnant patients. Additionally, patients with complex medical conditions may encounter a lack of vaccination awareness or hesitancy. Targeted high-level training is essential to promote effective vaccination practices. Influential figures within the academic and medical communities hold not just low vaccine acceptance but even anti-vaccination views. Anti-vaccine doctors contribute to the spread of misinformation. Challenges persist, especially in the context of the ongoing war. Some lawyers advise parents to reject medical assistance at schools, which poses a risk to national security. Although there is a law requiring mandatory vaccinations, no authority effectively enforces the rule. Verification of vaccination documentation remains an issue. Ukrainian citizens abroad follow vaccination rules, but returning home, they assert their rights not to be vaccinated, citing democratic principles. Religious people constitute a significant portion of those declining vaccination, according to the interviewed experts. Conducting comprehensive research and analysis on the anti-vaccination movement, while closely monitoring its impact, is crucial.

Nutrition

In the 2023 Global Hunger Index (GHI), Ukraine ranked 44th out of the 125 countries with sufficient data to calculate 2023 GHI scores.

Ukraine's GHI score of 8.2 in 2023 reflects its relatively low hunger severity. For children under 5 years old, the rate of child stunting is 16.4 per cent and child wasting is 2.7 per cent. Overall, 4.8 per cent of the population experience undernourishment.¹¹⁶

Figure 53. Global Hunger Index Score for Ukraine, 2000-2023



In early 2022, the World Food Program (WFP) conducted a comprehensive study that found that one in three Ukrainian families was food insecure, with the situation being more dire for displaced families.¹¹⁷ The coping strategies adopted by these families often included eating less and borrowing money, with adults skipping meals so that children could eat. In addition, the situation was particularly acute in eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, where up to 40 per cent of the population had to eat less or borrow food to feed their children.

Against the backdrop of ongoing hostilities and persistent difficulties in frontline areas, the estimated humanitarian needs for Ukraine in 2024 are 7.3 million people. Of this amount, 3.4 million people are specifically targeted for access to adequate food and livelihood support, as outlined in the 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan.¹¹⁸

The already low pre-war breastfeeding rates during the first six months of life remain sub-optimum (between 15-50¹¹⁹ per cent, as per 2023 assessments). Despite the limited geography, the 2023 study¹²⁰ offered a comprehensive overview of current infant and young child feeding practices in Ukraine. The exclusive breastfeeding rate increased to 51 per cent in 2023 from the 2015 rate of 26 per cent. Bottle-feeding reduced to 58 per cent, down from 68 per cent in 2015. Mothers with higher education levels showed, compared to mothers who only completed secondary school, significant levels of exclusive breastfeeding (61 % vs 35%) and lower levels of bottle feeding (51 % vs 67%). Although many maternity facilities in Ukraine have a status of being baby-friendly, very few comply, including breaching the International Code of Marketing of breastmilk substitutes by often pushing mothers towards formula from the very start.

¹¹⁶ Global Hunger Index, 2023

¹¹⁷ World Food Programme, 2022

¹¹⁸ OCHA, 2024

¹¹⁹ International Medical Corps, 2023

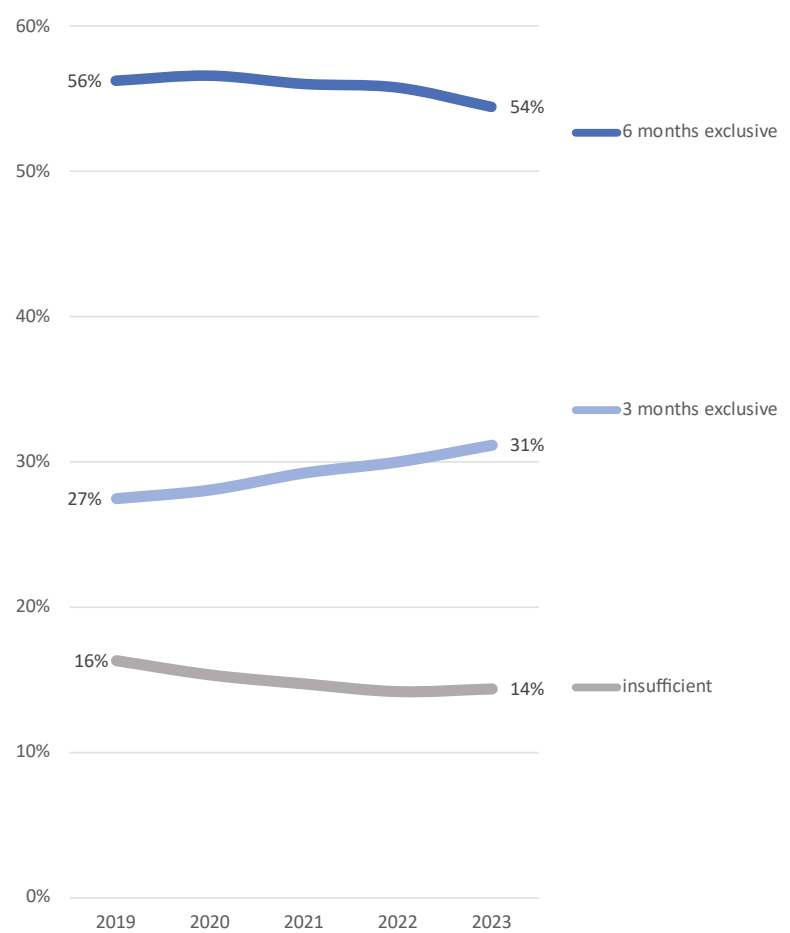
¹²⁰ International Medical Corps, 2023

At various levels of healthcare (including maternities, perinatal care centres, and primary level sites), healthcare workers have poor knowledge, low capacity, and poor commitment to support successful initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.

New mothers usually associate breastfeeding with pain, suffering, inconveniences, loss of freedom, and lack of an enabling environment. Myths about breastfeeding are widespread and supported by healthcare professionals. The support that women can receive for breastfeeding remains limited.

A survey of 9,000 parents commissioned by UNICEF in 2023 revealed that 28 per cent of mothers with children under 3 were breastfeeding, while 51 per cent rely on baby formula and lack stable access to needed baby food. This figure increased to 68 per cent for internally displaced persons.¹²¹ These findings underscore heightened difficulties for displaced populations. Overall, it is challenging to draw definitive conclusions about the overall trends of child feeding practices in Ukraine.

Figure 54. **Breastfeeding of children up to 1 year old, 2019-2023**



Source: Medical statistics / MoH

According to medical statistics data from MoH, about 54 per cent of observed children up to 1 year of age were exclusively breastfed until 6 months, and 31 per cent until 3 months.

At the same time, the share of babies exclusively breastfed until 6 months is dropping, while those breastfed only until 3 months of age is rising.¹²²

As reported by Ministry of Health, there is no updated data on the prevalence of overweight and obesity in children in Ukraine.¹²³ However, according to the World Organization Against Obesity, as of 2018, 26 per cent of boys and 13.9 per cent of girls aged 7-17 in Ukraine were overweight or obese.¹²⁴ It is hard to say how the war has affected these numbers; yet the war, COVID, accompanying stress, restrictions that might have affected eating habits negatively, and increased levels of distant learning might have had a negative effect on these numbers.

¹²¹ UNICEF, 2024

¹²² Medical Statistics of MoH of Ukraine, 2024

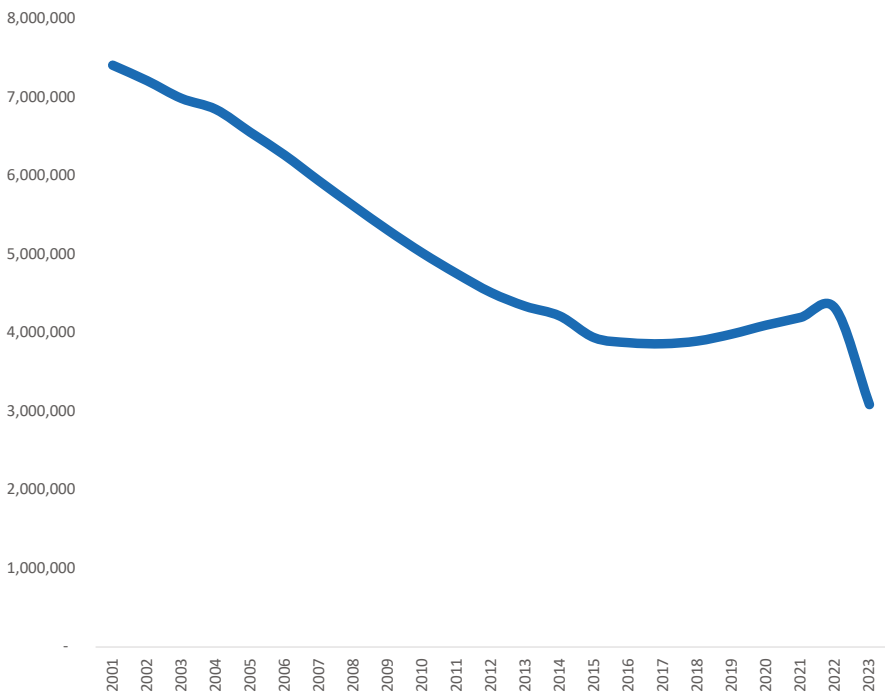
¹²³ Ministry of Health of Ukraine, 2023

¹²⁴ World Obesity Federation, 2018

Adolescent Physical, Mental and Reproductive Health

In 2023, the United Nations Population Fund estimated that the adolescent population in Ukraine aged 10-19 years old was 3,082,202, marking a substantial decrease of 29 per cent from 4,311,799 at the beginning of 2022.

Figure 55. Adolescents (10-19 y.o.) population estimates 2001-2023



Source: 2001-2022: SSSU; 2023: UNFPA

The change in adolescent (10- to 19-year-olds) distribution regionally due to war has been very uneven. Kyiv oblast saw an increase in adolescents by 34 per cent and Kyiv City by 3 per cent. In all other regions, there was a significant decrease (at least compared to official statistics). The biggest changes were in: Donetsk (-85%), Khersonska (-83%), Luhanska (-77%), Mykolaivska (-70%), Zaporizka (-57%), and Kharkivska (-55%) regions.¹²⁵

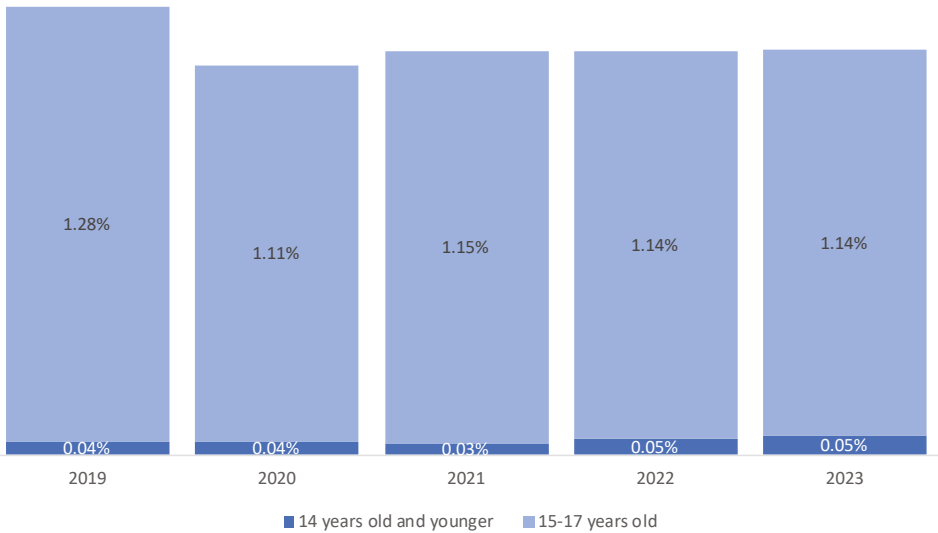
There were 159,000 children registered with disabilities in 2023 (by end of year), which was on par with 2016 (but, taking into account 25 per cent less children in the country overall, this was an increase). Out of those, 35,000 were aged 15-17 years (or, 4 per cent of the 880,000 estimated population of 15-17 years of age).¹²⁶ The most prevalent diseases among adolescents with disabilities include: congenital anomalies (8,500), mental and behavioural disorders (F00-F99) (6,000), diseases of the central nervous system (5,000), endocrine disorders and diseases (4,000), and mental developmental issues (F70-F79) (3,200). Fifty-eight per cent of adolescents with disabilities (15-17 years old) are boys (20,230) and 42 per cent are girls (14,849), as of the end of 2022.¹²⁷

There are very strong regional discrepancies regarding the distribution of adolescents (15-17 years old) with disabilities. The highest rates of 15- to 17-year-old adolescents with disabilities in 2022, per 1000, were in Mykolaivska (102), Donetsk (66), Kharkivska (56), Khersonska (55), and Chernigivska (51) Regions. The lowest prevalence was in Kyiv Region (27), Kyiv City (28), Poltavska (34), and Lvivska (35) oblasts.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ UNFPA, State Statistics Service Of Ukraine, 2023
¹²⁶ TransMonEE / State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2023
¹²⁷ Medical Statistics of MoH of Ukraine, 2024
¹²⁸ Medical Statistics of MoH of Ukraine, 2024

Share of early pregnancies (deliveries by mothers 17 years old and younger) has been rather constant over the years, and constituted less than 2 per cent of all childbirths, according to medical statistics data. In 2022, 2,256 children were delivered by teenage mothers (15-17 years old) and 94 by mothers 14 years old and younger.¹²⁹

Figure 56. Share of childbirths by teenage mothers (% of all deliveries), 2019-2023



Source: Medical statistics / MoH

About half of all mothers 14 years and younger were from Zakarpattia region.

Particularly vulnerable populations, such as IDPs, rural residents, and those residing in frontline areas, face compounded obstacles in accessing fundamental sexual and reproductive health services.¹³⁰ Over 2 per cent of women of reproductive age face unintended pregnancies annually, a figure expected to rise due to the ongoing war.¹³¹ Research shows that teenage mothers experience lower educational achievement and subsequently secure lower-paying jobs.¹³² This highlights the urgency of investing in interventions for proper sexual health for young people in Ukraine.

Prior to the escalation of the war in 2022, approximately 10 percent of the Ukrainian population was living with some degree of mental health conditions.¹³³ The war has worsened mental health conditions, affecting approximately 25 per cent of the general population and exacerbated existing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs.¹³⁴ Nearly 61 per cent of parents believe their children have signs of stress, such as poor sleep,¹³⁵ 24 per cent of young people aged 14–24 believe their psychological state has deteriorated; and, 11 per cent believe they need psychological help.¹³⁶

A recent survey conducted by UNICEF via U-Report revealed that 73 percent of young people in Ukraine aged 14 to 34 expressed a need for emotional or psychological support.¹³⁷ However, only 30 percent of them actively sought help. This disparity may be attributed to stigma, as well as limited awareness or inadequate access to mental health services, which is further exacerbated by the ongoing war. The research underscores a strong desire among children

¹²⁹ Medical Statistics of MoH of Ukraine, 2024
¹³⁰ UN Women, 2022
¹³¹ Devex.com, 2022
¹³² IZA World of Labor, 2014
¹³³ Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2023
¹³⁴ Reuters, 2023
¹³⁵ Cedos, 2023
¹³⁶ World Bank, 2024
¹³⁷ UNICEF, 2023

and adolescents to better understand their emotions and cope with stress. However, it also highlights a gap in parental support, particularly amid the challenging circumstances of war.¹³⁸ According to a study conducted by UNDP, concerns regarding mental health issues, such as mood swings, depression, anxiety, and loneliness, among young people doubled from 11 per cent in 2021 to 22 per cent in 2022.¹³⁹

According to an expert interviewed, the MHPSS response in Ukraine operates under the auspices of the WHO, the International Medical Corps, and other organizations. Their primary focus has been on addressing the need for specialised mental healthcare, which was previously predominantly centred around inpatient services. However, the prevention of mental disorders had not been adequately addressed in Ukraine until recently.

To expand patient reach, detect mental health conditions, and provide preventive care, Ukraine has taken steps to enhance primary medical care. A package of medical guarantees on mental health for primary care was developed and implemented, providing family doctors with additional compensation for managing patients with mental disorders. Family doctors are now being trained in mental health basics using a certified WHO course. The successful implementation of this program aligns with the healthcare initiatives led by the First Lady of Ukraine.

At the same time, another key expert in the healthcare sphere argued that the system still faces challenges in organising high-quality mental health services for children and adolescents. For example, the Affordable Medicine Program has introduced free medication for mental health issues, yet consumption remains low due to the lack of a streamlined prescription system (i.e., doctors not prescribing medication).

An analysis of parental and adolescent engagement with mental health services reveals several key points. While autism remains the most common reason for psychiatric referrals, there has been a noticeable increase in cases regarding stress-related and adaptation disorders (specifically, those falling under the F43 group of ICD10). There is also a possibility that the rise in diagnoses could be influenced by financial incentives provided by the National Health Service of Ukraine for managing patients with mental health conditions. It is also plausible that diagnostic accuracy has improved as well. According to the law on psychiatric assistance, individuals aged 14 and older have the right to voluntarily seek mental health services. This applies to both outpatient visits to psychiatrists and inpatient psychiatric care, and these services are covered by the NHSU.

According to experts, societal stigma surrounding mental disorders remains significant, particularly among older generations. However, in children, this stigma may be less pronounced. Factors such as the pandemic and war have made younger generations more introverted due to reduced socialisation during COVID-19 lockdowns. While stigma exists, it does not necessarily deter seeking help from mental health professionals. Instead, this stigma primarily affects social interactions, leading to more homebound behaviour. Adolescents find it easier to confide in their peers, reflecting a positive shift from older generations who struggled with open discussions about emotions. To bridge this gap, extensive online awareness campaigns are crucial. Leveraging young people's familiarity with gadgets can foster better communication and understanding. The younger generation is increasingly aware of various healthcare specialists, including psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatrists. This awareness is likely to continue as they become adults and pass it on to their own children.

A funding allocation for mental health services is crucial. While substantial resources are earmarked for psychiatric care, effective management is equally vital. The success of services — whether for patients or medical professionals — hinges on efficient utilisation. Additionally, there is a severe shortage of child psychiatrists in Ukraine. According to the expert interviewed, only 265 child psychiatrists were working in the entire country within the municipal system. This number appears to be quite low, and efforts should be made to increase it. To address mental health needs, Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) courses have been developed for family doctors in Ukraine. These courses focus on managing priority mental disorders at the primary level of medical care. As of autumn 2023, 40,000 doctors from various specialties have completed this training.

¹³⁸ [UNICEF, 2023](#)

¹³⁹ [Cedos, 2023](#)

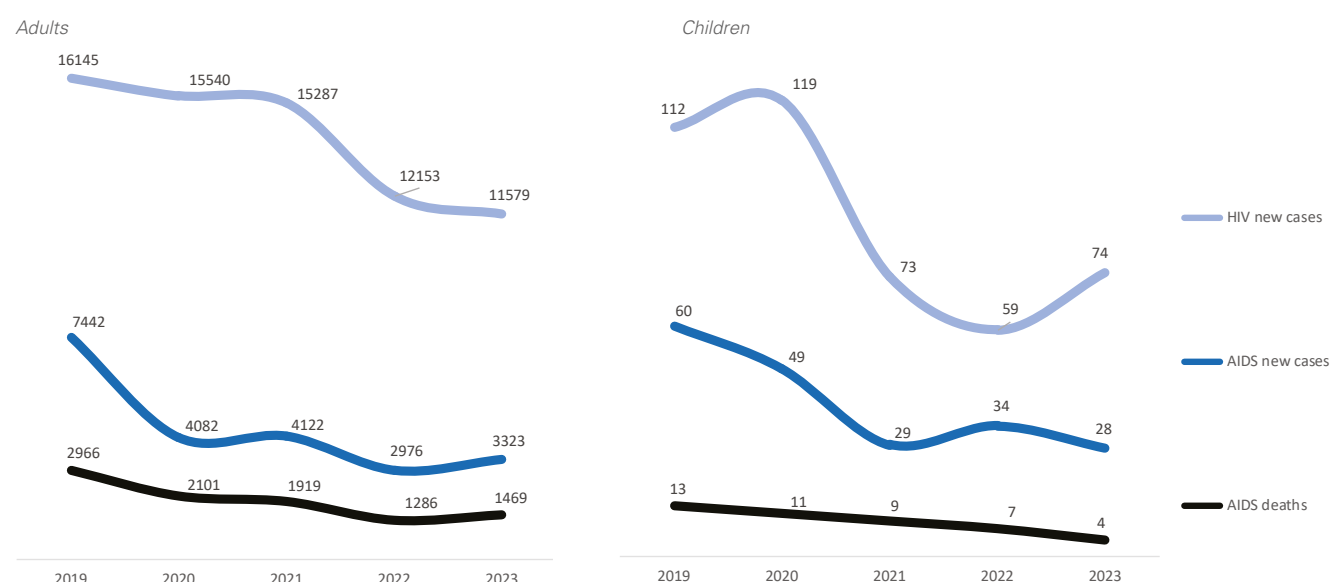
HIV / AIDS

Ukraine has the second-largest HIV epidemic in the WHO European Region. Approximately 250,000 people are living with HIV (PLHIV): 120,000 women, 130,000 men, and 2,700 children (0-14 years).¹⁴⁰

Ukraine was the only country in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region (EECA) where the government financed from its state budget a basic package of HIV prevention services among key population groups.

Deaths from AIDS grew by 14 per cent in 2023 (1,473 compared to 1,293 in 2022) after years of steady decline, while new HIV cases dropped by 5 per cent in 2023 (11,653 new cases). The number of children born to HIV-positive mothers was also the lowest in years (1,137 in 2023).

Figure 57. New cases of HIV, AIDS, AIDS deaths, 2019-2023



Source: MoH PHC

The coverage of pregnant women with antiretroviral therapy remained stable at ≥ 95 per cent between 2018 and 2021. Although it slightly decreased to 94.4 per cent in 2022, the rate still reflects efforts to provide necessary treatment and care to reduce the risk of HIV transmission during pregnancy. According to interviewed expert, efforts in HIV infection prevention and mother-to-child transmission prevention are at a high level. Ukraine has made significant progress toward almost eliminating HIV transmission from mother to child, according to an expert interviewed. As evidence from the Public Health Centre shows, Ukraine has successfully reduced mother-to-child transmission of HIV from 27 per cent in 2001 to 1.6 per cent in 2019.¹⁴¹

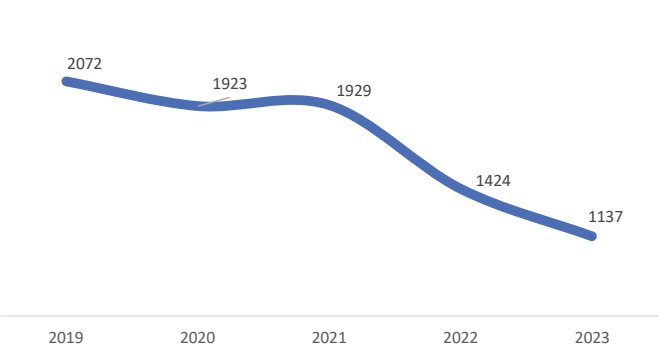
Most regions have achieved the WHO's global target rate for HIV transmission from mother to child (2.0%), except for Zaporizhzhia (6.3%), Sumy (4.3%), Zhytomyr (3.2%), Donetsk (3.1%), Cherkasy (2.9%), Kherson (2.9%), and Dnipropetrovsk Regions (2.3%).¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2022

¹⁴¹ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2020

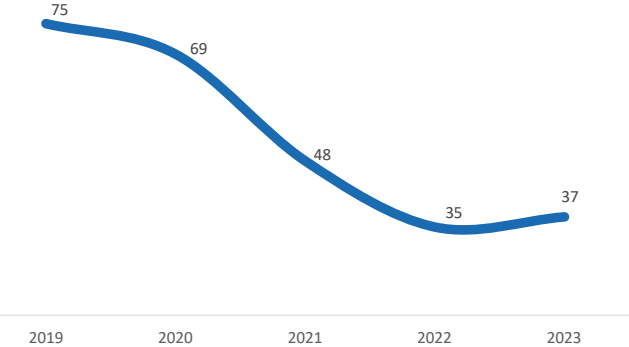
¹⁴² Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2022

Figure 58. Babies born by HIV-positive women (with HIV status to be confirmed), 2019-2023



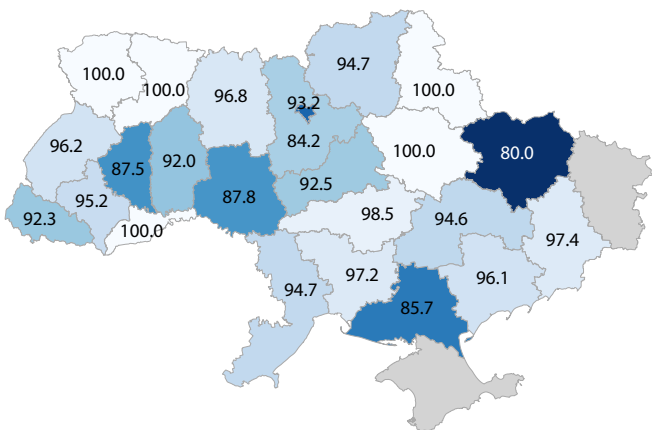
Source: MoH PHC

Figure 59. Babies born by HIV-positive women (with HIV confirmed), 2019-2023



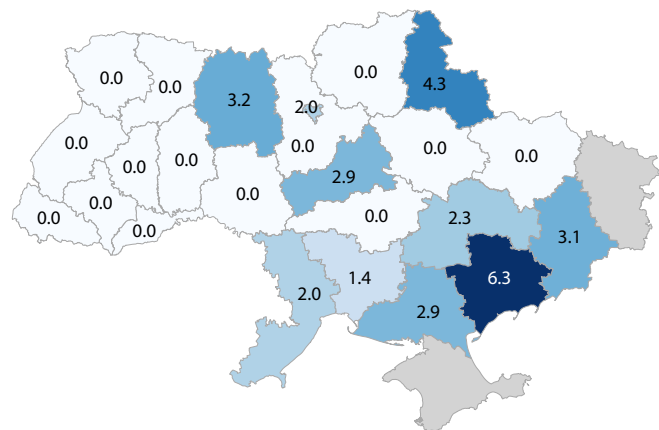
Source: MoH PHC

Figure 60. The coverage of pregnant women with antiretroviral therapy by region, %, 2022 ¹⁴³



Source: MoH PHC

Figure 61. Rate of HIV transmission from mother to child, based on early HIV diagnosis in newborns, 2022 ¹⁴⁴



Source: MoH PHC

One of the persistent problems is stigmatisation and self-stigmatisation. In Ukraine, over 70 per cent of HIV-positive individuals self-stigmatise, despite their already challenging circumstances. However, research indicates a positive trend, with a 2-3 per cent annual improvement in cultural awareness about HIV transmission and the importance of avoiding judgment, according to one of the key experts interviewed. This highlights the need for continued efforts to reduce stigma and promote understanding around HIV in Ukraine.

¹⁴³ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2022

¹⁴⁴ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2023

Bottlenecks and Strategies

Maternal, newborn, and child health

Enabling environment

- Bottlenecks**
- Outdated / inadequate regulatory framework and standards of care for integrated, human centred, accountable and gender transformative MCH services (perinatal, home visiting, PMTCT, ED/EI).
 - Fragmented medical information system (MIS) that lacks quality harmonised data for informed central and local planning and decision making in MCHC.
- Strategies**
- Update regulatory framework for MCH, to deliver and monitor quality accountable, human centred, gender-responsive services in line with WHO/EU standards.
 - Improve the quality of data and interoperability of medical information systems.

Supply

- Bottlenecks**
- Lack of capacities of sub-national healthcare system to ensure continuous access to quality equitable and inclusive facility- and home-based MCH/MHPSS services, including proper referral.
- Strategies**
- Enhance health workers' skills and knowledge on MCH (perinatal, home-visiting, IPC for immunisation, vaccine management, MHPSS/MhGAP, nutrition, gender [specifically HV], etc.

Demand

- Bottlenecks**
- Inadequate knowledge and misinformation prevent parents and caregivers from seeking MCH, immunisation and MHPSS services.
 - Lack of capacities and awareness among parents and caregivers to provide safe, stimulating, non-discriminatory, and caring family environments for early health and development of young children.
- Strategies**
- Design / secure funding for and carry out evidence-based participatory social and behavioural change and community interventions on MCH and MHPSS.
 - Design and implement multisectoral comprehensive parenting program to improve capacities and awareness of parents/caregivers, nurses, and health workers to provide positive, gender-transformative, and nurturing care for young children.

Immunisation

Enabling environment

- Bottlenecks**
- Lack of updated immunisation policy and effective vaccine management at all levels of healthcare system
 - Fragmented medical information system (MIS) that lacks quality harmonised data for informed central and local planning, and decision making in MCHC.
- Strategies**
- Adapt and fund the updated immunisation policy on EVM, vaccine forecasting, and procurement.
 - Improve quality of data and interoperability of MIS.

Supply

- Bottlenecks**
- Lack of sub-national healthcare system to ensure continuous access to quality equitable and inclusive facility- and home-based MCH/MHPSS services, including proper referral.
 - Non-standard vaccine storage equipment at around 50 per cent the service delivery level, especially in the context of current electricity crisis.
 - Challenges related to vaccine forecasting, distribution, and utilisation monitoring.

Strategies

- Allocate resources to rehabilitate damaged healthcare facilities and provide supplies.
- Enhance health workers' skills and knowledge on MCH (perinatal, home-visiting, IPC for immunisation, vaccine management, MHPSS/MhGAP, nutrition, gender [specifically HV], etc.).
- Integrate resilient community-based service modalities (preparedness, response, outreach) into local PHC, including physical rehabilitation of children affected by war.
- Continue upgrading the cold chain infrastructure to ensure parity with global standards.
- Capacity building of concerned officials, at national and oblast levels, on vaccine forecasting, distribution planning, and utilisation monitoring.

Demand

Bottlenecks

- Lack of trust, inadequate knowledge, and misinformation prevent parents and caregivers from seeking timely immunisation services.
- Lack of capacities and awareness among parents and caregivers on providing safe, stimulating, non-discriminatory, and caring family environments for the early health and development of young children.

Strategies

- Design, fund, implement, and monitor SBC interventions with parents and caregivers leading them to seek timely human-centred immunisation services.
- Design, secure funding for, and implement multisectoral comprehensive parenting programs to improve the capacities and awareness of parents/caregivers, nurses, and health workers to provide positive, gender-transformative, and nurturing care for young children.

Adolescent Health

Supply

Bottlenecks

- Inadequate quality of evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services offered to children, adolescents, and youth.

Strategies

- Develop evidence-based digital solutions to provide MHPSS services to adolescents and youth.

Demand

Bottlenecks

- Lack of trust, knowledge, and stigma prevents adolescents, parents, and caregivers from seeking MHPSS services.
- Lack of parental capacities and awareness to provide safe, stimulating, non-discriminatory, and caring family environments for the early health and development of young children and adolescents.

Strategies

- Design, fund, implement, and monitor SBC interventions with parents and caregivers to influence positive perceptions on nutrition and MHPSS.
- Design, secure funding for, and implement multisectoral comprehensive parenting program to improve the capacities and awareness of parents/caregivers, nurses and health workers to provide positive, gender-transformative, and nurturing care for young children.



January 24, 2023, Borodianka, Ukraine. The children are studying at the shelter of the kindergarten, where UNICEF has delivered new generators.

Amid power outages and freezing winter temperatures, new generators are transforming life for children and teachers at a kindergarten in Borodianka, Ukraine.

Without a stable electricity supply, the kindergarten's boiler room would not be able to operate. However, its doors can now remain open, thanks to the generators supplied by the UNICEF.

"Most of the children do not have generators at home, so they often spend evenings at home without electricity or heating," says Viktoria, the head of the kindergarten. - "And the kindergarten is the warmest and safest place for children now."

Education

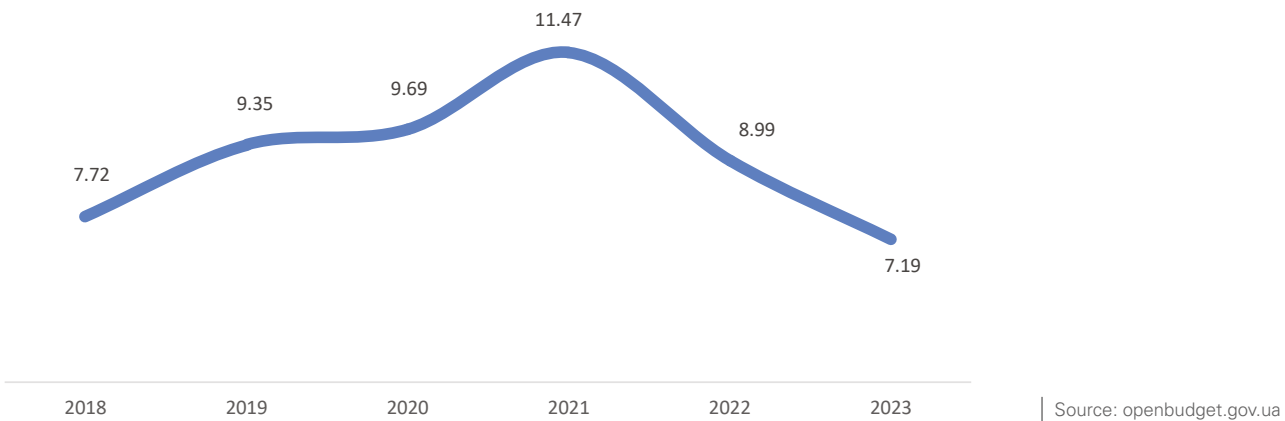
Education System

The full-scale war has significantly affected Ukraine’s education sector. Between February 2022 and December 31, 2023, the estimated damage to education infrastructure stood at US\$5.6 billion and included damage to 3,583 educational institutions and the destruction of 394 facilities.¹⁴⁵ Out of 301 youth centres, 38 were reported damaged or destroyed.¹⁴⁶ The displacement of children and school closures have significantly disrupted learning continuity across Ukrainian education and training systems. The war has severely impacted the frontline regions, like the east and south, where schools have adopted online or underground learning methods. The number of children in Ukraine who study online or through blended learning has reached almost two million, almost half of all schoolchildren.

Since 2017, the Government of Ukraine has followed a comprehensive reform agenda driven by the New Ukrainian School Reform, aimed at tackling disparities in learning outcomes, promoting competency-based approach, and improving the effectiveness of the education and science systems.¹⁴⁷

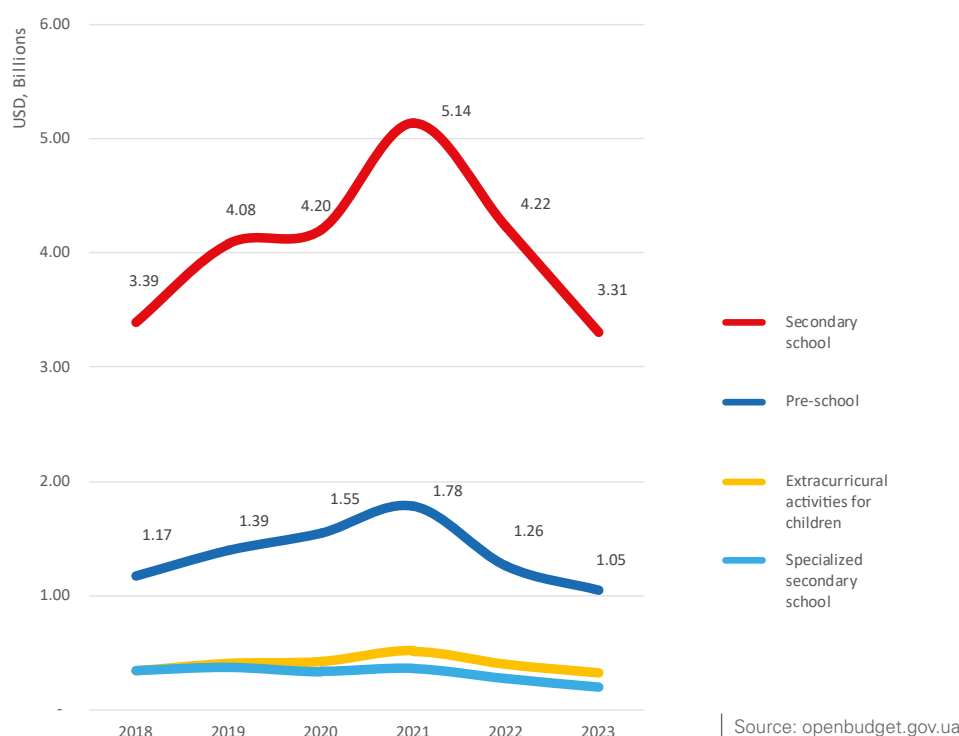
Government spending on education decreased by 26 per cent between 2021 and 2023 (or, by US\$3 billion USD), down from almost 15 per cent of all government expenditures in 2021 to a mere 6.6 per cent in 2023.

Figure 62. Consolidated budget expenditures (state and local budgets combined) on education, USD billions, 2018-2023



Education spending consists of direct spending on education from the state budget, direct expenditures from the local budget, and education subvention (from the state budget to local budgets).

¹⁴⁵World Bank, 2024
¹⁴⁶World Bank, 2024
¹⁴⁷World Bank, 2024

Figure 63. Consolidated budget expenditures on some categories of education, USD billions, 2018-2023

The shares of direct spending and subventions were relatively stable over many years (with notable spikes in Decembers). Secondary education comprised 48.7 per cent of total education spending in 2023, while preschool was 14.6 per cent.¹⁴⁸

During the full-scale war, significant budget cuts were inevitable, and certain subsidies even disappeared. For example, the New Ukrainian School (NUSh) program went unfunded for two years. However, in 2024, funding was increased beyond pre-war levels. Standard subsidies, including those for NUSh, meal programs, and transportation, were reinstated. Additionally, substantial funds were allocated for shelters. Ukraine's education law stipulates that combined state and local budget funding for education should constitute 7 per cent of GDP. Prior to the war, this level had already been reached for two consecutive years.

A total of 5,117,618 children (0-17 years old) were enrolled in some type of education by the end of 2023: pre-school (836,445); secondary schools (3,860,023); vocational (133,173); pre-higher (181,219); and, higher (106,758). A significant share of school children is attending Ukrainian schools online even, if being physically located abroad or in NGCAs.¹⁴⁹

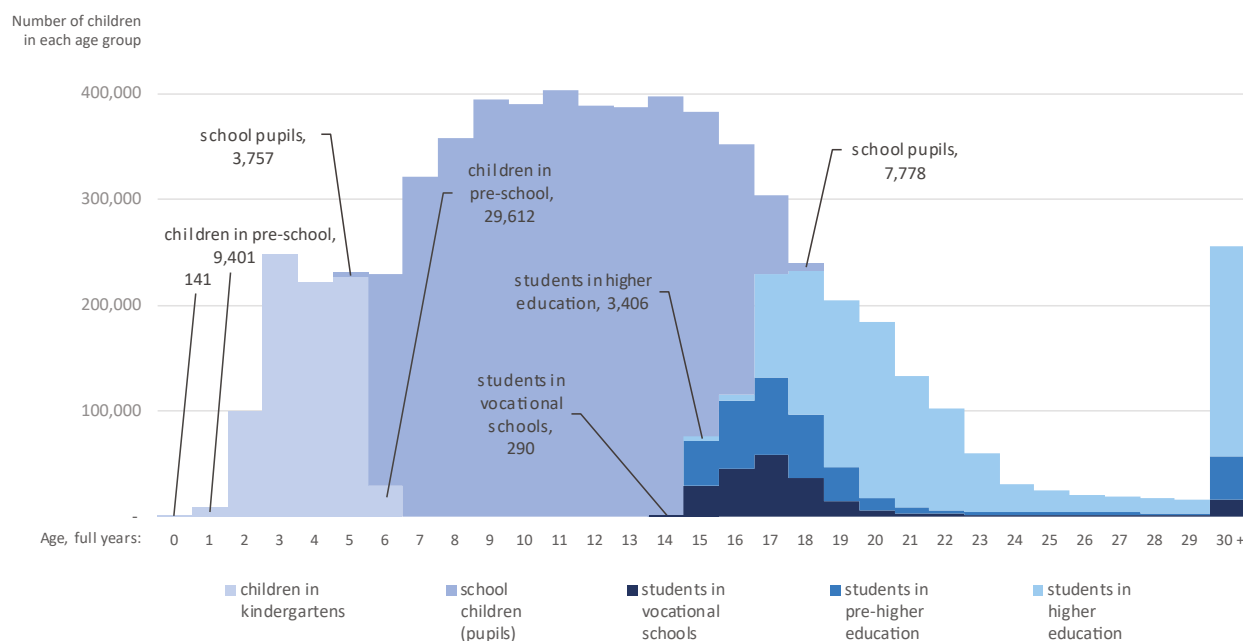
While the absolute majority of 14-year-olds were attending secondary schools (397,027 pupils), 290 were in vocational schools, 232 in pre-higher education institutions, and 21 in higher education. Among children younger than one year of age, 141 were reported as enrolled in pre-primary education.

Pre-school Education

For children aged 5 to 6, preschool education is a mandatory primary component of the system of continuous education in Ukraine, but there is no requirement to attend a centre-based setting; children can receive education in a home-based or family setting, if preferred. Enrolment of younger children is at the discretion of parents.

¹⁴⁸ Open Budget

¹⁴⁹ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

Figure 64. Distribution of children and youth by type of education and age, 2023


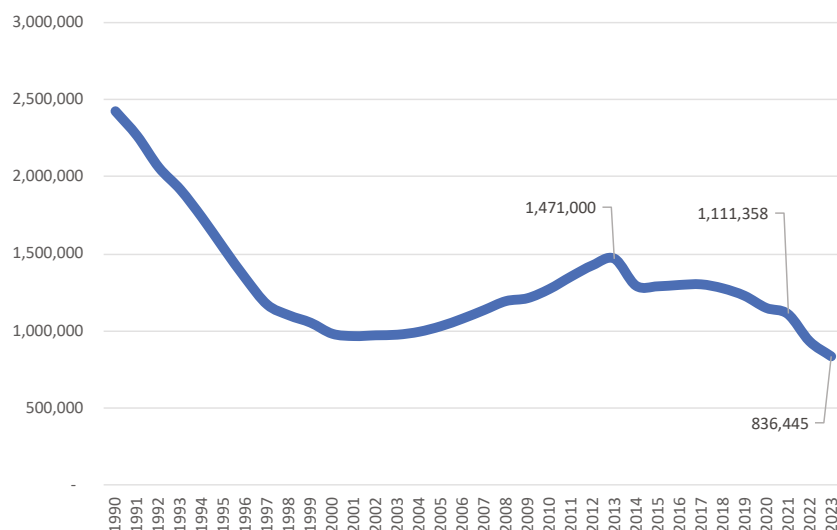
Source: SSSU / Institute for Education Analytics

The Ukrainian legislation stipulates that preschool age is up to 6 or 7 years, meaning parents can send children to primary schools at the age of 7.

The number of pre-school education facilities in Ukraine have almost halved since 1990, from 24,500 to less than 13,000 in 2023.

Due to the full-scale war, there were 2,000 kindergartens less in government-controlled areas in Ukraine in 2023, compared to 2021.

There are 1.6 million less children attending kindergartens now than in 1990.¹⁵⁰

Figure 65. Children in kindergartens in Ukraine


Source: SSSU / Institute for Education Analytics

¹⁵⁰ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

Since 2021, the number of children in early education dropped by 25 per cent due to NGCAs and many mothers with children leaving Ukraine following the escalation of the war in 2022. A total of 836,445 children were attending kindergartens as of the end of 2023, with about 74 per cent attending face-to-face, 14 per cent online, and 10 per cent in blended education modality.¹⁵¹

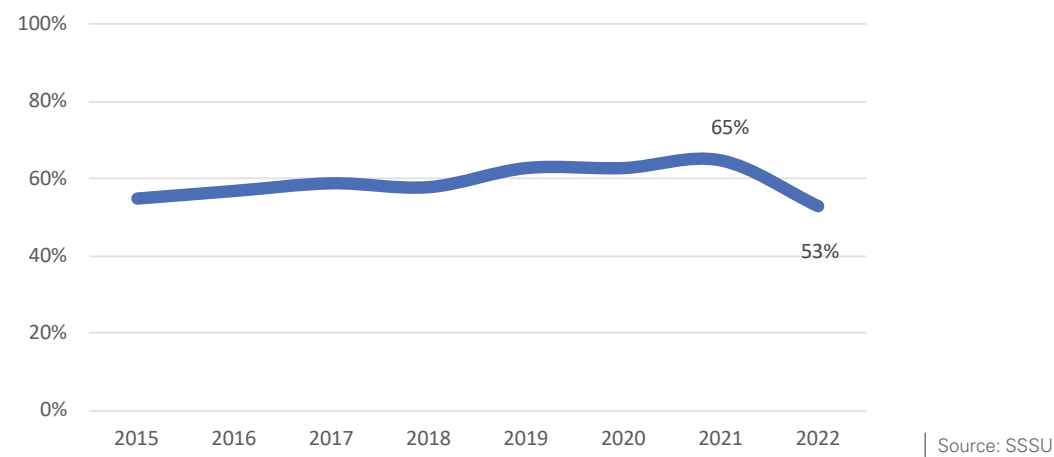
Due to a lack of reliable population data, it is currently impossible to accurately calculate the gross enrolment rate for the pre-school education. The State Statistics Service of Ukraine published the latest estimates for 2022, with a total of 53 per cent of gross enrolment.¹⁵² Enrolment has dropped from 63 per cent in 2019, due to a combination of displacement caused by the war, inflation affecting household incomes, and the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

DATA GAP

ISSUES IN EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS (BASED ON KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS)

- Decentralisation reform in Ukraine faces challenges in coordination, decision transparency, and collaboration between legislative and executive authorities, including insufficient use of data and evidence for decision-making.
- Regional inefficiencies occur due to task concentration among a few local education representatives, causing delays in data submission and processing.
- Workforce volatility, especially during war, disrupts state statistical educational reporting. When management-level staff leave, they often fail to adequately transfer knowledge and responsibilities to successors.
- In rural and economically disadvantaged regions, education representatives often lack sufficient IT competencies, affecting their ability to handle data, process information, and organise affiliated institutions.
- War complicates the understanding of population density in densely populated areas, a crucial factor for enrolment rates.
- Empowering communities requires systematic personnel policies, competitive salaries, and enhanced analytical capabilities among leaders. It is unlikely that a management or data analysis professional would choose an education department job over the private sector, where salaries can be significantly higher and stress levels lower.
- Strengthening analytical capabilities among community leaders and their supporters is vital in the context of decentralisation.

Figure 66. Gross enrollment rate (pre-school education), 2015-2022

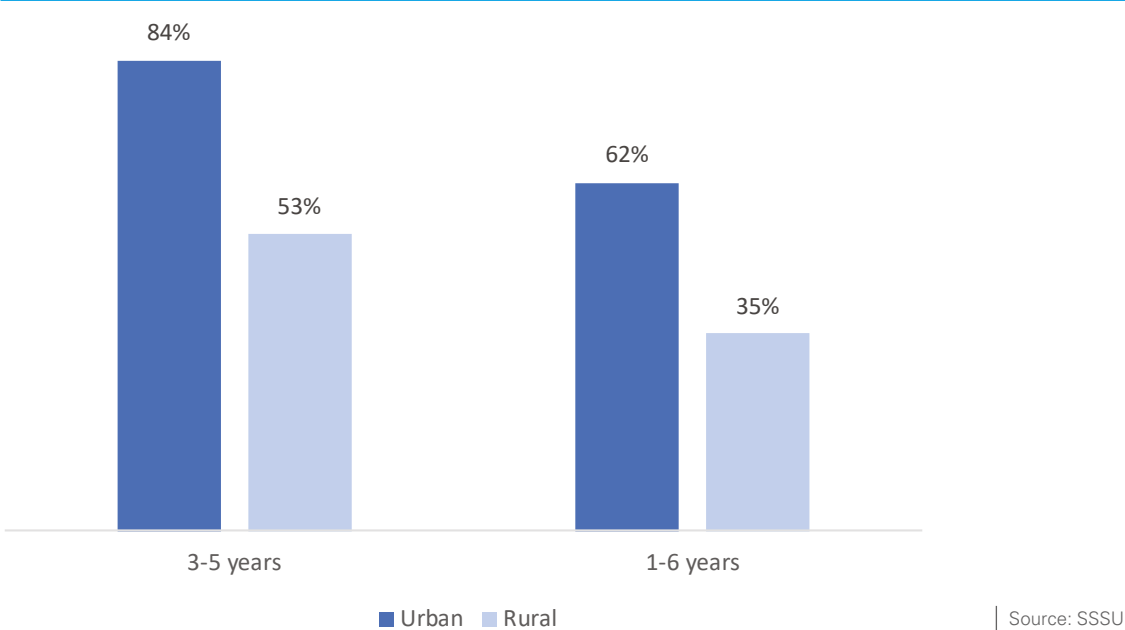


¹⁵¹ Institute of Educational Analytics, 2024

¹⁵² State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

About 77 per cent of all kindergarten children live in cities, while 23 per cent live in rural areas. According to State Statistics in 2022, 84 per cent of children aged between three and five in urban areas were attending ECE, compared to only 53 per cent in rural areas.¹⁵³

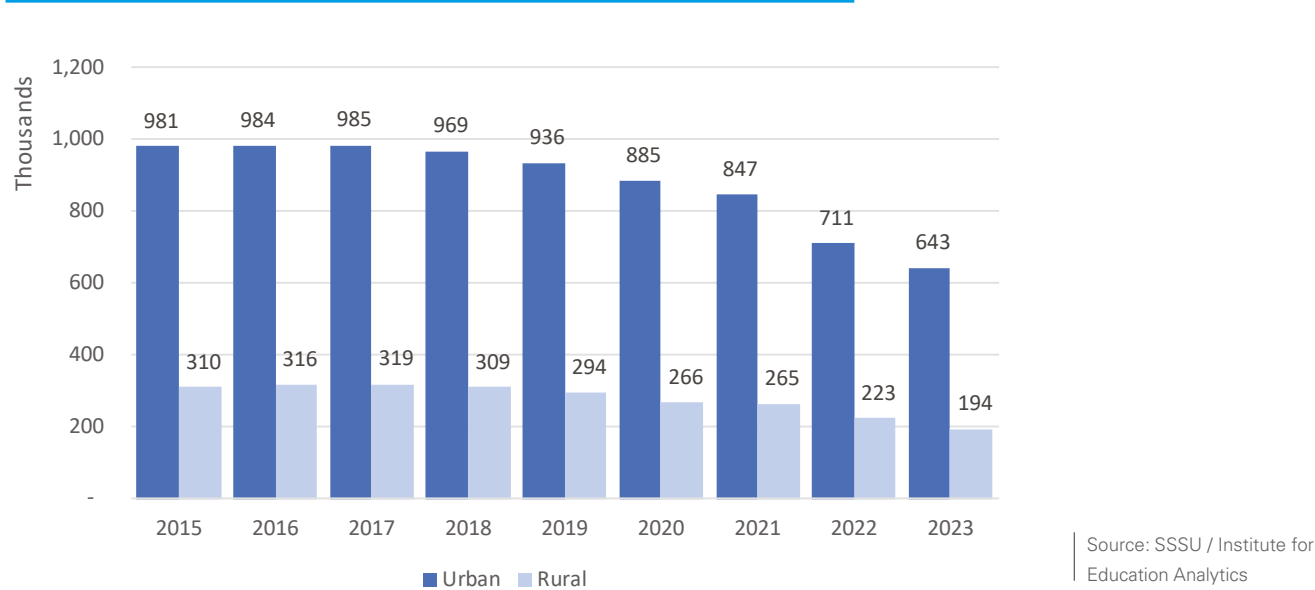
Figure 67. Pre-school enrollment rates, by type of settlement and selected age groups, 2022



The enrolment rate in pre-school institutions is calculated as: the number of children 1-6 years old in pre-school divided by the total number of children 1-6 years of age (excluding children already in secondary schools), multiplied by 100.

Enrolment numbers are falling faster in cities, while the situation in rural areas is more stable.

Figure 68. Children in kindergartens, by settlement type, 2015-2023

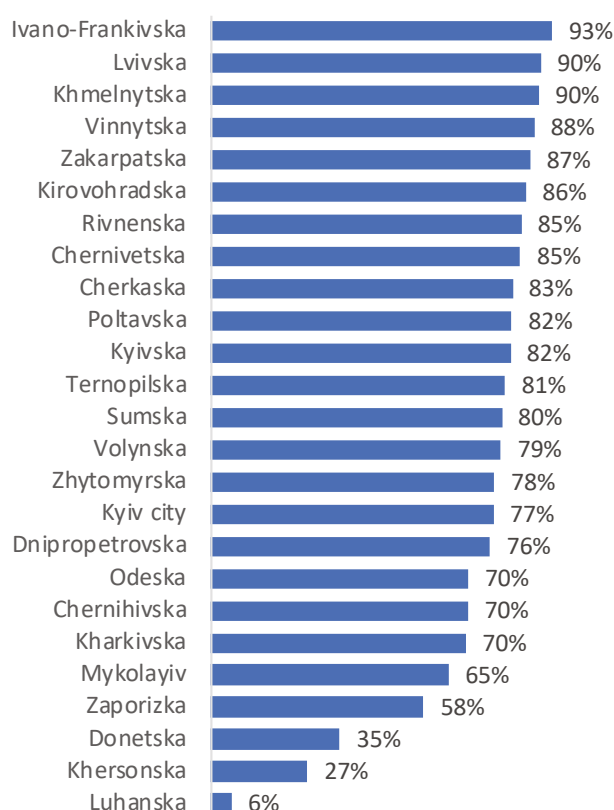


¹⁵³ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2023

The changes brought by the war are different for different regions. Some regions may have lost only about 7 per cent of children in pre-school education, while frontline or regions partially not under government control, have lost up to two thirds of their pre-school child population.

Most of Luhansk Region has been an NGCA since February 2022, but there were 749 children reported as attending 19 kindergartens in Luhansk Region in 2023. Most likely these are evacuated facilities, still formally registered in the Luhansk Region.¹⁵⁴

Figure 69. Percentage of number children in kindergartens in 2023 comparing to 2021, by region



| Source: Institute for Education Analytics

Figure 70. Capacity of kindergartens (children / places ratio), by regions, 2021-2023

Region	2021	2022	2023
Ivano-Frankivska	115%	113%	107%
Zakarpatska	99%	100%	103%
Zaporizka	110%	103%	102%
Lvivska	117%	106%	102%
Volynska	116%	103%	99%
Dnipropetrovska	93%	90%	99%
Rivnenska	106%	94%	94%
Khmelnytska	100%	94%	93%
Vinnytska	89%	89%	90%
Kyiv city	107%	98%	89%
Zhytomyrska	101%	90%	87%
Chernivetska	101%	91%	86%
Sumska	90%	83%	83%
Poltavska	97%	87%	83%
Chernihivska	103%	85%	82%
Kirovohradska	87%	85%	82%
Kyivska	92%	82%	80%
Ternopilska	96%	84%	79%
Odeska	101%	82%	78%
Kharkivska	90%	77%	72%
Khersonska	88%		70%
Mykolayiv	95%	77%	69%
Cherkaska	79%	72%	69%
Donetska	86%	77%	65%
Luhanska	88%		37%

| Source: Institute for Education Analytics

Some regions, especially in the west of Ukraine, demonstrate high child-capacity ratios (i.e., more children attending a facility than reported capacity), sometimes exceeding 100 per cent.

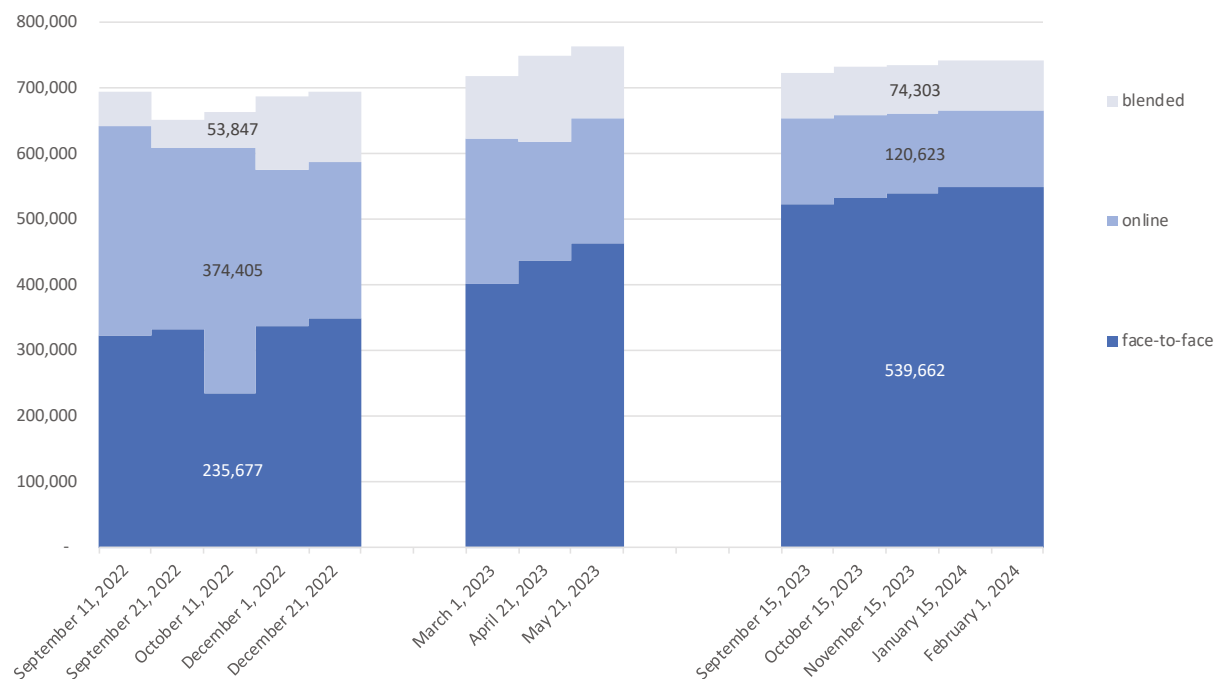
According to experts interviewed, the quality of preschool services in communities varies due to demographics, educator shortages, and funding. Overcrowding is an issue in some areas. Despite the low wages for educators, there are successful preschools even in smaller communities. The goals are to increase accessibility, achieve a 99 per cent enrolment rate, and reform the system for more spaces, according to a MoES expert. Unlike primary and secondary education, which are state-funded, preschool education is financed by local budgets.

Another important issue to consider while analysing pre-school education is the modality of attendance: face-to-face or online. Starting with the COVID19 pandemic, online education became a widespread solution to the lockdown, and, consequently, during the full-scale war.

According to data provided by the Institute of Educational Analytics, over 56 per cent of children attended kindergartens online in October 2022. By November 2023, this ratio dropped to 16 per cent with substantial regional differentials.

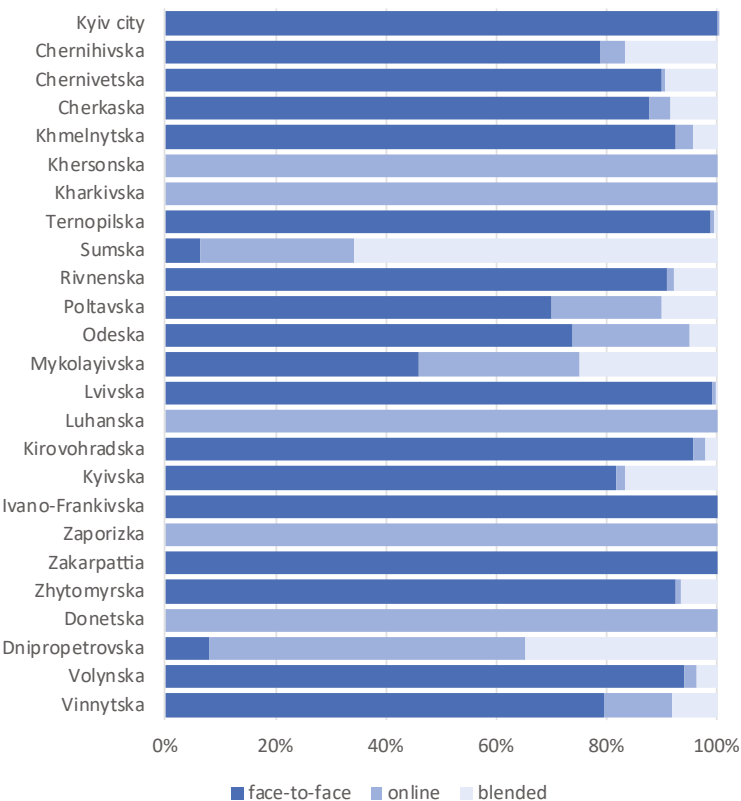
¹⁵⁴ Institute of Educational Analytics, 2024

Figure 71. Number of children in preschool education institutions, by learning modality, 2022-2024



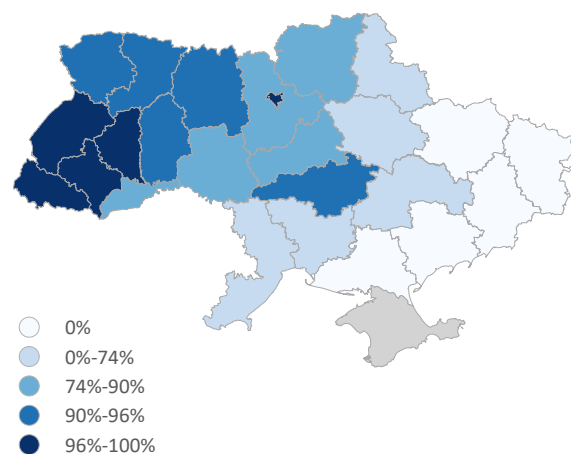
Source: Institute for Education Analytics

Figure 72. Children in pre-school education by learning modality, 15 November 2023



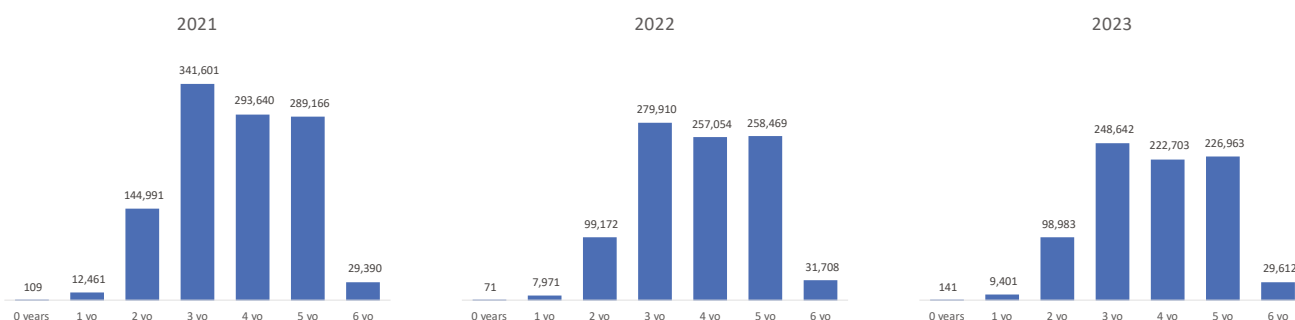
Source: Institute for Education Analytics

Figure 73. Share of children in kindergartens in face-to-face learning, as of November 2023



As of November 2023, all children in Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhya Regions attended kindergartens only online; while about 57 per cent in Dnipro, 29 per cent in Mykolayiv, and 28 per cent in Sumy attended online.¹⁵⁵

Figure 74. **Children in kindergartens by age and year of study**

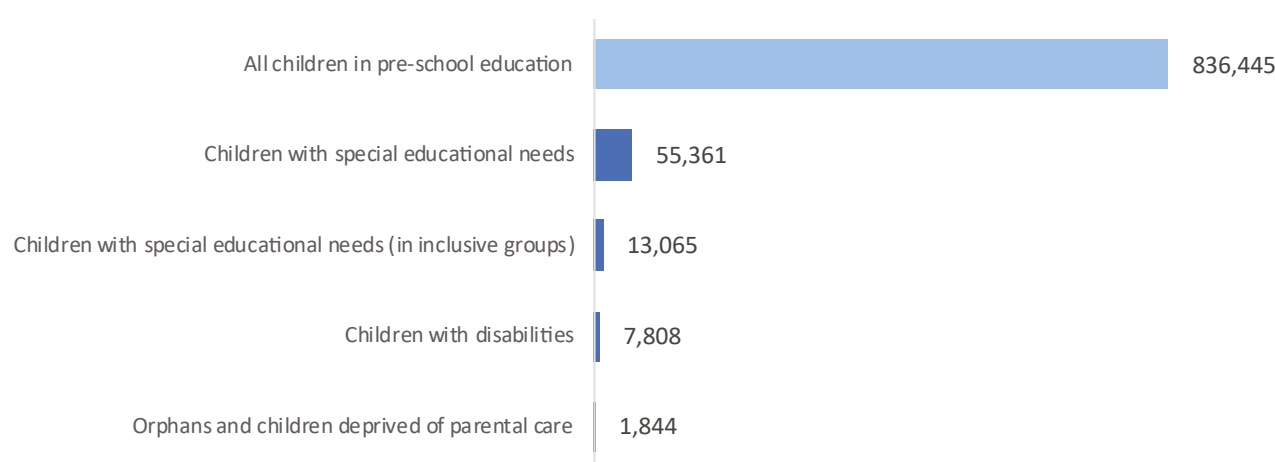


Source: Institute for Education Analytics

About 7 per cent (55,361) of children in pre-school education were reported to have special education needs, of which only 24 per cent were in inclusive groups. Children with disabilities constitute less than 1 per cent of those enrolled in pre-school education.

According to the MoES expert, early childhood education is facing numerous challenges. The ongoing reform in this area is intensifying, with a particular focus on working with educators. The Ministry is preparing a new law to introduce English language teaching in preschools and is concentrating on training educators to interact with children in English. However, this initiative must be aligned with financial policies, particularly considering the low wages of educators. The improvement of qualifications in early childhood education remains a continuous priority.

Figure 75. **Disabilities and special needs in pre-school education, 2023**



Source: Institute for Education Analytics

In recent years, inclusive education in Ukrainian preschools has been expanding, even surpassing its implementation in general secondary education institutions. Efforts have been made to increase the number of children benefiting from inclusive learning in preschools. As of 1 January 2022, changes to the Cabinet of Ministers resolution have come into effect, addressing how inclusive education is organised.

¹⁵⁵ Ministry of Education and Science, 2024

Ukrainian authorities have defined five levels of support for children, ranging from mild difficulties (Level 1) to more complex challenges (Level 5). Educational professionals at the Inclusive Resource Centres (IRCs) determine the appropriate level of support based on comprehensive assessments. If a child requires support from Level 2 to Level 5, an inclusive group or class is established to meet their needs.

In the context of inclusive education, the focus is shifting from solely a child's diagnosed conditions to assessing the specific support needed for active participation and successful learning alongside their peers. A differentiated approach to funding inclusive education has been implemented, considering the levels of support for all individuals with special educational needs. However, achieving this requires increasing allocations from both the state and local budgets, which is challenging in conditions of war.

According to experts interviewed, educational programs in Ukraine, including preschool and primary education, undergo regular updates every five years to align with state standards for preschool education. However, a concept of minimum quality standards for inclusive preschool services is currently absent. At the legislative level, Ukraine defines the notion of an inclusive educational environment, emphasising the creation of specific conditions, methods, and resources to facilitate collaborative learning and the development for children, considering their individual needs and abilities.

Ukraine has recently revised its preschool education law, necessitating a review of all related legal acts. Creating a safe environment and providing quality services for children with special needs is crucial, but there is a shortage of specialised educators. These educators need psychological support and professional training. A lack of suitable facilities and low wages lead to a severe shortage of teaching assistants, especially in large cities like Kyiv. Child assistants are provided for children needing high-level support. Despite legal restrictions on group sizes, war conditions have led to larger inclusive groups. Stagnant budget allocation for supporting children with special needs is insufficient for the growing demand and required equipment. Preschools in frontline areas operate with limited capacity or not at all, making remote services for typical and special needs children challenging. Despite these challenges, parents desire inclusive education for their children.

Secondary Education

Thirteen per cent of education infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed by the war and 20 per cent of primary and secondary schools are non-operational due to inadequate access to shelters.¹⁵⁶ Half of the country's 3.8 million schoolchildren rely on online or blended learning.¹⁵⁷ Distance learning, stress, and trauma during the pandemic and the war have caused substantial learning and skills losses.

Secondary education makes up the biggest share of government spending on education. At the same time, secondary education spending makes up the largest spending category of local budgets (mostly via the educational subvention from the state budget).

Figure 76. Top 10 spending categories of all local budgets, 2023, UAH billions

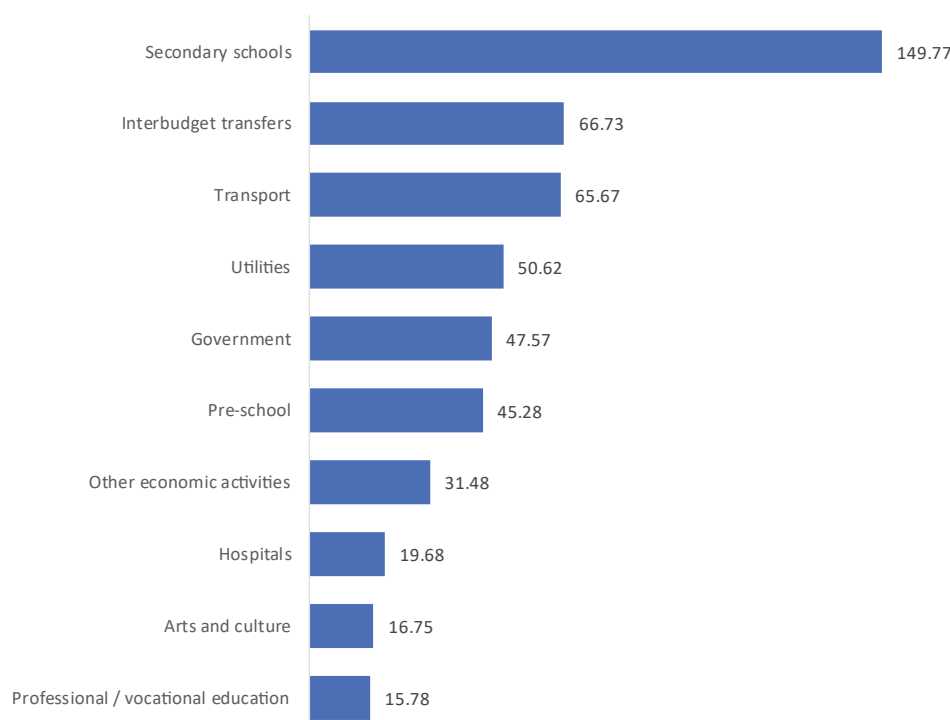
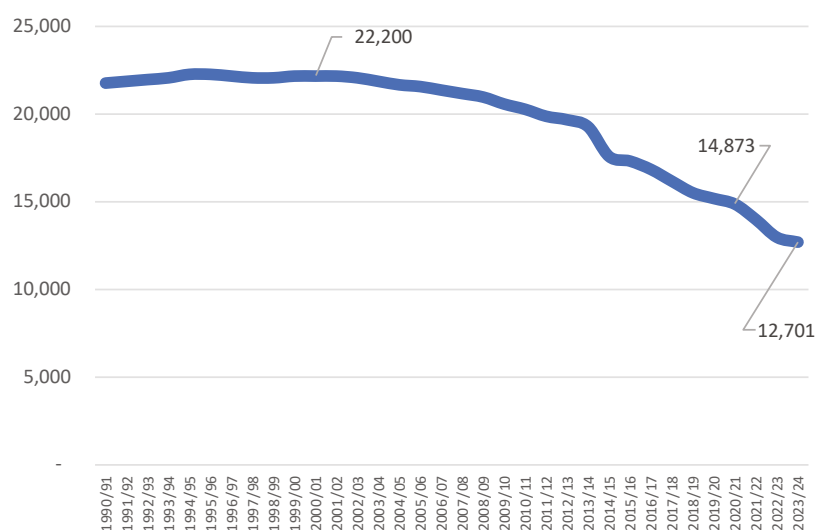


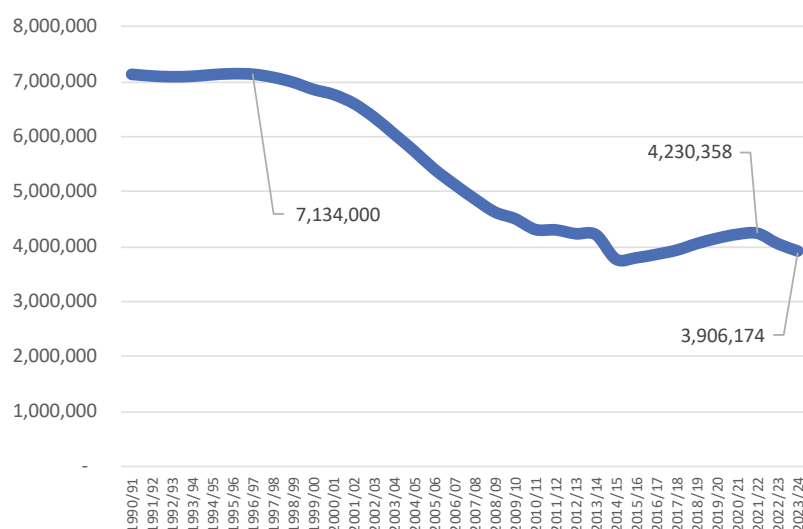
Figure 77. Number of secondary education institutions (schools) at the beginning of study year, 1990-2023



¹⁵⁶ World Bank, 2024

¹⁵⁷ Institute of Educational Analytics, 2024

Figure 78. Number of children in primary and secondary education (pupils) at the beginning of study year, 1990-2023

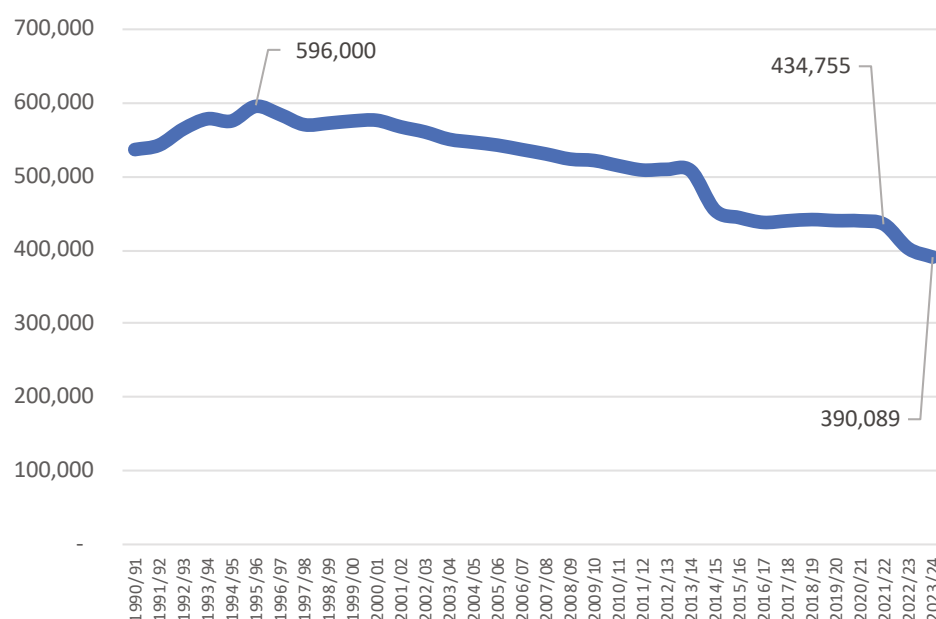


Source: SSSU

The numbers of both secondary schools and students have been gradually decreasing since the 1990s, with notable drops in 2014 (the start of the war, annexation of Crimea) and in 2022 (escalation of the war).¹⁵⁸ At the same time, the issue of reorganization and the closure of smaller (and less cost-efficient schools, which cannot provide the optimum learning opportunities for children) has been on the agenda for many years.

According to the expert opinion of a key informant, over a third of the approximately 13,000 schools are considered “small” and consistently have a reduced student population compared to the overall school average. While the concept of “smallness” varies, the focus typically lies on schools with fewer than 100 students. Despite this, such schools are abundant. Occasionally, founders understand that these schools may eventually be reorganised, with students commuting to larger institutions. Simultaneously, there is a barrier preventing the closure of these schools: the right for elementary education to be accessible based on residence. Consequently, these schools remain open due to the presence of students, even though their development stagnates due to low enrolment.

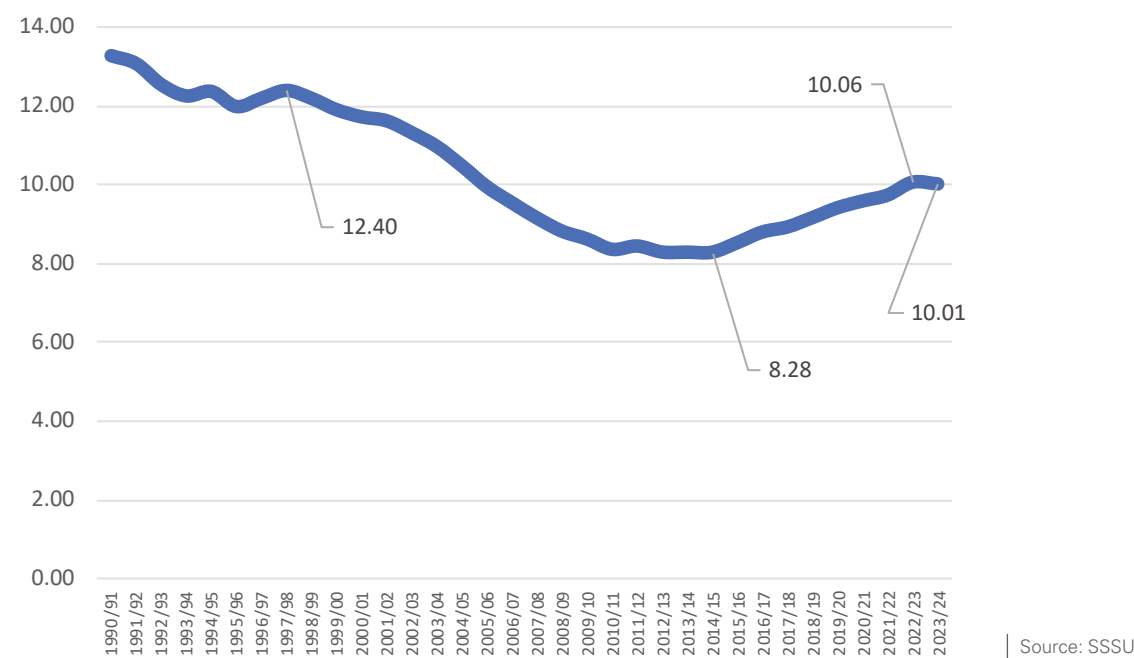
Figure 79. Number of teachers in schools at the beginning of study year, 1990-2023



Source: SSSU

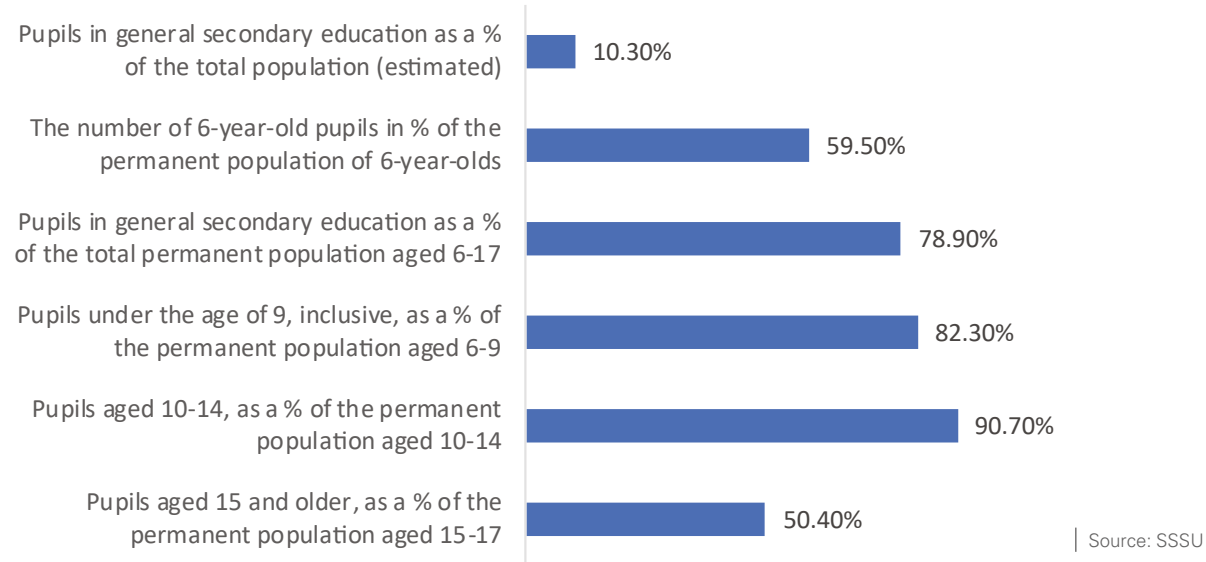
¹⁵⁸ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

Figure 80. Pupil-teacher ratio, 1990-2023



Despite the decrease in the number of teachers due to NGCAs and migration, the overall pupil-teacher ratio has continued its upward trend since 2012, reflecting the demographic structure of school-age children.¹⁵⁹

Figure 81. General secondary education gross enrolment rate, 2021



According to the latest data available from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, over 90 per cent of children 10-14 years old were enrolled in general secondary education. At the same time, with lack of accurate and recent population data (last census was conducted in 2001), these figures (though no other official data is available) should be considered with caution.

¹⁵⁹ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

Figure 82. Number of pupils and % of change in 2023 to 2021, by region

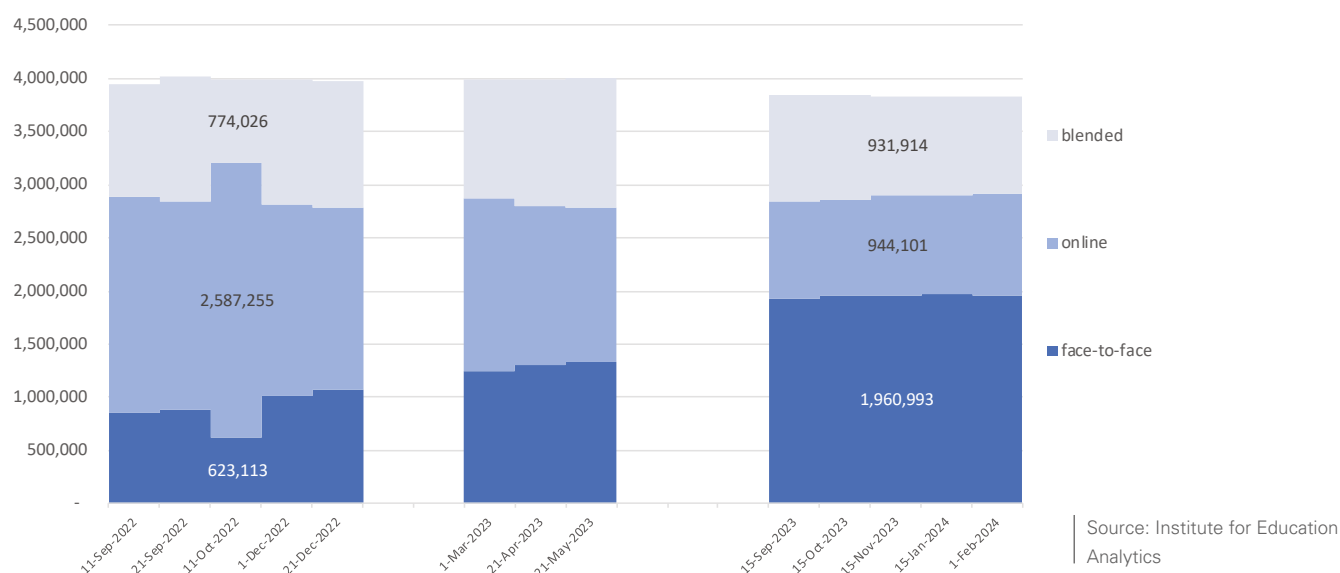
Region	2021/2022	2023/2024	% change
Vinnitska	166,368	163,168	98.08%
Volynska	144,931	141,568	97.68%
Dnipropetrovska	341,862	322,890	94.45%
Donetska	167,958	90,436	53.84%
Zhytomyrska	138,486	134,276	96.96%
Zakarpatska	171,065	164,045	95.90%
Zaporizka	170,381	138,066	81.03%
Ivano-Frankivska	161,157	158,127	98.12%
Kyivska	240,419	238,588	99.24%
Kirovohradska	96,568	94,676	98.04%
Luhanska	55,234	23,408	42.38%
Lvivska	289,187	288,337	99.71%
Mykolayivska	118,973	107,398	90.27%
Odeska	281,913	265,307	94.11%
Poltavska	138,594	136,110	98.21%
Rivnenska	167,633	165,873	98.95%
Sumska	98,377	92,479	94.00%
Ternopil'ska	110,968	106,337	95.83%
Kharkivska	260,862	223,525	85.69%
Khersonska	113,562	64,964	57.21%
Khmelnitska	138,791	136,922	98.65%
Cherkaska	117,198	116,102	99.06%
Chernivetska	107,974	106,537	98.67%
Chernihivska	96,599	90,612	93.80%
Kyiv city	335,298	336,423	100.34%

Source: SSSU

The change in the school-age population was uneven during the last two years of war, with frontline regions losing up to 50 per cent of children. One notable exception is the capital city of Kyiv, which saw a slight increase in children in secondary schools, despite the war.

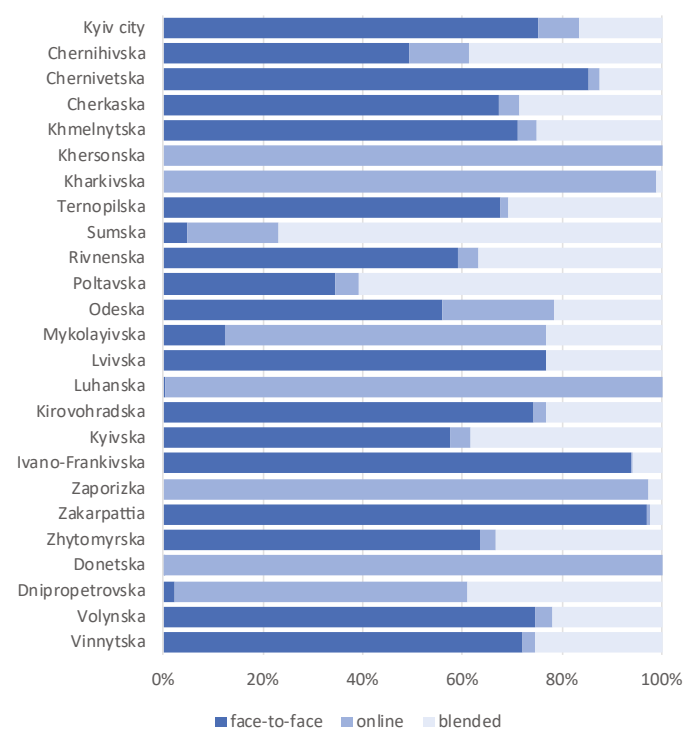
About half of the 3.8 million schoolchildren rely on online or blended learning modality.

Figure 84. Number of pupils in general secondary education, by learning modality



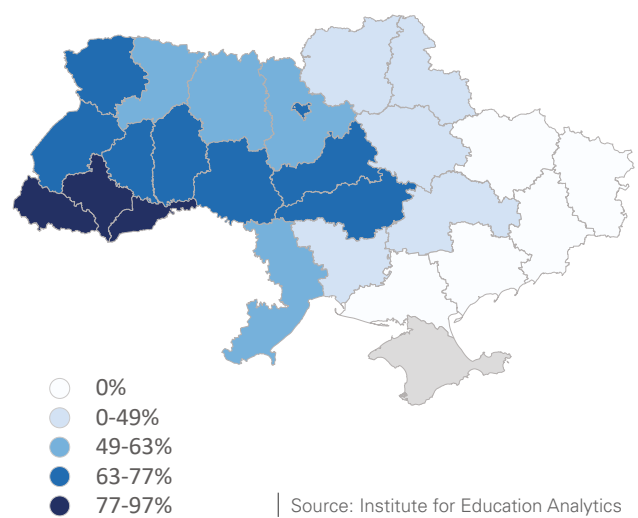
In regions affected by war, accessibility to education faces security challenges. Safety concerns influence learning formats, and traditional in-person education is often unfeasible due to shelling and other limitations. Efforts to create shelters address these issues subtly, allowing a blended approach. The Ministry of Education and Science is developing a comprehensive set of policies to ensure access to in-person learning for as many children as possible (working title – School Offline). The target of policies is to decrease the number of children studying exclusively online to 250,000 by the end of 2024.¹⁶⁰ According to the Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment in Ukraine (RDNA3), a significant portion of students in conflict-affected areas lack access to the necessary technology for remote learning. Approximately 40 per cent of students are without personal digital devices, such as laptops or tablets, and many areas suffer from unreliable internet connectivity.¹⁶¹

Figure 85. Children in secondary education by learning modality, 15 November 2023



Source: Institute for Education Analytics

Figure 86. Share of pupils in face-to-face learning, as of 15 November 2023



The largest share of distance learning takes place in the southern and eastern regions.

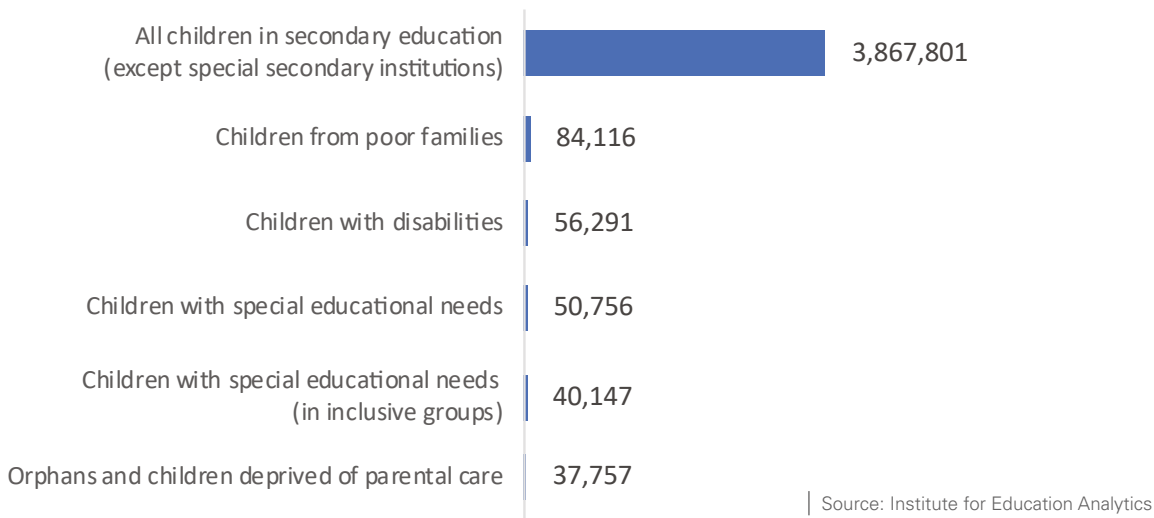
Children from low-income families¹⁶² make up 2.2 per cent of all schoolchildren, as reported by official educational statistics; children with disabilities make up 1.5 per cent; children with special educational needs, 1.3 per cent (in inclusive groups, 1.0 per cent); and, orphans and children deprived of parental care, 1.0 per cent.

¹⁶⁰ Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Digital Transformation, 2024

¹⁶¹ World Bank, 2024

¹⁶² A low-income family is a family that, for valid or independent reasons, has an average monthly total income lower than the subsistence minimum for the family.

Figure 87. **Disabilities and special needs in secondary education, 2023**



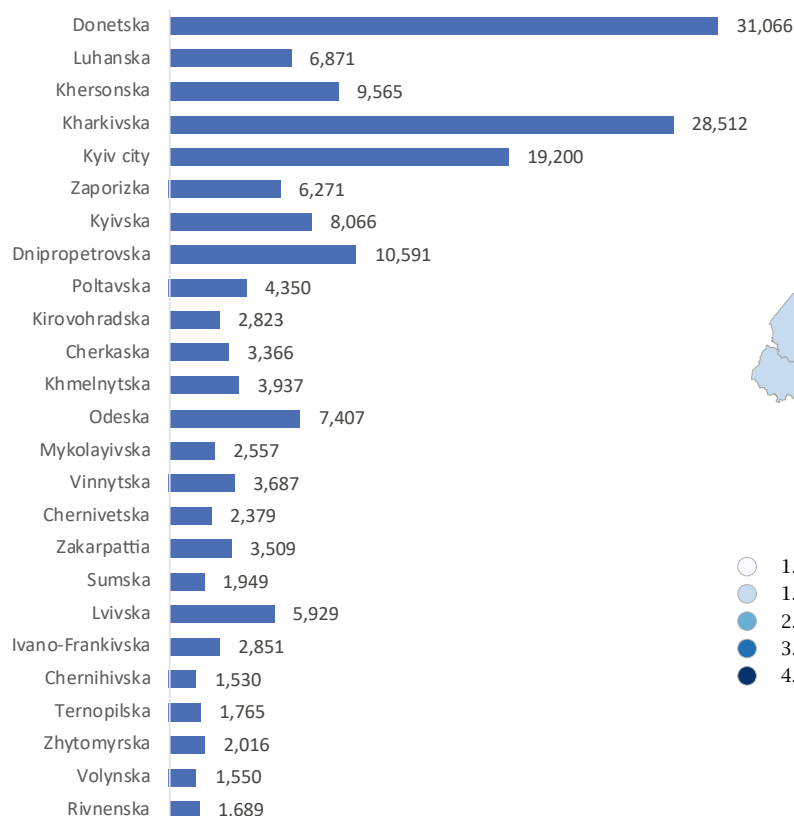
Children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) require tailored educational support due to learning disabilities, while disabilities encompass a broader range of physical and mental impairments affecting daily activities. There is significant overlap between the two groups, but not all children with SEN have disabilities and not all children with disabilities have SEN.

According to expert interviews, in the context of decentralisation, the enhancement of inclusivity and accessibility largely depends on a community’s financial capacity. However, aspects of inclusive development, like equality, accessibility, and barrier-free environments, are interconnected but not directly influenced by a community’s capacity.

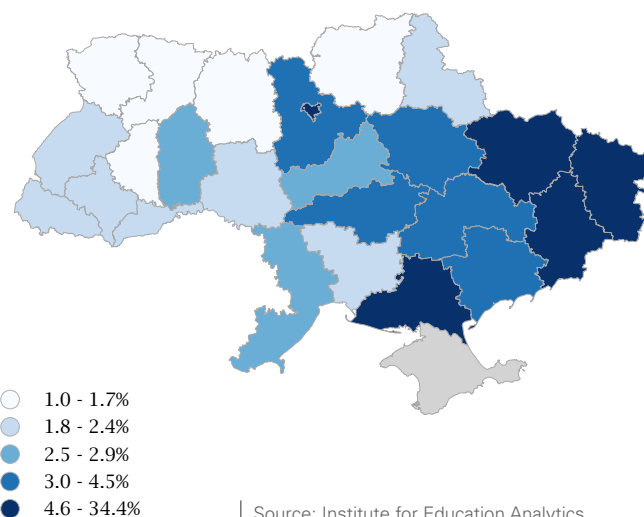
While the salaries of inclusive resource centre (IRC) specialists are covered by educational subsidies, state funding alone may not be enough to provide appropriate inclusive education. The calculation assumes eight specialists per IRC, including a director and seven experts. However, unfortunately, due to financial constraints, a diminishing coefficient has been applied in recent years. Consequently, if educational funding alone is insufficient, local authorities are urged to supplement teacher salaries, according to another key informant.

Children being displaced from their homes make up a significant portion of students in secondary education: from 5 to 34 per cent of pupils in some regions (34% in Donetsk, 15% in Kherson, 13% in Kharkiv, 6% in Kyiv City, and 5% in Zaporizhzhia).¹⁶³

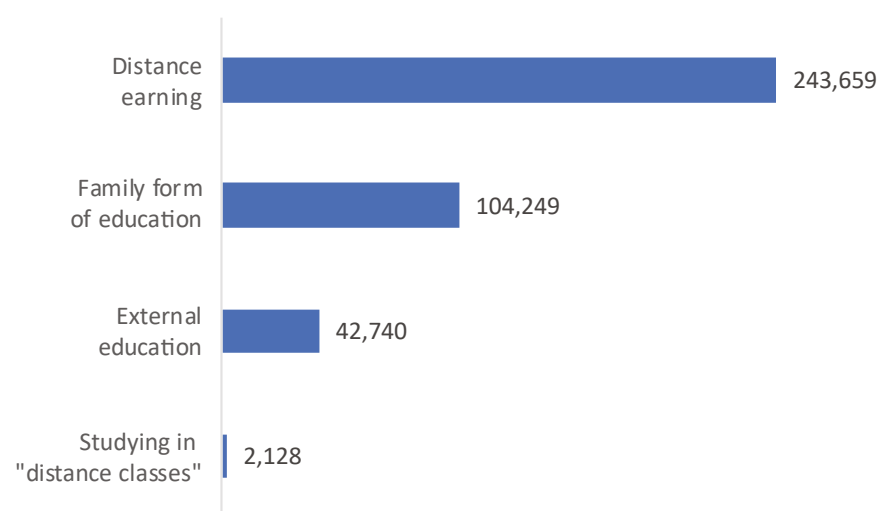
¹⁶³ Institute of Educational Analytics, 2024

Figure 88. Number of IDPs among secondary school pupils, beginning of 2023/2024 study year

Source: Institute for Education Analytics

Figure 89. Share of IDPs among pupils in secondary education (2023/2024)

There are also 392,776 pupils abroad who are still enrolled in Ukrainian secondary schools. 62 per cent of whom participate in the education process through distance learning.¹⁶⁴

Figure 90. Ukrainian pupils abroad, as of February 2024, by type of learning modality

Source: Institute for Education Analytics

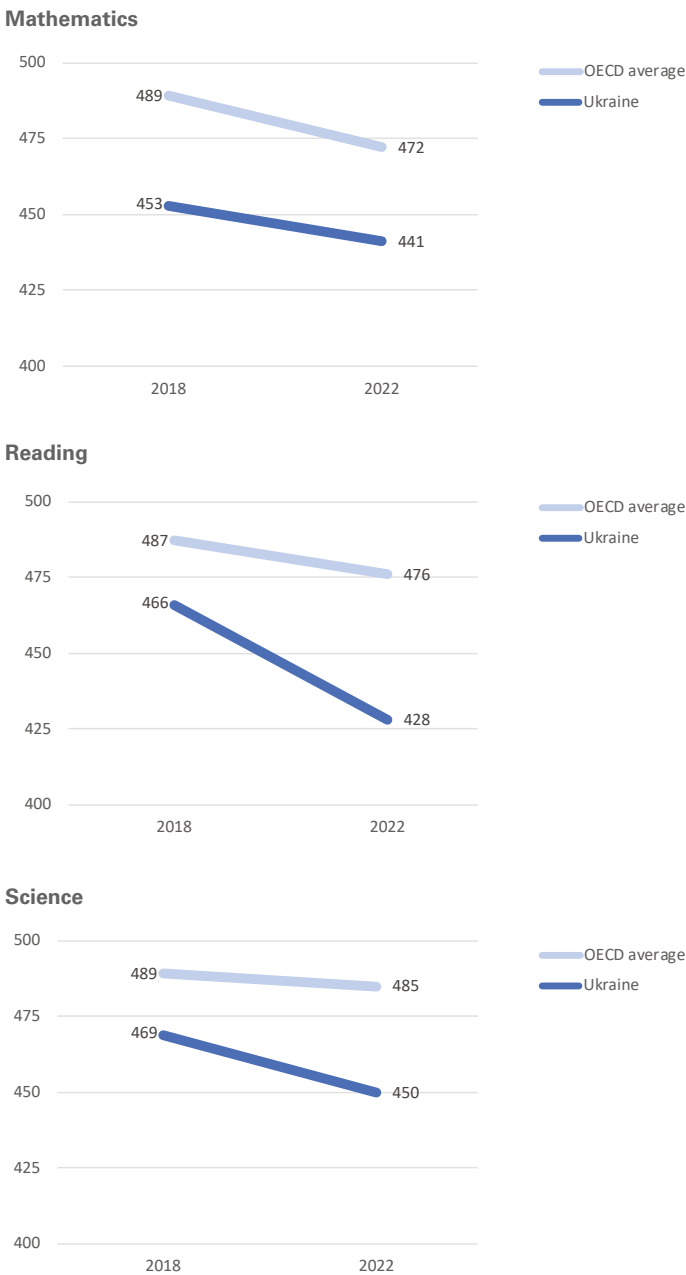
Regarding learning outcomes, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) evaluates the competencies of 15-year-old students in mathematics, reading, and science. The Programme investigates the students' ability to solve intricate problems, use critical thinking skills, and be effective in communication. These

¹⁶⁴ Institute of Educational Analytics, 2024

evaluations provide valuable insights into how well educational systems are equipping students to tackle real-world challenges and succeed in the future. Ukraine made its debut in PISA in 2018; in 2022, due to the impact of war, survey operations could not be successfully carried out in the most affected regions. Consequently, the current results are representative of only 18 out of 27 regions: Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Vinnytsia, Chernihiv, Kyiv, Sumy, Kyiv city, Zhytomyr, Odesa, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Khmelnytskyi, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Volyn, and Zakarpattia.¹⁶⁵

In 2022, Ukrainian pupils scored less than the OECD average in mathematics, reading, and science. Moreover, there was an overall decline of scores between 2018 and 2022 (it should be noted that PISA in Ukraine was conducted in October 2022, which coincided with the start of massive attacks and power outages).

Figure 91. PISA scores in Mathematics, Reading, and Science, 2018-2022



The results from PISA-2022 indicated not only a lower level of mathematical, reading, and scientific literacy for Ukrainian students than the average for OECD countries, but also the scale of educational losses compared to 2018. According to PISA standards, the losses were equivalent to half a year of education in natural sciences, one year of mathematics, and two years of reading.

PISA-2022 confirmed the presence of significant gender gaps in reading and mathematics among Ukrainian students. In reading, boys are lagging behind girls by more than a year of schooling but are ahead of girls by 10 points in mathematics.

Students with high socio-economic status have higher results in math, reading, and science than those with low socio-economic status. At the same time, students with a lower socio-economic status most often study in Ukraine in ordinary schools or vocational and technical educational institutions, and live in small cities, towns, or villages; while students with higher socio-economic status study in lyceums, gymnasiums, and specialised schools, and live in large cities.¹⁶⁶

Source: PISA 2022

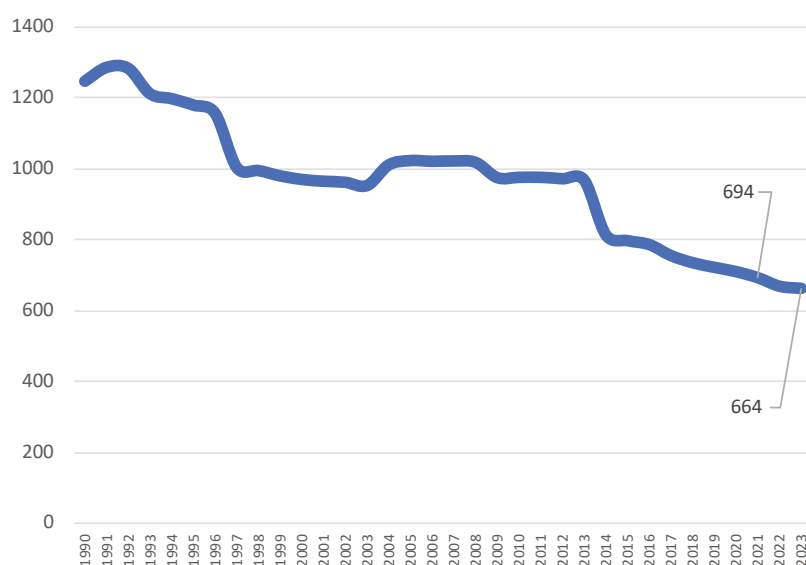
¹⁶⁵ OECD / PISA, 2023

¹⁶⁶ Ministry of Education and Science, 2023

Vocational (Professional) Education

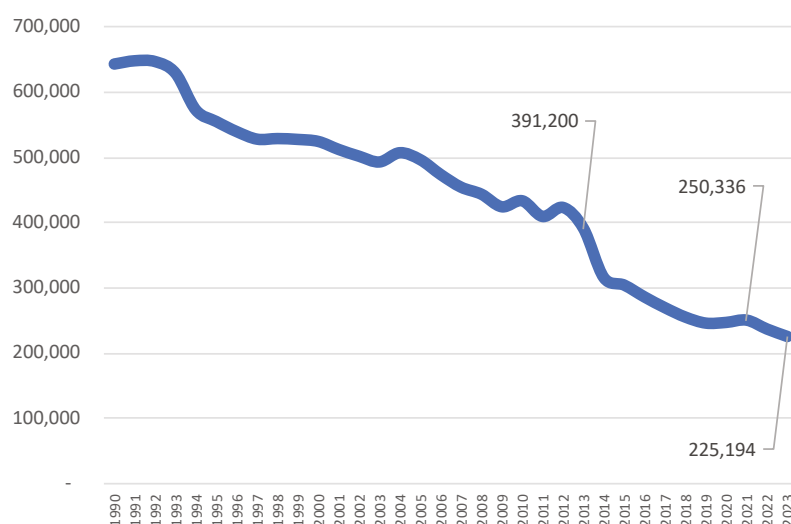
Since the 1990s, the number of vocational schools have been steadily declining, with a notable drop in 2014 (from 1,246 in 1990 to 694 in 2014), with the annexation of Crimea and areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions not under Government control. During the first two years of the full-scale war, the number of vocational schools dropped by 30 (or, by 4 per cent).

Figure 92. Number of vocational schools at the end of year, 1990-2023



Source: SSSU

Figure 93. Number of students in vocational schools at the end of year, 1990-2023



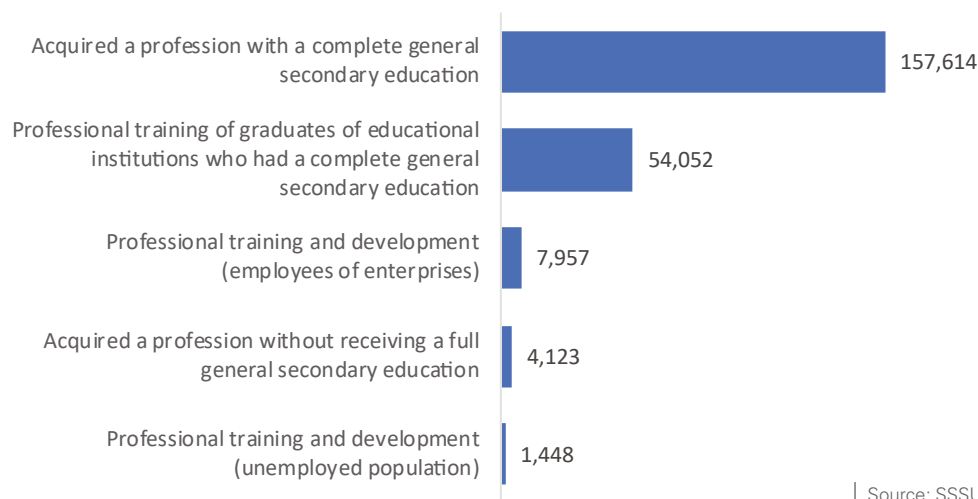
Source: SSSU

The number of students in vocational schools at the end of 2023 was 25,000 less than at the end of 2021 (or, a 10 per cent decrease).¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

The majority of students in vocational schools (70 per cent) were acquiring a profession with a complete general secondary education. 24 per cent of students had already a complete secondary education.

Figure 94. **Structure of vocational schools' students, as of end of 2023**



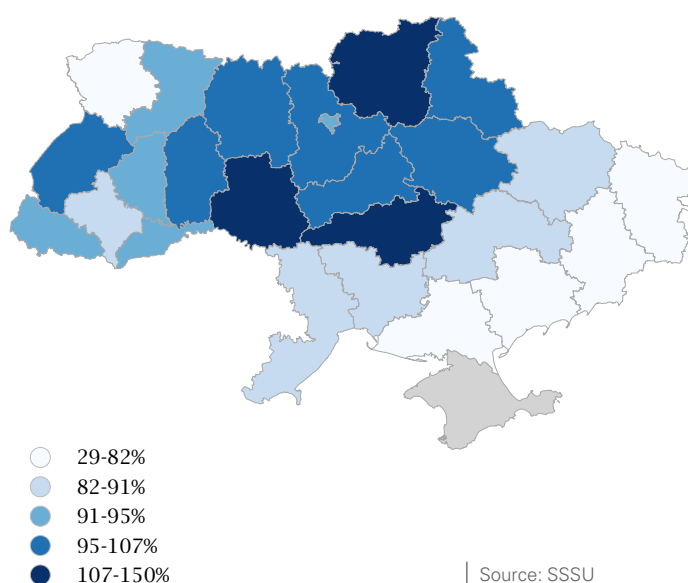
Despite a general decline in the numbers of students in vocational (professional) schools, the change was not even across regions.

Figure 95. **Number of students in vocational schools by region, 2021-2023**

Region	2021	2023	% of 2021
Vinnytska	12,199	13,131	108%
Volynska	8,034	6,138	76%
Dnipropetrovska	20,994	19,020	91%
Donetska	10,455	4,975	48%
Zhytomyrska	7,234	7,390	102%
Zakarpattia	5,837	5,488	94%
Zaporizka	13,846	11,340	82%
Ivano-Frankivska	9,175	8,051	88%
Kyivska	7,852	8,246	105%
Kirovohradska	6,352	7,196	113%
Luhanska	4,829	1,381	29%
Lvivska	20,850	21,051	101%
Mykolayivska	10,324	9,313	90%
Odeska	12,826	10,835	84%
Poltavska	9,506	9,388	99%
Rivnenska	10,855	10,056	93%
Sumska	8,934	9,367	105%
Ternopil'ska	7,716	7,072	92%
Kharkivska	13,867	12,289	89%
Khersonska	7,062	3,199	45%
Khmeln'yska	9,253	9,925	107%
Cherkaska	7,557	7,424	98%
Chernivetska	6,143	5,804	94%
Chernihivska	3,734	5,603	150%
Kyiv city	12,083	11,512	95%

Source: SSSU

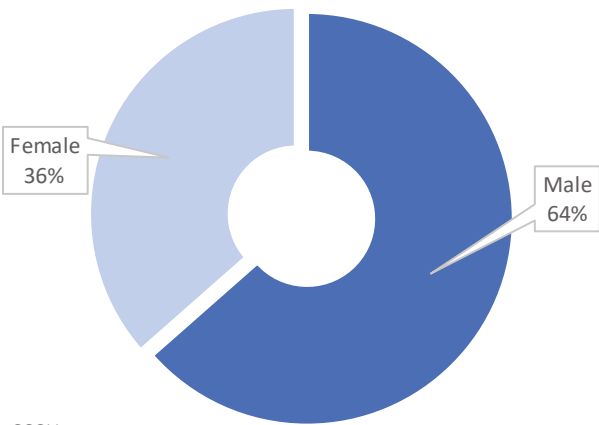
Figure 96. **Percentage change of students in vocational schools by region (2023 against 2021)**



There was a strong decline in frontline regions (18-71%) and a less prominent (9-19%) decline in adjacent regions (e.g., Odesa, Mykolayiv, Dnipro, Kharkiv). Some regions saw, however, growth in 2023 compared to 2021. These include Chernihiv with 50 per cent growth, Kirovohrad – 13 per cent, and Vinnytsia – 8 per cent.

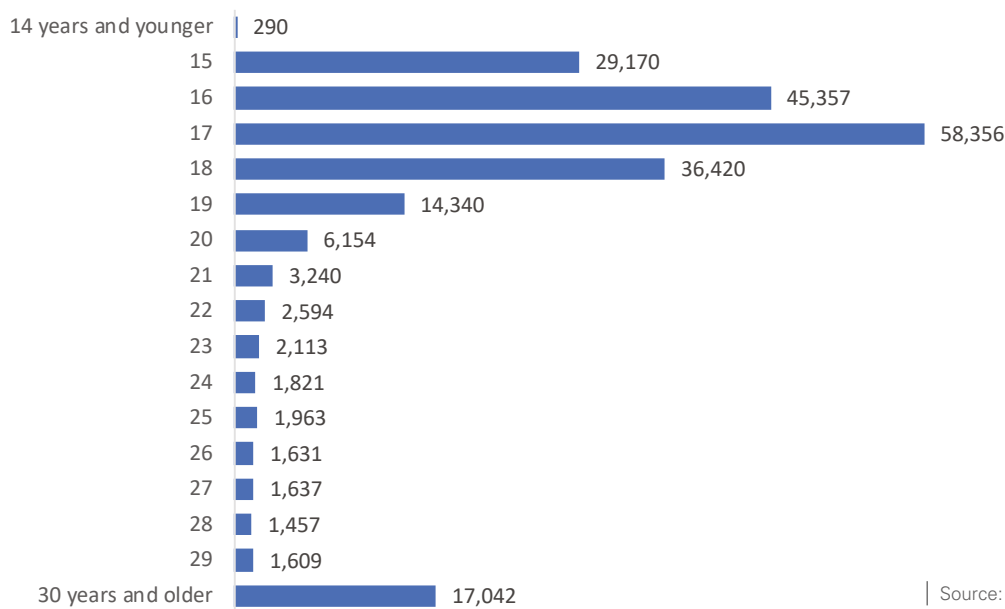
Unlike children in preschool and general secondary education, students in vocational schools are predominantly male (64 per cent).

Figure 97. Distribution of students of vocational schools by sex, 2023



Source: SSSU

Figure 98. Distribution of students of vocational schools by age, 2023



Source: SSSU

About 7.5 per cent (or, a total of 17,042) of vocational school students are 30 years and older. About 59 per cent of all students enrolled in vocational education are children (14-17 years old).¹⁶⁸

At the same time, young people in Ukraine lack opportunities for skills development to meet the country's socio-economic recovery requirements, and struggle to access decent employment opportunities.

Even before the escalation of the war, Ukraine's skills profile was not sufficient to meet the demand of the labour market. A 2017 World Bank report indicated that workers lacked a mix of advanced cognitive, socioemotional, and technical skills to succeed in the labour market.¹⁶⁹ It also found that skills training outside the formal education system has very low take-up rates, and partnerships between firms and education institutions are scarce.

According to a 2023 IREX study, 18 per cent of young people aged 16-35 were neither studying nor employed. Also, 22 per cent of unemployed youth considered lack of skills and knowledge a barrier to employment or self-employment.¹⁷⁰

The disparities are not uniform across regions, with rural areas, including those affected by the war, experiencing lower access to opportunities, as indicated by the PISA-2022 results.

As of March 2024, there were a total of 118,500 registered unemployed in Ukraine, of which 27,100 (or, 23 per cent) were youth under the age of 35, according to the National Bank of Ukraine.¹⁷¹ Before the onset of the war, Ukraine had existing challenges that limited youth employment, including limited opportunities to obtain work experience, declining work-based learning mechanisms, and uninformed career choices driven by misconceptions of prestige. Additionally, there was a scarcity of career counselling services available to students.¹⁷² The rate of youth unemployment was already at 19.1 per cent before the full-scale war and is likely to be significantly higher at the time of writing (excluding the Armed Forces).¹⁷³ There are reports that the private sector is losing qualified workers due to forced displacement, and up to one million working-age men have been mobilised into the Armed Forces.¹⁷⁴ Women would typically increase labour participation rates in times of conscription, but they are the vast proportion of those externally displaced. The path to restoring pre-war levels of employment in the country is expected to be prolonged, given the substantial damage to production capacities and logistical networks, alongside a sluggish domestic demand.¹⁷⁵ Consequently, high unemployment is anticipated to persist for an extended duration even after the war. This period could, in turn, contribute to worsening the rates of vulnerability among populations and families grappling with challenging life circumstances.

Also, as an MoES official commented, young people in Ukraine face a gap between what they learn in educational institutions and the skills needed for the job market. An increasing number of students are uncertain about their future career paths, with a rising percentage of 11th graders at a crossroads. There is a lack of comprehensive state initiatives in Ukraine to provide skills development opportunities for the most marginalised teenage groups in both formal and informal education. The absence of a cohesive national program addressing this issue remains a challenge, according to key informant interviews.

¹⁶⁸ [State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2023](#)

¹⁶⁹ [World Bank, 2017](#)

¹⁷⁰ [IREX, 2023](#)

¹⁷¹ [National Bank of Ukraine, 2024](#)

¹⁷² [United Nations Ukraine, 2019](#)

¹⁷³ [ILO, 2021](#)

¹⁷⁴ [Economic Pravda, 2023](#)

¹⁷⁵ UNICEF, 2023

The skills mismatch is most likely attributed to the quality and relevance of skills learned, rather than school attendance or enrolment rates. Surveyed employers in Ukraine in previous studies have indicated that the educational system fails to adequately fulfil their requirements. The survey findings suggest that graduates lack practical skills, as well as up-to-date knowledge, resulting in a perceived shortage in the skilled labour supply.¹⁷⁶ On the other hand, Ukraine's enrolment for primary and lower secondary is at or close to 100 per cent, and the country has a relatively high enrolment rate for higher education, compared to the average in the EU. As of 2020, while 57.1 per cent of 30–34-year-old Ukrainians (49.7 % of men, 64.8 % of women) had completed tertiary education, only 41.0 per cent in the EU (46.1 % of women and 36.0 % of men) had done the same.¹⁷⁷ Ukrainian students are also more likely to pursue further education beyond the first degree. About 74 per cent of bachelor's degree graduates entered master's programmes in 2018. This is attributed to the expectation that better qualifications lead to a higher chance of being employed. Research shows that in 2021, the employment rate among 20-64-year-olds holding at least a master's degree stood at 75.0 per cent, while it was 51.3 per cent for those with only a secondary school education and 59.8 per cent for individuals with a bachelor's degree.¹⁷⁸ Given these statistics, Ukraine appears to be performing well in terms of creating access to formal education. However, the major challenge is that the current education system lacks skills building opportunities within the curriculum to equip students with in-demand skills for the labour market and limited opportunities beyond the educational system for skills building.

¹⁷⁶ [OECD, 2015](#)

¹⁷⁷ [MoES / Institute of Educational Analytics, 2022](#)

¹⁷⁸ [MoES / Institute of Educational Analytics, 2022](#)

Bottlenecks and Strategies

Early childhood education

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	• Lack of real-time, comprehensive transparent data for evidence planning and implementing education policies and framework. • Absence of evidence-based human-centred normative framework for diversified inclusive ECE services. • Outdated ECE curriculum and minimum quality service standards for inclusive pre-primary school services.
Strategies	• Develop transparent, nationally-owned education data systems to inform decision making at school national, oblast, and hromada levels. • Develop evidence-based, human-centred normative framework for inclusive accountable ECE. • Design, adopt, and implement the updated ECE curriculum and minimum quality service standards to contribute to NUS reform.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	• Lack of capacity at hromada level to plan, deliver, and monitor diversified inclusive ECE services. • Lack of teacher capacity to include children with disabilities within pre-primary school services.
Strategies	• Integrate ECE services in their budget plans. Allocate human and technical resources for inclusive ECE service provision. • Review, adopt, and implement the inclusive education component in the national teachers' training curriculum.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	• Lack of parent capacity and awareness to provide safe, stimulating, non-discriminatory and caring family environments for stimulation and engagement in learning of young children. • Pervasive stigmatisation of children with disabilities within both educational systems and communities, hindering their full inclusion and participation in society.
Strategies	• Develop and implement communication for ECE policy reform. • Develop, adopt, and implement a parenting programme in coordination with different social sectors. • Design, finance, and implement campaigns and interventions to reduce stigmatisation of children with disabilities, both in educational systems and communities.

Learning outcomes

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	• Lack of real-time, comprehensive transparent data for evidence planning and implementing education policies and framework.
Strategies	• Develop comprehensive transparent, nationally-owned education data systems to inform decision making at school national, oblast, and hromada levels.

Supply	
Bottlenecks	• Lack of safe, accessible primary and secondary learning environments (in war-affected regions). • Lack of teacher capacity to include CwD education within primary and secondary school education and learning. • Lack of formalised remedial learning opportunities for children whose learning has been disrupted or who are lagging behind.
Strategies	• Develop and adopt a strategy for digitalising education and allocate resources to implement it. • Rehabilitate/refurbish school facilities to effectively provide in-person education. • Develop, deliver, and fund formalised remedial learning services and programmes for children in primary and secondary school. • Facilitate teacher training on child centred learning and formative assessment.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	• Lack of programmes at local government level that engage and empower parents, children, and youth with disabilities in inclusive pre-primary, primary and secondary education services.
Strategies	• Develop and implement programmes to engage and empower parents / caregivers / children / youth with disabilities in inclusive education at local level.

Learning to earning (LtoE)

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	• Lack of a joint multi-sectorial strategy and coordination across stakeholders on supporting youth LtoE transitions. • Lack of strategic and operational frameworks to ensure institutional linkages between alternative learning pathways and private sector. • Lack of structured skills development opportunities within formal and non-formal education services for most marginalised adolescents and youth.
Strategies	• Develop a national coordination framework and a common multi-sectorial strategy to facilitate the transition from learning to earning (i.e., school to work) for young people, in line with EU systems. • Design, implement, and fund frameworks linking private and public sector to facilitate the transition to first job experiences for young people. • Develop, approve, and certify skills-based materials for GSS to integrate transferable skills and socio-emotional competencies within curriculum reform.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	• Lack of efficient, stigma-free, and labour-market informed career guidance system for youth in the context of recovery needs and emerging trends (digitalisation, greening, gender).
Strategies	• Develop and adopt labour market-informed, stigma-free career guidance models to facilitate the transition of young people from learning to earning.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	• Limited access to essential information and resources regarding the skills required for the labour market, compounded by the absence of accessible youth-friendly services, platforms, and tools for career guidelines and employment consultations within Ukraine.
Strategies	• Design, promote, and use platforms, tools, and interventions for youth or career guidelines and employment consultations within Ukraine.

Oksana, mother at the family-type children's home, with her children.

Oksana, 46, is a foster mother from Bunakove, in Ukraine's eastern Kharkiv region. When the full-scale war broke out in February 2022, her foster children were far away.

"The war started like a nightmare," she recalls. "The children were at a holiday resort, while we were at home. My youngest daughter, my daughter-in-law, my two grandkids and I were left alone."

Fortunately, Oksana's foster children were evacuated to Dnipro, and later to a safer place in the west of Ukraine.

After four long months, despite the ongoing shelling and violence, Oksana and her foster children were finally reunited. But life in Bunakove had changed dramatically – food was scarce, prices were high and the nearest open shop was 60 kilometres away. When food became three or even four times more expensive, feeding her family became a challenge.

UNICEF provided financial assistance to Oksana and her family. They used the funds to buy food and to build a shelter in the basement of the garage that could protect the large family during shelling. Part of the money was also used to repair the pumping station that supplies water to the house.



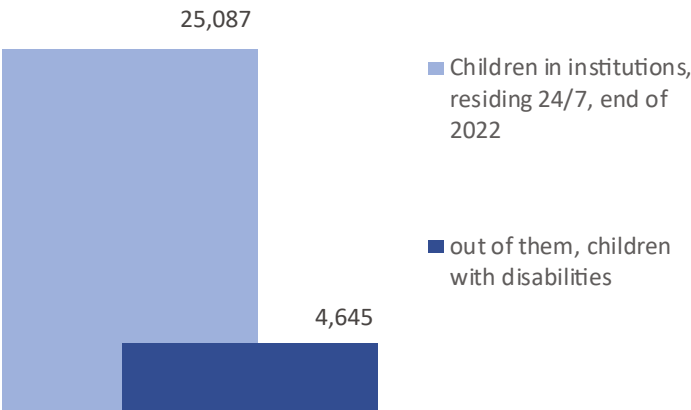
Child Protection

Alternative Care

In the first days of the war in 2022, more than 38,000 of the 48,000 children in institutional care were returned to their families without assessing the families’ ability to provide care and upbringing, and without giving assistance to provide care; more than 4,000 children from institutions were evacuated to European Union, Moldova, or Türkiye, and more than 1,600 to other regions in Ukraine. More than 7,000 children have been relocated (evacuated) from institutions of various types and ownership that provide institutional care and upbringing for children.¹⁷⁹

As of the end of 2022, the number of children in formal residential care (residing in institutions 24/7) constituted 25,087, according to data provided by the National Social Service Agency of Ukraine.¹⁸⁰

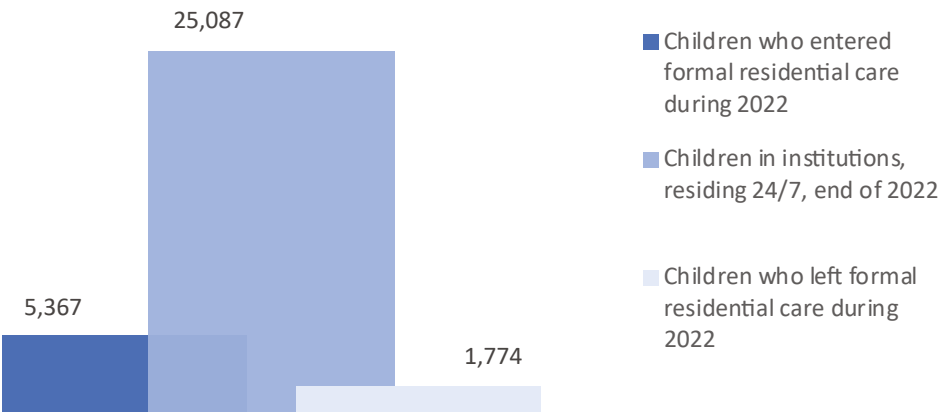
Figure 99. Number of children aged 0-17 in formal residential care, at the end of 2022



Source: National Social Services Agency (NSSA)

About 19 per cent of children in institutions are children with disabilities. In 2022, over 5,000 children entered formal residential care, and almost 2,000 children left formal residential care.

Figure 100. Movement of children aged 0-17 in and out of formal residential care, during 2022

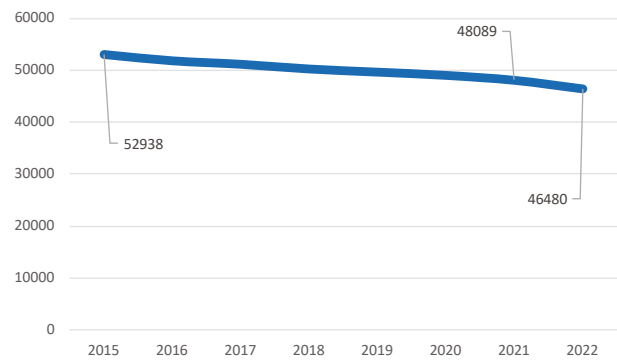


Source: NSSA

¹⁷⁹ UNICEF, 2022
¹⁸⁰ National Social Services Agency of Ukraine, 2024

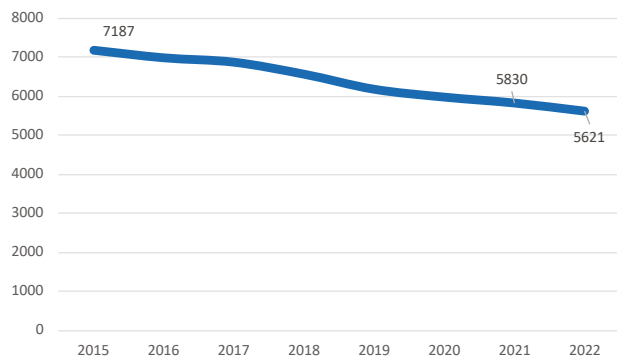
Children in family-based care in 2022 were distributed as following: 5,621 (including 309 children with disabilities) in foster family; 46,480 (1,348 with disabilities) in kinship care; and, 9,037 (including 470 children with disabilities) in other forms (family type children home).¹⁸¹

Figure 101. Total number of children aged 0-17 in formal kinship care, at the end of the year, 2015-2022



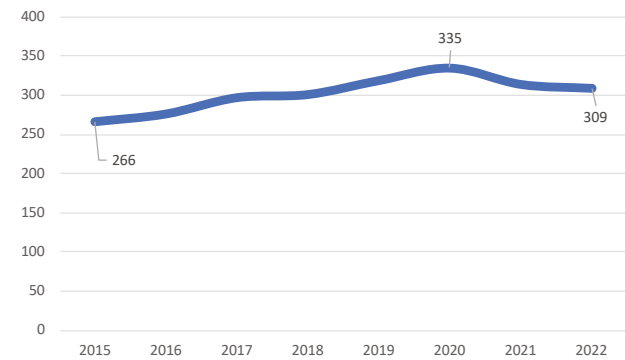
Source: NSSA

Figure 102. Total number of children aged 0-17 in formal foster care, at the end of the year, 2015-2022



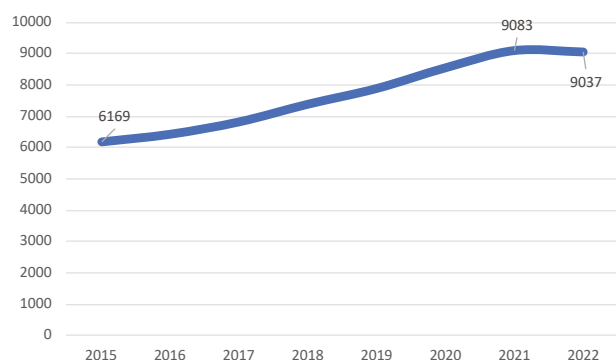
Source: NSSA

Figure 103. Total number of children with disabilities in formal foster care, at the end of the year, 2015-2022

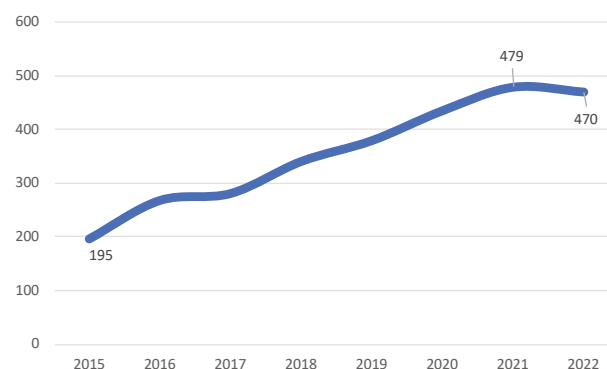


Source: NSSA

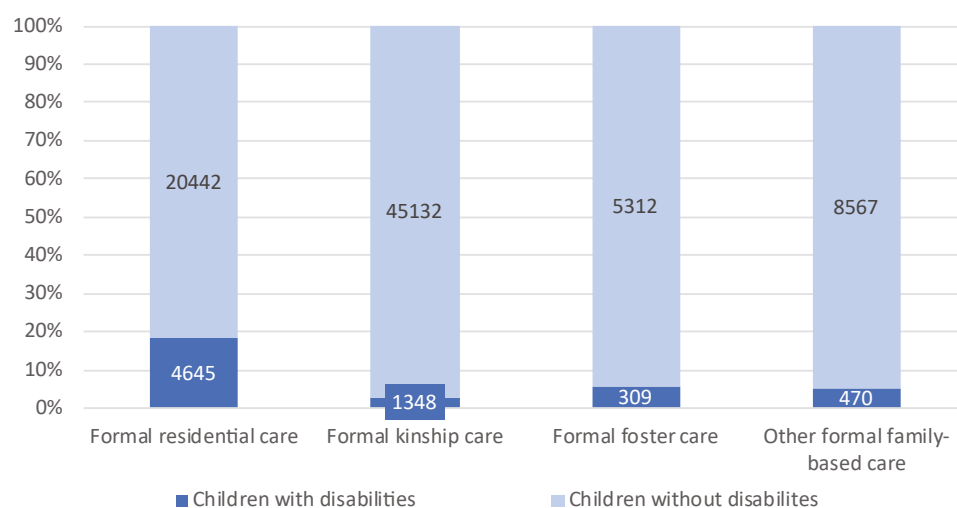
¹⁸¹ National Social Services Agency of Ukraine, 2024

Figure 104. Total number of children in family type children's homes, at the end of the year, 2015-2022

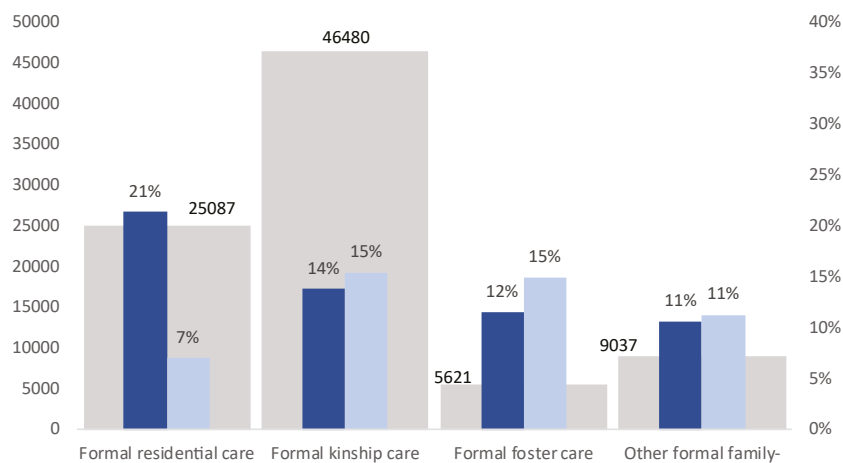
Source: NSSA

Figure 105. Total number of children with disabilities in family type children's homes, at the end of the year, 2015-2022

Source: NSSA

Figure 106. Children in alternative care, by type and disability status, end of 2022 ¹⁸³

Source: NSSA

Figure 107. Total number of children in different types of formal care, end of 2022, % children entered and left from each type during 2022

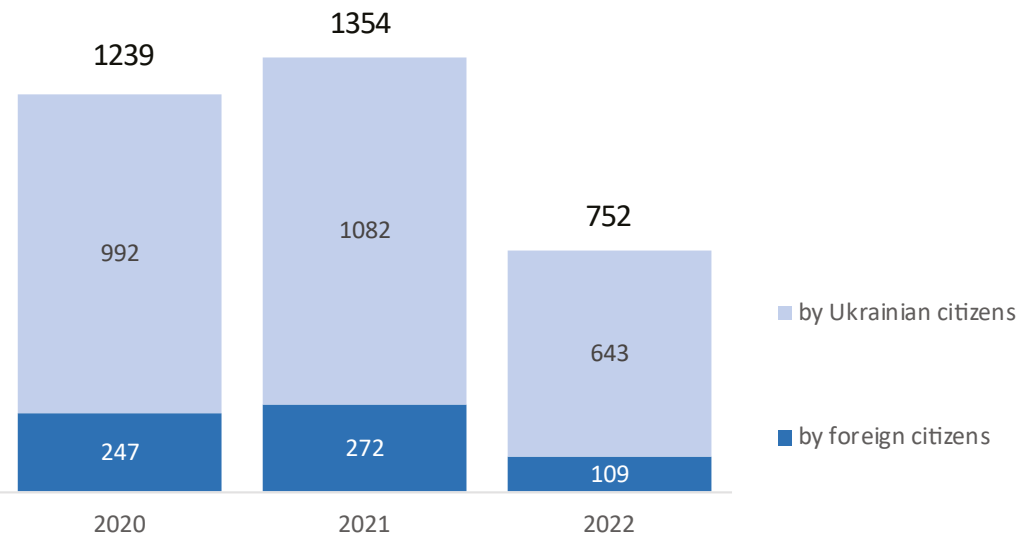
Source: NSSA, SSSU

The number of children who entered all types of family-based care was minimal in 2022, but made up 9,774 (13,274 in 2015) over the last 8 years.

The full-scale war has almost halved the number of children being adopted. International adoption of Ukrainian children was effectively put on hold when martial law started in 2022. According to a government decree, international adoption is not allowed during martial law, except when: the candidate for adoption is a relative of the child; the candidates for adoption have expressed a desire to adopt a child who is a biological brother/sister of a child previously adopted by them; or, one of the spouses has expressed a desire to adopt the child of the other spouse.¹⁸³

According to data provided by the National Social Services Agency of Ukraine, 752 orphans and children deprived of parental care were adopted in 2022, down from 1,354 in 2021.

Figure 108. Total number of children aged 0-17 formally adopted, during the year, 2020-2022



Source: NSSA

Despite the increase in the 2024 budget, local transfers for deinstitutionalisation and education of children in family, or close to family, settings represent only 74 per cent of the 2021 allocations.¹⁸⁴

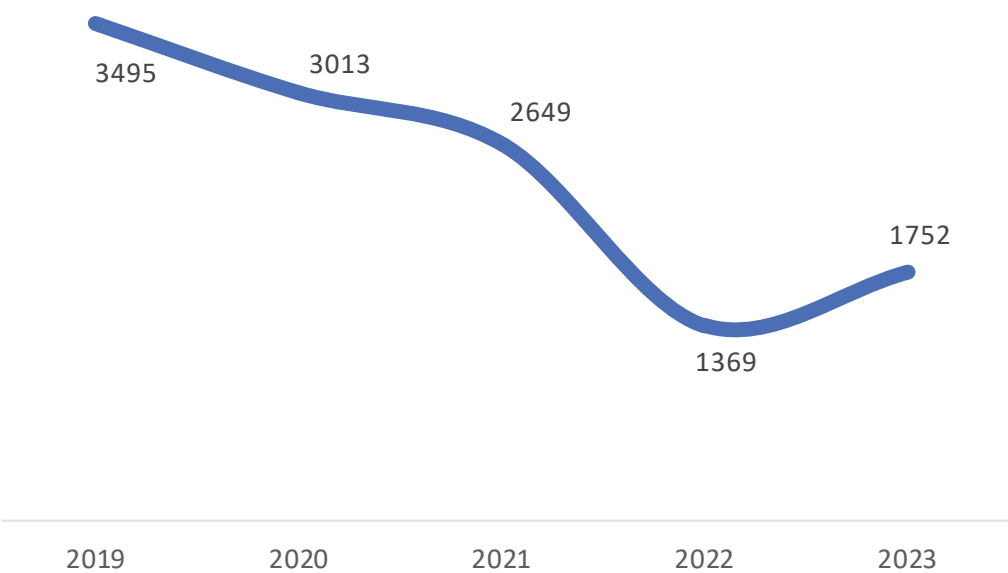
¹⁸³ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2024

¹⁸⁴ UNICEF, 2023

Justice for Children

While the number of children with criminal charges decreased from 2,649 to 1,369 between 2021-2022. The number increased by 28 per cent to 1,752 in 2023,¹⁸⁵ with custodial or alternative sentences reaching a historic low of 336 in 2022.¹⁸⁶

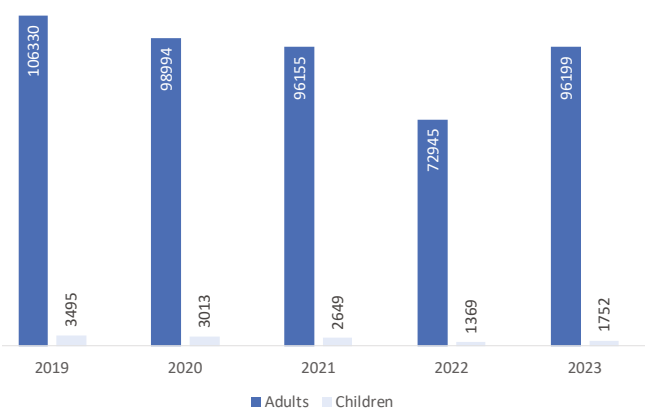
Figure 109. Number of children charged with crimes, 2019-2023



Source: Office of Prosecutor General (OPG)

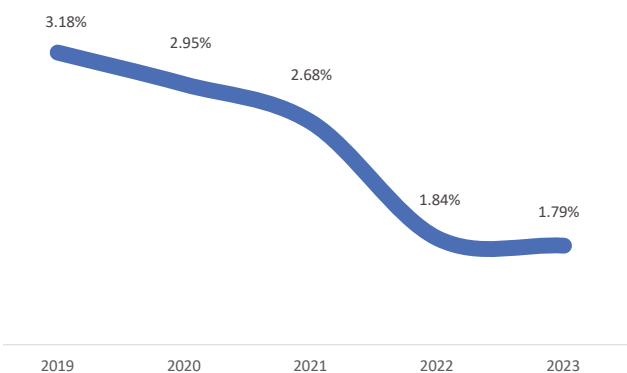
The share of children among all those charged with criminal offences dropped from 3.18 per cent in 2019 to 1,79 per cent in 2023.

Figure 110. Number of adults and children charged with crimes, 2019-2023



Source: OPG

Figure 111. Percentage of children among all persons charged with crimes, 2019-2023



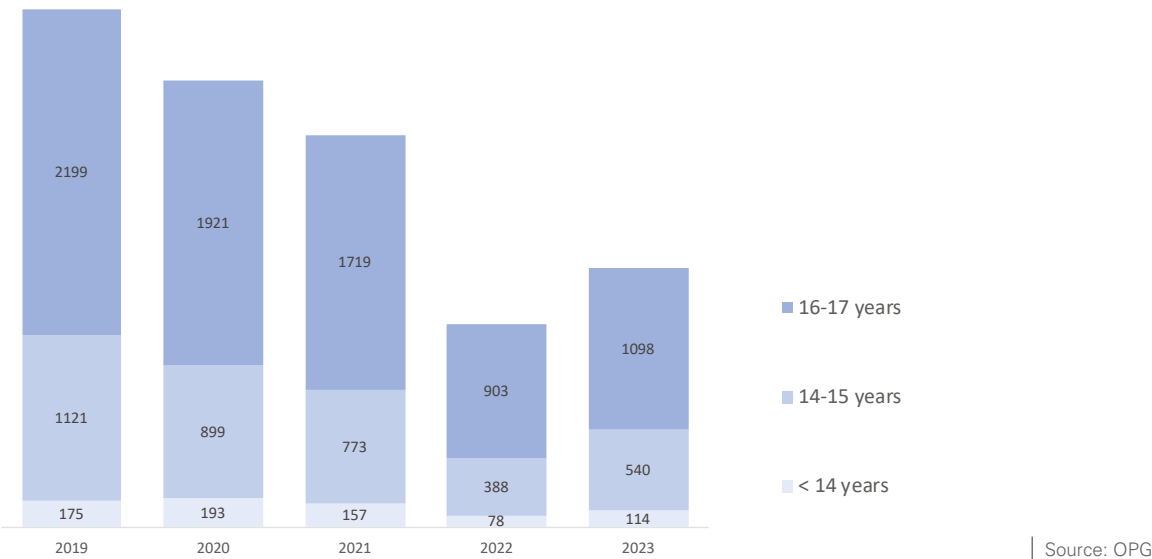
Source: OPG

¹⁸⁵ Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 2024

¹⁸⁶ TransMonEE / State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2023

About 63 per cent of all children charged with criminal offences in 2023 were 16-17 years old.

Figure 112. Distribution of children, charged with crimes, by age groups, 2019-2023



Within the overall landscape of criminal offenses, 55 per cent were offenses against property, 19 per cent against life and health, 9 per cent regarding traffic safety, and 6 per cent linked to drug trafficking. The top criminal offences charged against children in 2023 were theft (46%), other crimes against life and health (15%), robbery (6%), illegal possession of vehicle (5%), and fraud (4.5%).¹⁸⁷

Figure 113. Top crime types, children were charged with, 2019-2023

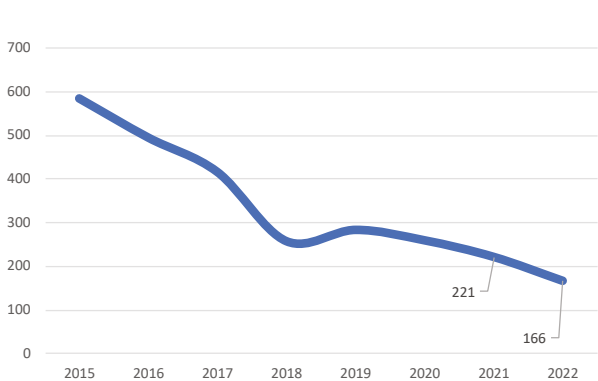
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Theft	2067	1645	1468	675	807
Crimes against life and health: other	282	273	272	202	269
Robbery	392	348	247	97	97
Illegal possesion of vehicle	-	272	191	81	92
Fraud	65	52	57	48	79
Related to drugs witout intention to sell	-	77	68	49	68
Hooliganism	-	106	76	35	56

Source: OPG

The number of children with both custodial and alternative sentences has been in a constant downward trend over the last few years. Custodial sentences reached a historical minimum in 2022 at 166 (down from 221 in 2021; and 4,810 in 2000).

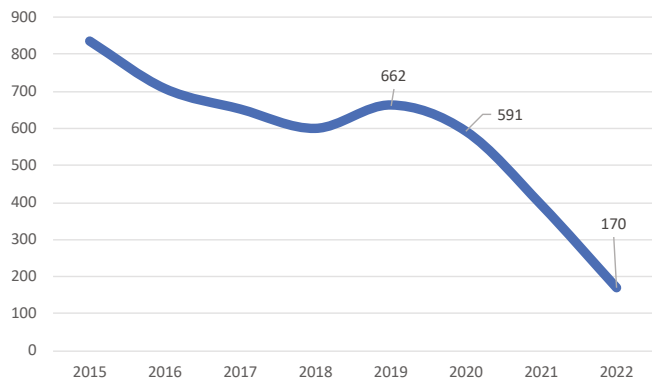
¹⁸⁷ Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 2024

Figure 114. Total number of children sentenced to custodial sentences, during the year, 2015-2022



Source: SSSU /TransMonEE

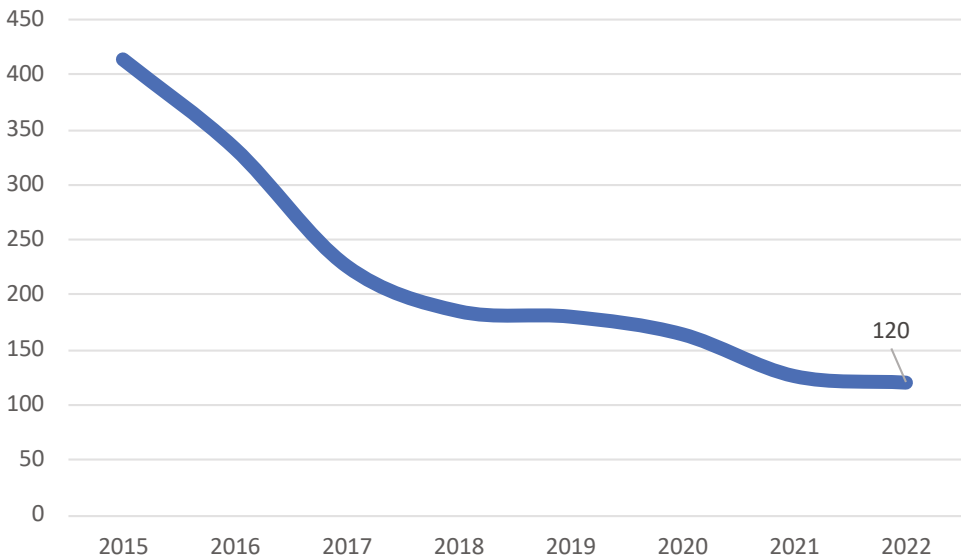
Figure 115. Total number of children sentenced to alternative measures, during the year, 2015-2022



Source: SSSU /TransMonEE

Children sentenced to alternative measures during 2022 also were at a historical low: 170 (compared to 393 in 2021; 591 in 2020).¹⁸⁸ However, the trend rebounded in 2023 to 214 custodial sentences and 282 alternative measures.¹⁸⁹ There were only 120 children in detention at the end of 2022 (down from 414 in 2015).

Figure 116. Total number of children in detention, at the end of the year, 2015-2022

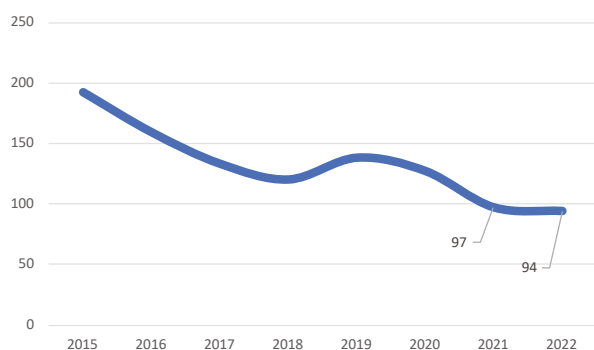


Source: SSSU /TransMonEE

¹⁸⁸ TransMonEE / State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2023

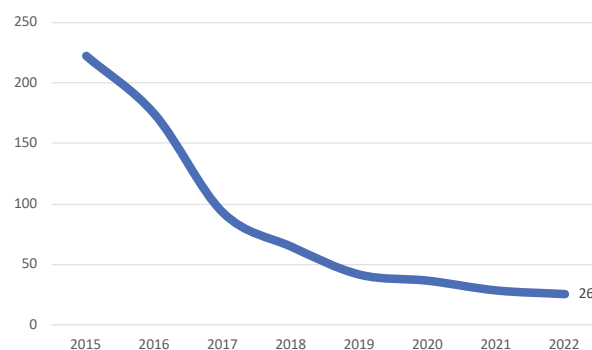
¹⁸⁹ State Court Administration of Ukraine, 2024

Figure 117. Total number of children in pre-sentence detention, at the end of the year, 2015-2022



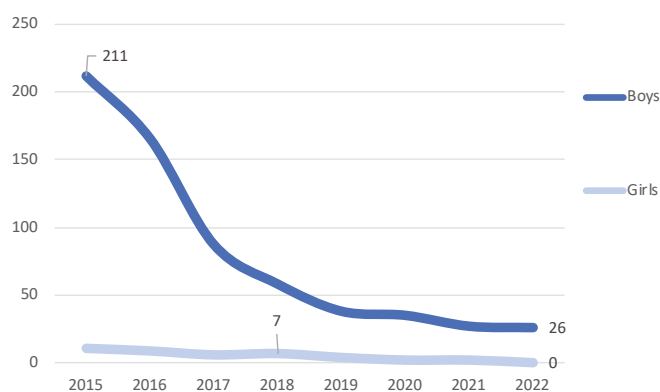
Source: SSSU / TransMonEE

Figure 118. Total number of children in post-sentence detention, at the end of the year, 2015-2022



Source: SSSU / TransMonEE

Figure 119. Boys and girls in post-sentence detention, at the end of the year, 2015-2022



Source: SSSU / TransMonEE

The absolute majority of children in detention are boys.¹⁹⁰ Also, historically (2015-2021), of all convicted, 85 per cent were boys. In 2023, less than 10 per cent (114) of 1,252 convicted children were girls.¹⁹¹

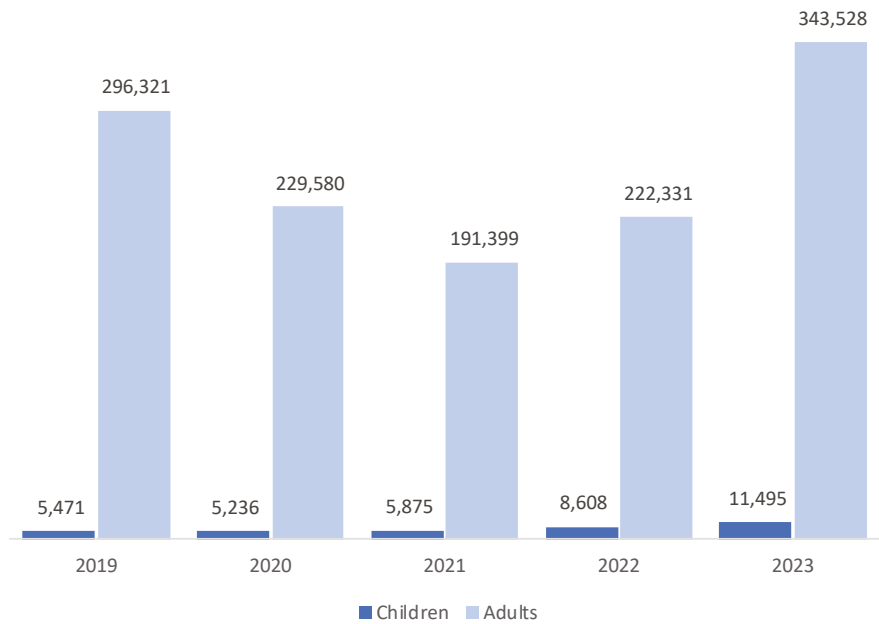
¹⁹⁰ TransMonEE / State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2023

¹⁹¹ State Court Administration of Ukraine, 2024

Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Against Girls, Boys and Women

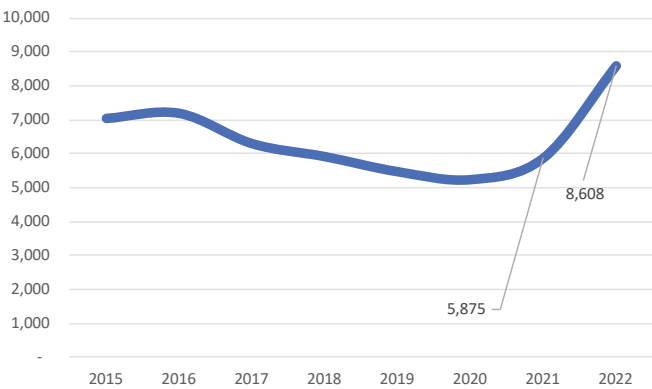
According to the statistics published by the Office of Prosecutor General of Ukraine, between 2021-2023, the number of child victims of registered crimes (including war-related crimes) almost doubled to 11,495.¹⁹² This figure has reached a historical high after a steady decline since 2015 of registered crimes against children, from 7,050 (2015) to 5,236 (2020).

Figure 120. Number of children and adults, registered as victims of crimes, 2019-2022



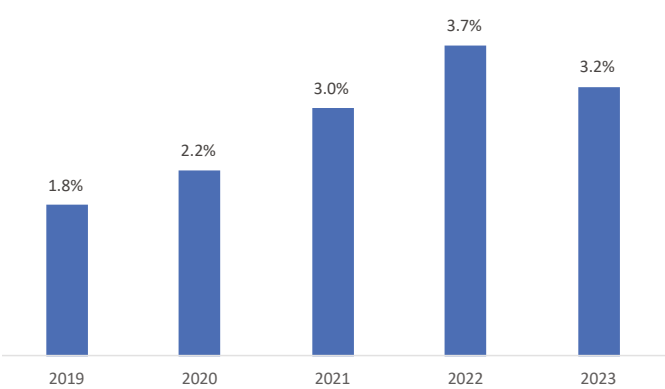
Source: OPG

Figure 121. Total number of child victims of crime aged 0-17 registered by the police, 2015-2022



Source: SSSU / TransMonEE

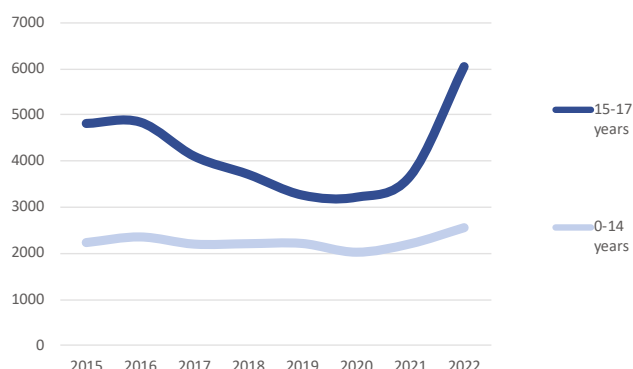
Figure 122. Share of children among victims of crimes, 2019-2023



Source: OPG

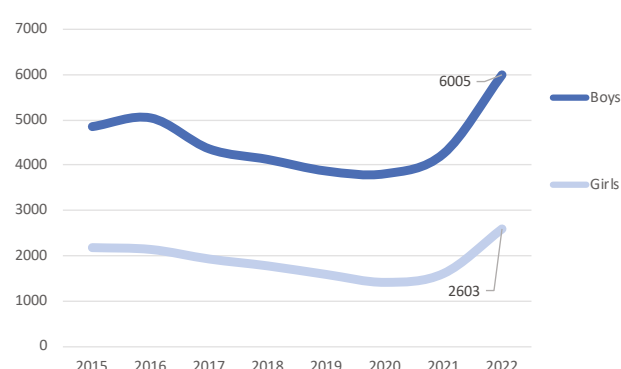
¹⁹² Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 2024

Figure 123. Distribution of children victims of crimes by age groups, 2015-2022



Source: SSSU /TransMonEE

Figure 124. Distribution of children victims of crimes by sex, 2015-2022



Source: SSSU /TransMonEE

The main category of crimes against children in 2022 and 2023 was “violation of the laws and customs of war”: 4,206 and 2,590 cases, respectively. Traffic accidents came second in 2023 (900 cases), followed by domestic violence (571), and sexual crimes (501).

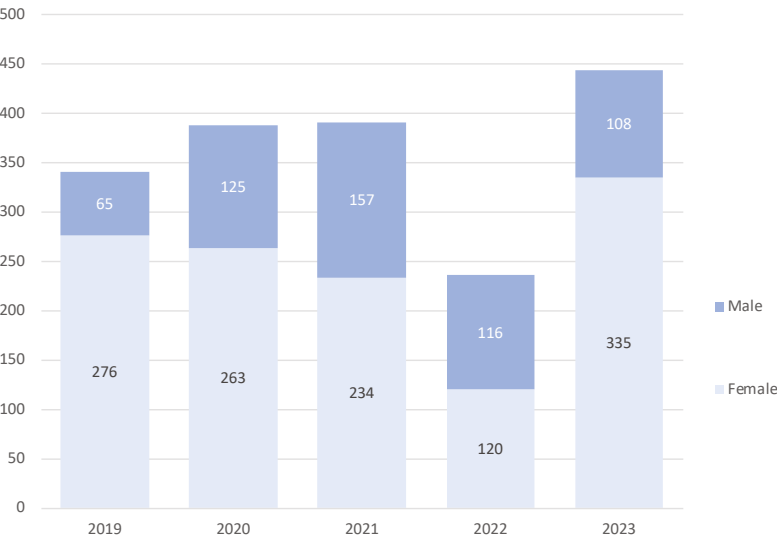
Figure 125. Distribution of children victims of crimes by types of crime, 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Violation of the laws and customs of war				4206	2590
Traffic accidents	936	953	975	666	900
Domestic violence	188	199	419	206	571
Sexual crimes				368	501
Theft	781	406	305	288	418
Fraud	145	120	124	150	402
Rapes (and attempts)	148	233	284	158	379
Murders (and attempts)	51	63	42	34	165
Robbery	468	326	284	135	136
Intentional hard injuries	29	26	25	22	24
Human trafficking	10	1	26	12	16
Other crimes	2715	2909	3391	2363	5393

Source: OPG

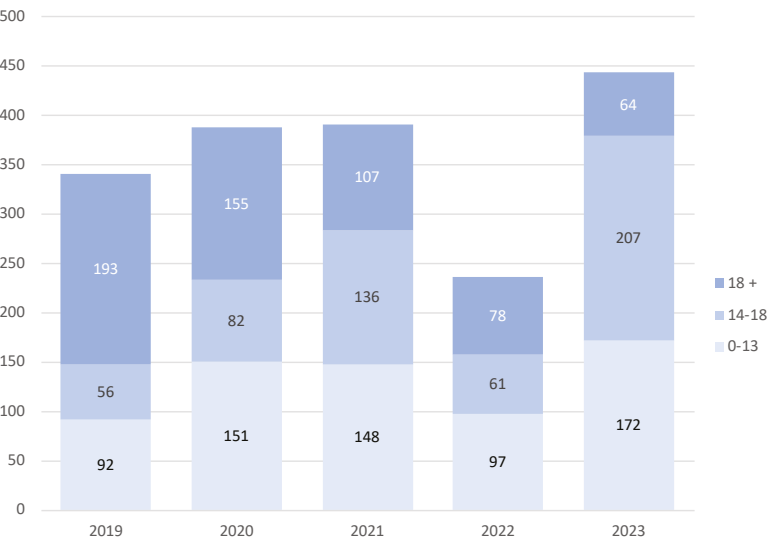
The number of child survivors / victims of sexual violence (categories “Sexual crimes” and “Rape”) grew by 67 per cent from 526 to 880 between 2022 and 2023.

Figure 126. Number of victims of rape (and attempted rape), by sex, 2019-2023



Source: OPG

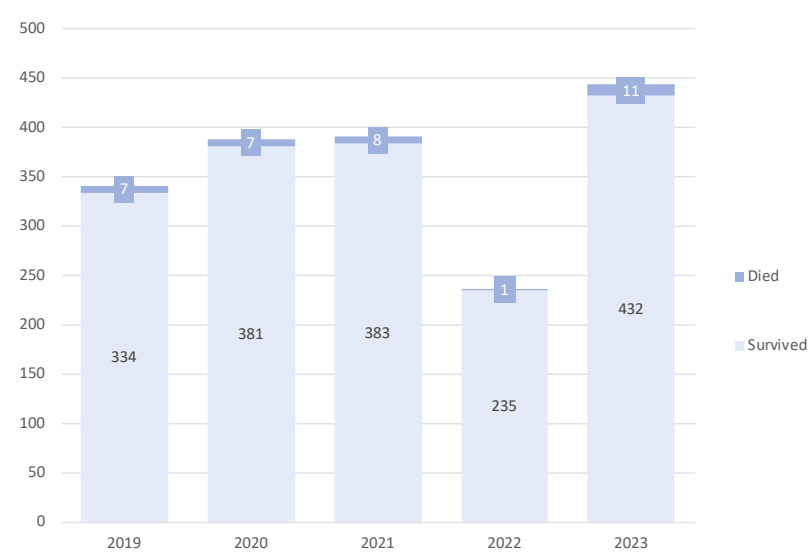
Figure 127. Number of victims of rape (and attempted rape), by age, 2019-2023



Source: OPG

The absolute majority of rape victims in 2023 were girls and women (76%). Out of all rape victims, 86 per cent were children in 2023 (a reverse from 2019, when 57 per cent of rape victims were over 18 years old).

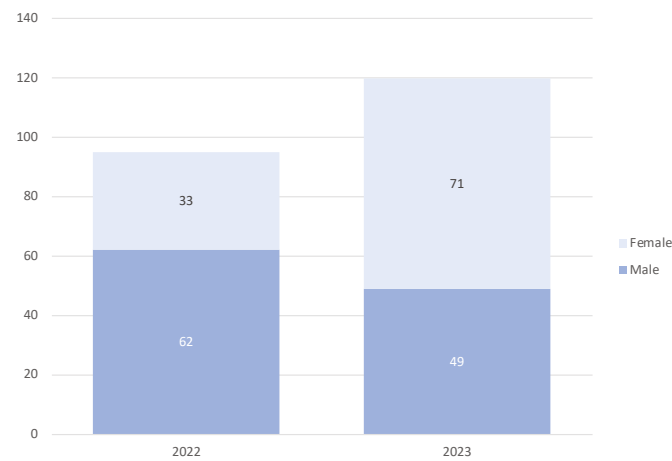
Figure 128. Number of victims of rape (and attempted rape), died/survived, 2019-2023



Source: OPG

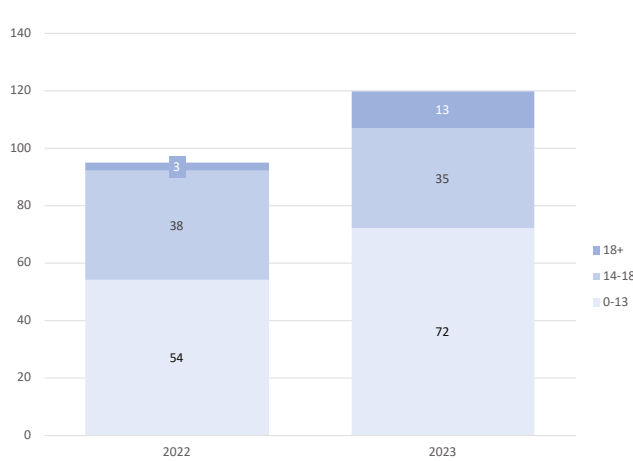
It was reported that about 2 per cent of rape victims died in 2023.¹⁹³

Figure 129. Number of victims of sexual violence, by sex, 2022-2023



Source: OPG

Figure 130. Number of victims of sexual violence, by age, 2022-2023

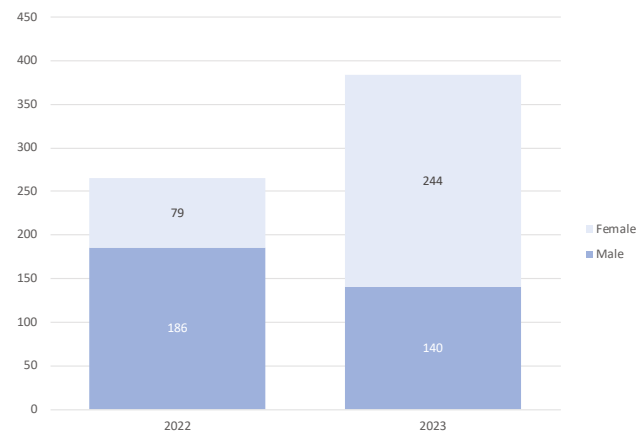


Source: OPG

¹⁹³ Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 2024.

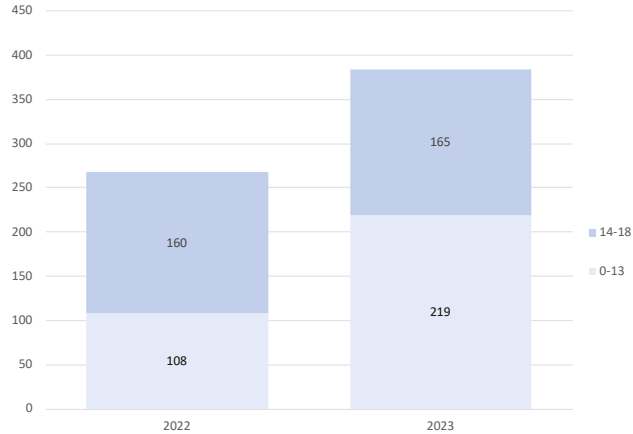
Girls and women are increasingly victims of sexual violence crimes (60 per cent in 2023 compared to 35 per cent in 2022). The absolute majority of victims in this category of crimes are children (90%).

Figure 131. Number of victims of acts of sexual nature with person under 16 and corruption of minors (molestation), by sex, 2022-2023



Source: OPG

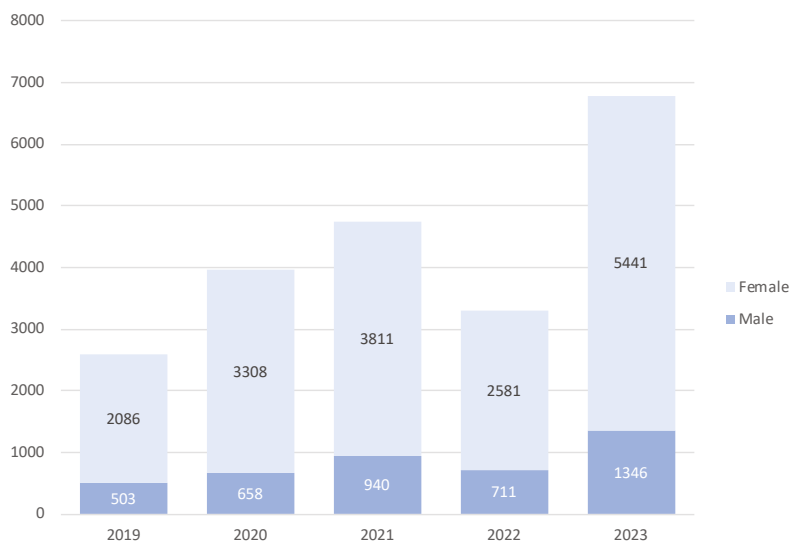
Figure 132. Number of victims of acts of sexual nature with person under 16 and corruption of minors (molestation), by age, 2022-2023



Source: OPG

Women also constitute a largest proportion of the victims of domestic violence crimes (80 per cent in 2023). Children constitute 8 per cent of domestic violence victims. About 2.5 per cent of domestic violence victims died (173 persons in 2023).

Figure 133. Number of victims of domestic violence, by sex, 2019-2023



Source: OPG

Figure 134. Number of victims of domestic violence, by age, 2019-2023

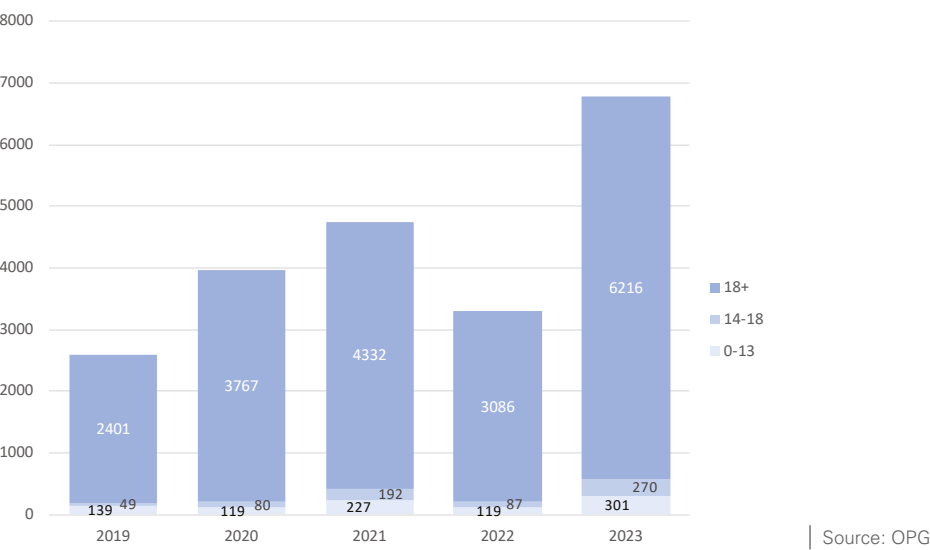
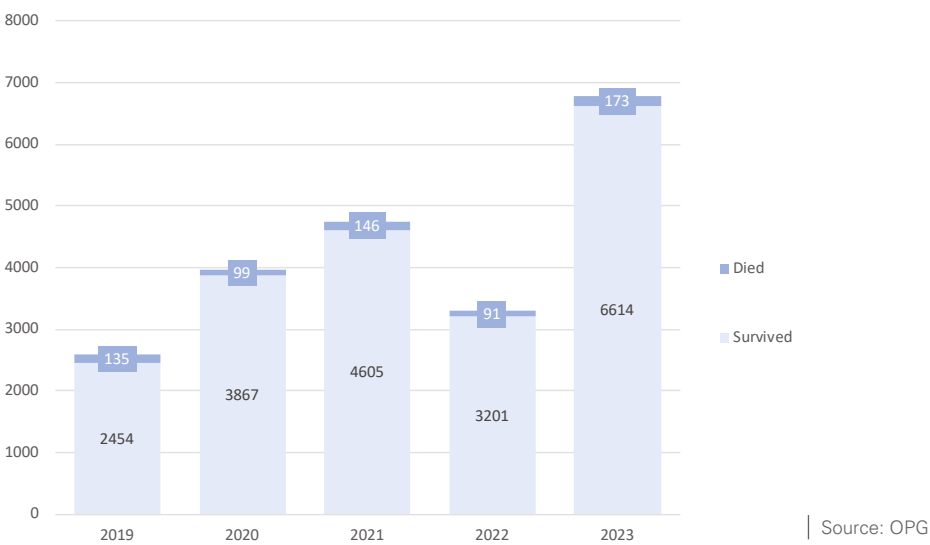
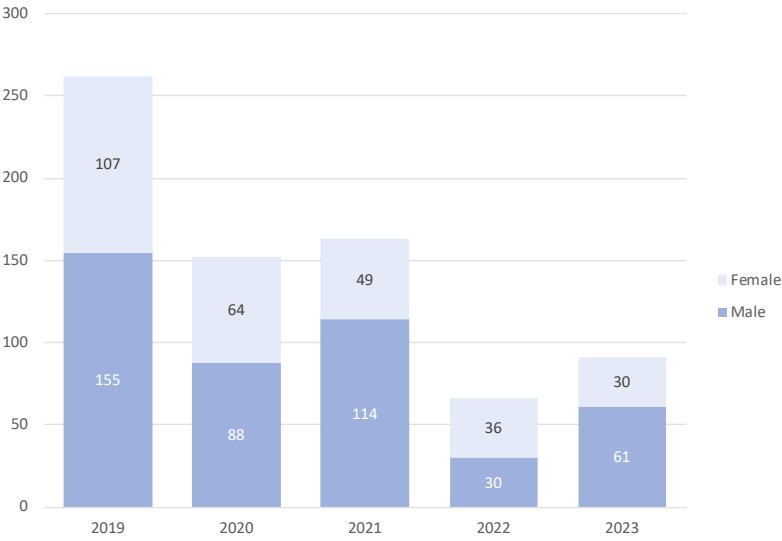


Figure 135. Number of victims of domestic violence, died/survived, 2019-2023



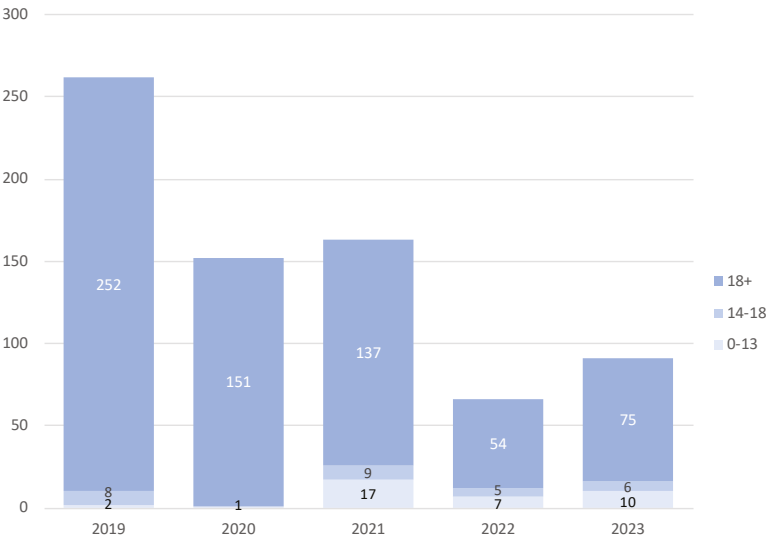
Determining the accuracy of crime statistics related to sexual assault and domestic violence victims remains a complex task. The reported figures may not fully represent the actual situation, particularly considering the context of the escalation of the war during the first quarter of 2022, which significantly impacted the number of domestic violence cases registered.

Figure 136. Number of victims of human trafficking, by sex, 2019-2023



Source: OPG

Figure 137. Number of victims of human trafficking, by age, 2019-2023



Source: OPG

The total number of child victims of sexual violence (e.g., rape, attempted rape, and other sexual crimes) grew by 67 per cent between 2022-2023 (from 526 to 880). The number of murders and attempted murders against children grew four times between 2021-2023 (from 42 to 165).¹⁹⁴

Before the war, Ukraine had taken several significant steps towards upholding the rights of children and adolescents by adopting the National Strategy for Reforming the Juvenile Justice System up to 2023¹⁹⁵ in 2018. The country was able to reduce by 42 per cent the number of children with custodial or alternatives sentences between 2018 and 2023.

The country has also adopted legislation to combat and prevent domestic abuse, introduced new guidelines and mechanisms to protect survivors of domestic abuse, and approved a new state programme to combat domestic abuse and gender-based violence (GBV).

The reported number of children forcefully transferred to the Russian Federation and NGCAs has not been verified.

¹⁹⁴ Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 2024

¹⁹⁵ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2018

DATA GAP

FRAGMENTED DATA ON VIOLENCE

The data collection on conflict-related violence and its responsibility is currently fragmented in Ukraine. Various structures collect information on different types of violence. For example, cases of sexual violence related to the conflict are documented by different agencies. The Ministry of Social Policy and the police collect data on domestic violence, but their numbers sometimes diverge. Despite efforts, interagency coordination remains a challenge. Mobile brigades from UNFPA provide specialised services to gender-based violence survivors, but their data is not integrated with other agencies. Official information is available on police and health ministry websites, but gaps persist.

Even before the escalation of the war, there were challenges in gathering data related to sexual violence and gender-based violence. The Istanbul Convention, which is in effect, also mandates the collection of this data.

Determining the accuracy of crime statistics related to sexual assault and domestic violence victims remains a complex task. The reported figures may not fully represent the actual situation, particularly considering the context of the escalation of the war during the first quarter of 2022, which significantly impacted the number of domestic violence cases registered.

The question pertains to whether the collected data is analysed and utilised for planning.

Less attention is given to domestic violence during war. Many argue that the law enforcement system cannot adequately address and ensure safety for such issues. The qualifications of law enforcement and justice personnel who interact with mothers and children during crises are variable, influenced by the human factor. Although training has been given to local police officers and juvenile prevention workers, frequent turnover and relocations disrupt consistent training. The effectiveness of their response hinges on their preparedness and experience. Notably, high staff turnover in the regions where they operate affects the timeliness of their reactions. The training for law enforcement personnel should focus on critical components, such as issuing urgent restraining orders. Properly executed restraining orders are, for example, essential to prevent misuse and to ensure victims have access to specialised services. Some regions excel in this area, while others still face challenges.

Law enforcement officers often inadequately respond to domestic violence cases, sometimes viewing it as a family matter. Efforts are necessary to educate and inform law enforcement agencies. The ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention should lead to changes in the judicial system. However, determining child status for those affected by domestic violence remains a question—whether they will be classified as victims or mere witnesses. Legislative reforms guided by the Istanbul Convention are crucial to protect children in this process.

Currently, legal assistance is provided to women, children, and adolescents by both the government and civil society organizations in Ukraine. The government operates a national hotline that offers legal support. While the availability of psychological assistance is uncertain, the hotline provides guidance on legal matters. Notably, the prominent civil society organization La Strada-Ukraine consistently handles phone calls related to gender-based violence and sexual violence. Although the state's involvement in victim support remains limited, civil society organizations actively provide psychological and legal aid, accompanying survivors in court proceedings.

The creation of Barnahus centres¹⁹⁶, in collaboration with UNICEF, addresses a critical need. However, shortages persist, particularly in specific regions. The coordination of services across communities remains ineffective. In summary, while larger cities provide more services, smaller communities struggle with distribution and payment mechanisms.

There are plans to fund and support the development of a shelter network. However, prior to the full-scale war, in 2022 or possibly 2021, there were only around 30 shelters in the country. Other initiatives have been driven by civil society organizations, but there remains a significant shortage of shelters.

¹⁹⁶ Barnahus, meaning “children’s house” in Icelandic, is a child-friendly, multidisciplinary model that coordinates child protection and justice responses to prevent trauma during investigations and court proceedings.

Bottlenecks and Strategies

Alternative care

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	- Lack of a costed reform strategy, plan, or comprehensive technical capacity to implement and monitor the Better Care reform. - Insufficient level of digitalisation and harmonisation of monitoring tools with EU practices to ensure children are monitored in alternative care and to respond to identified child rights violations.
Strategies	- Develop and fund a National Better Care Reform Strategy and plan. - Develop and fund a unified monitoring and reporting system, in line with EU standards, to ensure timely response to identified child rights violations, including the right for family.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	- Lack of standardised practices for engaging a statutory social service workforce to implement the three service mechanisms (national child services, resilience services, procurement agency) initiated by MOSP. - Local authority lack of knowledge and skills to provide a continuum of care to families at risk of separation and children deprived of parental care. - Lack of capacity of the Ombudsman's Office (OO) and the National Social Service Accountable for the Monitoring and Reporting of Child Rights (NSSA), especially for children in alternative care. - Absence of an integrated specialised support services (ECI) system to provide integrated and coordinated interventions and support for young CwD and their parents / caregivers / service frontline workers.
Strategies	- Design, implement, and coordinate a model for comprehensive continuum of care for families at risk of separation and children deprived of parental care. - Develop, standardise, and pilot the three-service mechanism initiated by MOSP. - Advocate and strengthen the capacity of OO and NSSA to ensure regular monitoring of children in alternative care. - Design, implement, and coordinate a multisectoral model for ECI for young CwD and their parents / caregivers / service frontline workers.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	- Lack of positive parenting skills and awareness to provide safe, stimulating, non-discriminatory, and caring family environments to provide positive nurturing care for young children. - Lack of technical capacities in relevant institutions (MOSP, Better Care reform office [CCFUCDU], sub-national authorities) to address prevailing social norms, practices, and beliefs that normalise VAC and institutionalisation.
Strategies	- Develop, finance, and implement a positive parenting programme nationwide with robust SBC to influence relevant parenting behaviours. - Develop, advocate, and fund evidence and guidance for national and subnational authorities in addressing prevailing social norms, practices, and beliefs normalising VAC and institutionalisation.

Justice for children

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	Lack of specialised justice for child professionals and normative framework setting for child-friendly and non-traumatising procedures in the justice system to report and uphold the rights of the child.
Strategies	Develop regulatory frameworks, guidance, and capacities for specialised justice system professionals.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	Lack of specialised services for children in contact with the law, including for survivors of violence, witnesses, children under the minimum age of criminal responsibility, children in conflict with the law, and children in civil proceedings.
Strategies	Develop frameworks and service specifications, and allocate finance and human resources for specialised services (early identification, prevention, reintegration, resocialisation, Barnahus, child-friendly investigation and interviewing, registry of psychologists, family mediation, restorative justice, etc.) for all categories of children in contact with the law.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	- Absence of a culture that listens to children's voices and testimonies. - Lack of positive parenting skills. - Existence of peer pressure that promotes violent behaviour.
Strategies	- Develop, fund, and implement programmes for parents, specialists, and children that foster the culture and awareness on child rights. - Develop, fund, and implement positive parenting and non-violent communication programmes for parents. - Develop, fund, and implement programmes for children on rights awareness and non-violent communication.

Violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation against girls, boys, and women

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	Insufficiently shock-responsive CP and GBViE system to respond adequately and efficiently to emergency context.
Strategies	Develop frameworks, regulations, standards, and tools, and allocate resources (human, financial, infrastructure) to increase the shock responsiveness of the CP and GBViE system, based on international and EU minimum standards.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	Limited availability and access to CPiE and GBViE specialised services responding to specific humanitarian needs.
Strategies	Establish specialised CPiE and GBViE services accessible to prevent, respond, and mitigate the risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect of children in emergencies.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	Lack of positive parenting skills and awareness to provide safe, stimulating, non-discriminatory, and caring family environments for the positive nurturing care for young children.
Strategies	Develop, implement, and institutionalise a positive parenting programme nationwide to ensure parents/caregivers improve engagement through the positive nurturing care of young children.

Alina (33), a mother of 3 children, from Bucha is applying for financial assistance from UNICEF at the Social protection service. Oksana Kukharuk, Social protection services specialist, helps Alina fill in the application form correctly.

UNICEF Ukraine provides cash assistance to families with three or more children to support most vulnerable children across Ukraine.

UNICEF's "Spilno" cash assistance programme is possible thanks to funding from the European Union, the Government of Italy, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).



Social Policy

The Ukrainian social protection system is complex, with the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (MoSP) as the main body responsible for developing and implementing public policy in the field of social policy. The main functions of the MoSP are policy-making (regulatory and methodological support). Other relevant government institutions in the social security system include: the Pension Fund of Ukraine (implements public policy on pensions and keeps account of persons who are subject to compulsory state social insurance), the Fund for Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities (provides financial support for activities on the social protection of persons with disabilities and children with disabilities in Ukraine; implements activities on the employment of persons with disabilities, in particular, promoting job creation), the National Social Service of Ukraine (provides social protection for the population, and protects children's rights [this part of its mandate may be taken over by a new government body called the State Service of Ukraine for Children], consists of a central office and territorial authorities, one in each oblast and in the city of Kyiv); the State Service of Ukraine for Children (implements public policy on the protection of children's rights, provides social support for families with children, health improvement and recreation for children, develops family forms of upbringing and adoption [a new body has recently started its activities]).

The Social Insurance Fund of Ukraine was an authorised body in the system of compulsory state social insurance; and, until 2023, the Fund operated in the system. On 1 January 2023, all its functions were transferred to the PFU.

Social Protection System

The system's architecture is multi-faceted, encompassing both contributory and non-contributory schemes, and operates through a combination of social insurance, social assistance, and social services. Social insurance includes programs like pensions and unemployment benefits funded through public investments and contributions from employees and employers. Social assistance, on the other hand, comprises means-tested and categorical benefits aimed at supporting low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Social services involve providing care and support to those in need, such as children in vulnerable situations and elderly care. Over the past years, the system has shown a commendable performance in terms of coverage and responsiveness, although challenges in adequacy, efficiency, and resources allocation have been noted.¹⁹⁷

According to the ILO, effectively 73 per cent of the population were covered by at least one social protection programme before the full-scale war, with especially high coverage among children, mothers with newborns, the elderly, disabled persons, large families, war victims, and veterans.¹⁹⁸

The administrative layer of the social protection system is well adapted to the war situation and allows enrolment in most social protection programmes via multiple digital and non-digital access points, such as the Diia portal (mobile app and website), via postal service, or in person.

On the programme layer, several design tweaks were introduced to improve access to benefits, expand duration of benefits, and relax requirements for re-certification. Social payments that required re-application were prolonged. Moreover, social assistance entitlements were made transferable from one oblast to another.

Ukraine's social assistance programmes cover large parts of the life cycle. Children between 0 to 36 months benefit from a universal child grant. Children above 36 months receive, however, only social assistance if they are part of a single parent household or in a large family.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ PeReHID, 2024

¹⁹⁸ socialprotection.org, 2023

¹⁹⁹ PeReHID, 2024

The Ukrainian social protection system is fragmented. For example, families with children potentially have the right to a total of 54 types of benefits, including 31 types of cash payments, eight social services, and 39 benefits (including 10 related to the payment of taxes and fees). Low-income persons are entitled to 16 types of assistance. Persons with disabilities have the right to almost 100 types of social support: approximately 50 types of benefits, 30 types of cash payments, and 17 types of social services. In addition to a pension, older persons have the right to 37 related benefits, including 15 types of cash payments, and 22 benefits and social services (including nine types of taxes and fees).²⁰⁰

Local communities (hromadas) implement their own local social assistance programmes funded through local revenues. These programmes address local needs according to local political priorities. They expand or top up existing state social assistance programmes, or constitute standalone social assistance programmes that alter the level of benefits the population receives, depending on the location they are in.

Populations living in NGCAs remain entitled to receive benefits from the Ukrainian social protection system. Ukrainian banks and postal service have suspended, however, their operations in NGCAs. Hence, those populations face severe challenges to access their benefits unless they travel to government-controlled areas.²⁰¹

The 2023 IMF-supported concept note “Ukraine: Strengthening the System of Social Support for the Population” provides a comprehensive overview of the various benefits available and mentions specifically the following types of state budget-funded assistance to families with children:

- State assistance at the birth of a child
- One-time “baby package” assistance at the birth of a child
- “Municipal nanny” care service for a child up to three years old
- State aid for adopting a child
- State child support for single parents
- State assistance in connection with maternity
- Temporary state assistance to children whose parents evade payment of alimony, are unable to support a child, or whose place of residence is unknown
- State assistance to a sick child caregiver
- State aid for children under guardianship or custody
- Assistance for children raised in large families
- Social assistance for raising a child in the family of a foster carer
- Payment for the services of a foster carer
- State social assistance for orphans and children deprived of parental care
- Financial assistance to foster parents and adoptive parents for providing social services in family-type children’s homes and foster families
- One-time award to women who have been awarded the honorary title of “Heroine Mother” of Ukraine
- Rehabilitation and recreation for children who need special attention and support
- Subsidy from the state budget to local budgets for design, construction, and repair works; purchase of housing and premises for developing family and other forms of education close to family; support for small group homes and provision of housing for orphans, children deprived of parental care, and persons from their numbers

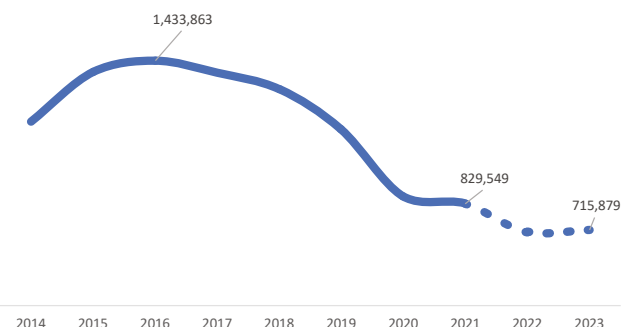
The same concept note provides data on the number of beneficiaries for different types of social assistance / benefits (figures for 2022 and 2023 are targets / estimates).²⁰²

²⁰⁰ [Kyiv School of Economy, 2021](#)

²⁰¹ [PeReHID, 2024](#)

²⁰² [IMF, 2023](#)

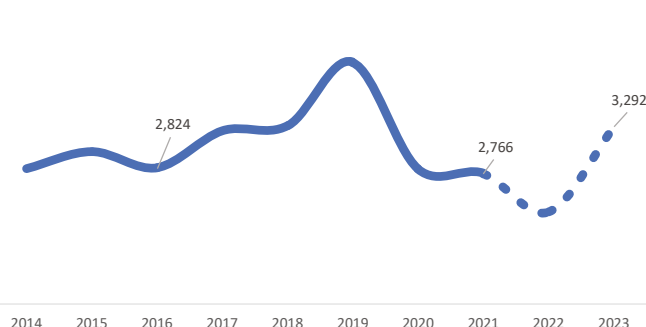
Figure 138. Number of recipients of state assistance at the birth of a child, persons, 2014-2023



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

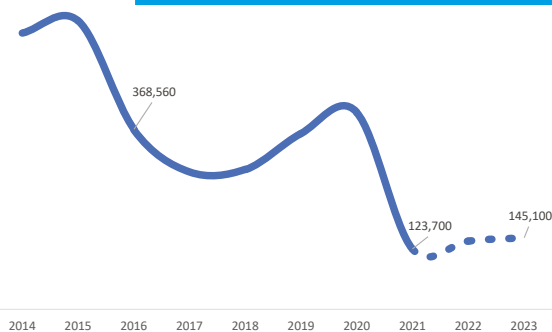
Figure 139. Number of recipients of child adoption assistance, persons



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

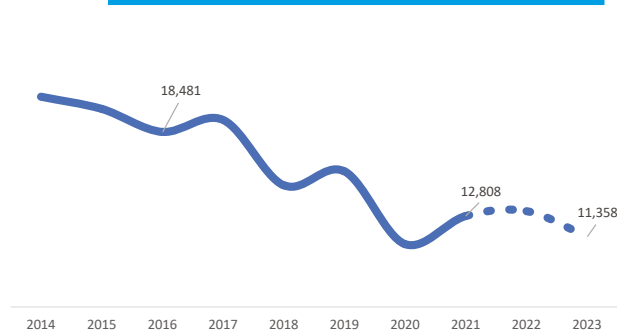
Figure 140. The number of beneficiaries of child support for single parents, persons



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

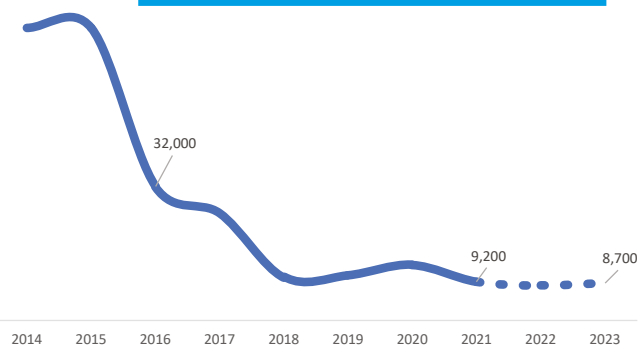
Figure 141. Number of recipients of the maternity assistance (monthly average), persons



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

Figure 142. The number of recipients of temporary assistance for children whose parents avoid paying alimony, are unable to support the child or whose whereabouts are unknown, persons



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

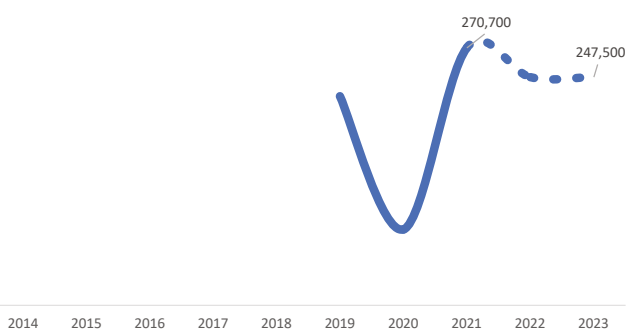
Figure 143. The number of recipients of assistance to a sick child caregiver, persons



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

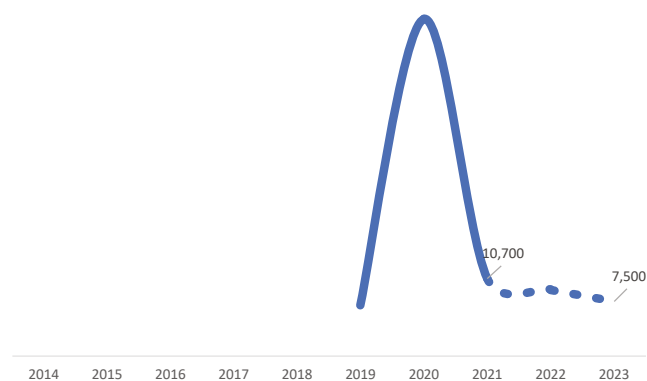
Figure 144. The number of recipients of one-time in-kind assistance "baby package", persons



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

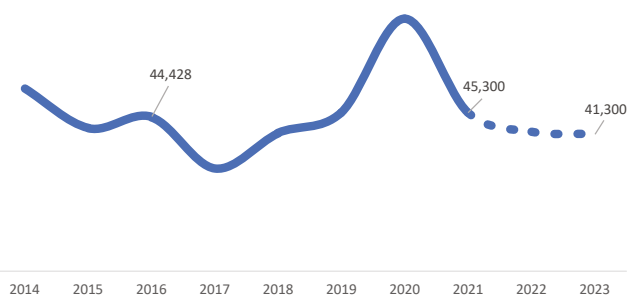
Figure 145. The number of recipients of reimbursement for the "municipal nanny" service for caring for a child up to three years of age, persons



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

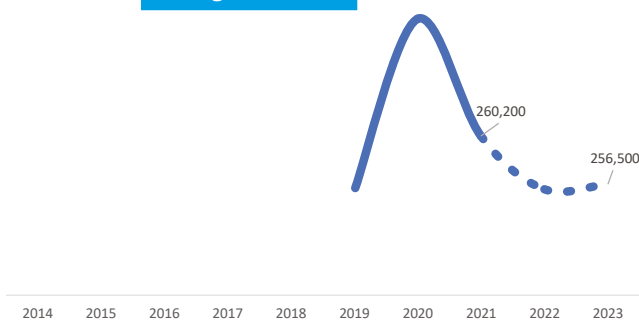
Figure 146. The number of recipients of child support for whom guardianship or custody has been established, persons



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

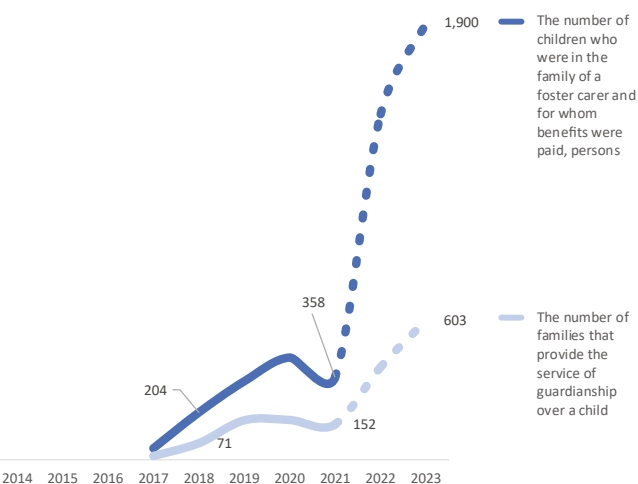
Figure 147. The number of persons receiving assistance for children raised in large families



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

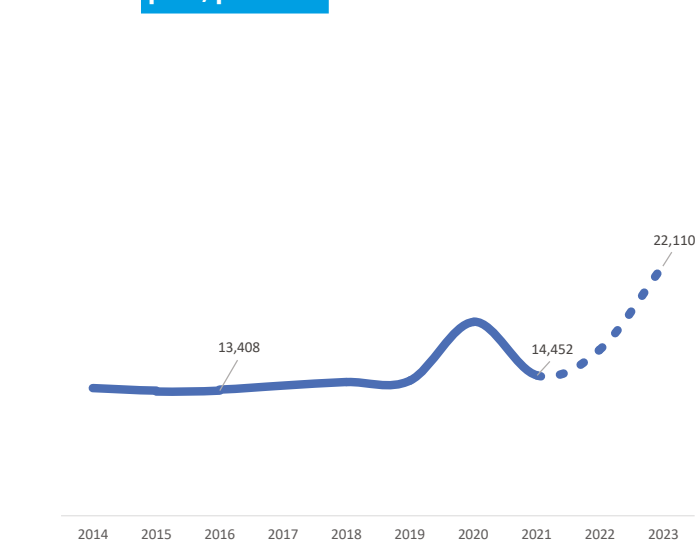
Figure 148. The number of children who were in the family of a foster carer and for whom benefits were paid, number of families that provide the service of guardianship over a child



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

Figure 149. The number of orphans and children deprived of parental care for whom state social assistance has been paid, persons



Source: IMF

2022-2023- projections

Figure 150. The number of beneficiaries of financial support for the provision of social services in family-type children's homes, foster families, individuals

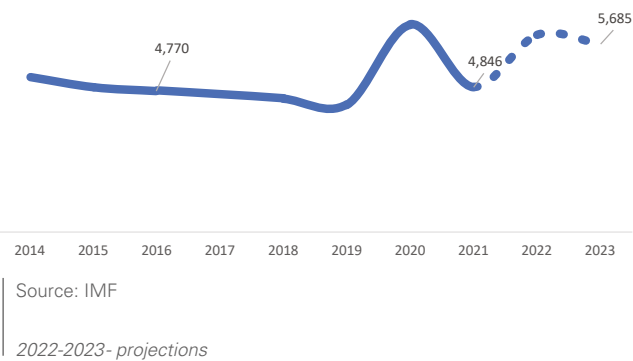
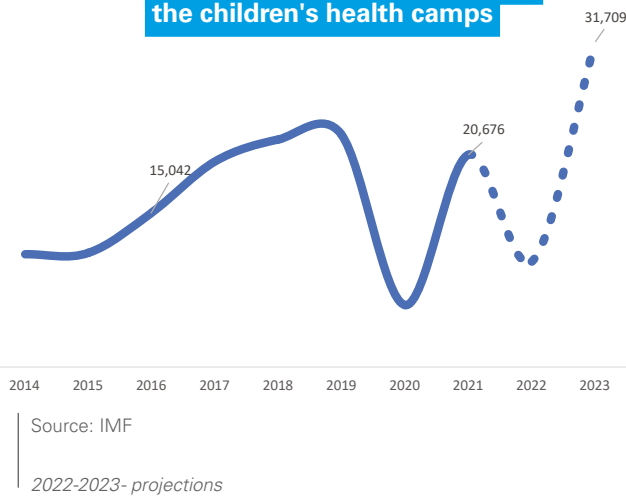
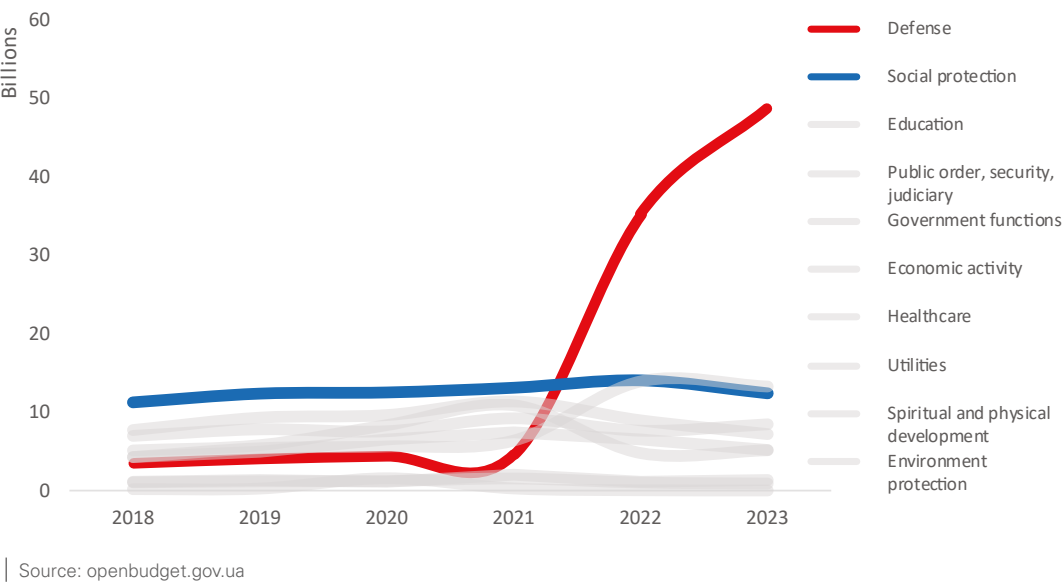


Figure 151. The number of children in need of special attention and support, who have been rehabilitated in the children's health camps



Before the escalation of the war in 2022, social protection spending was relatively high, with social security being the largest state budget item between 2018 and 2021.²⁰³

Figure 152. Consolidated budget expenditures, billions USD, 2018-2023



The war has placed significant pressure on public financing, stretching the Ukrainian government's and households' resources and capacities. As of the end of 2023, it was estimated that 20 per cent of children were left in need of sustained humanitarian and social assistance, with residents affected by active hostilities and the internally displaced experiencing more difficulties in accessing social services.²⁰⁴

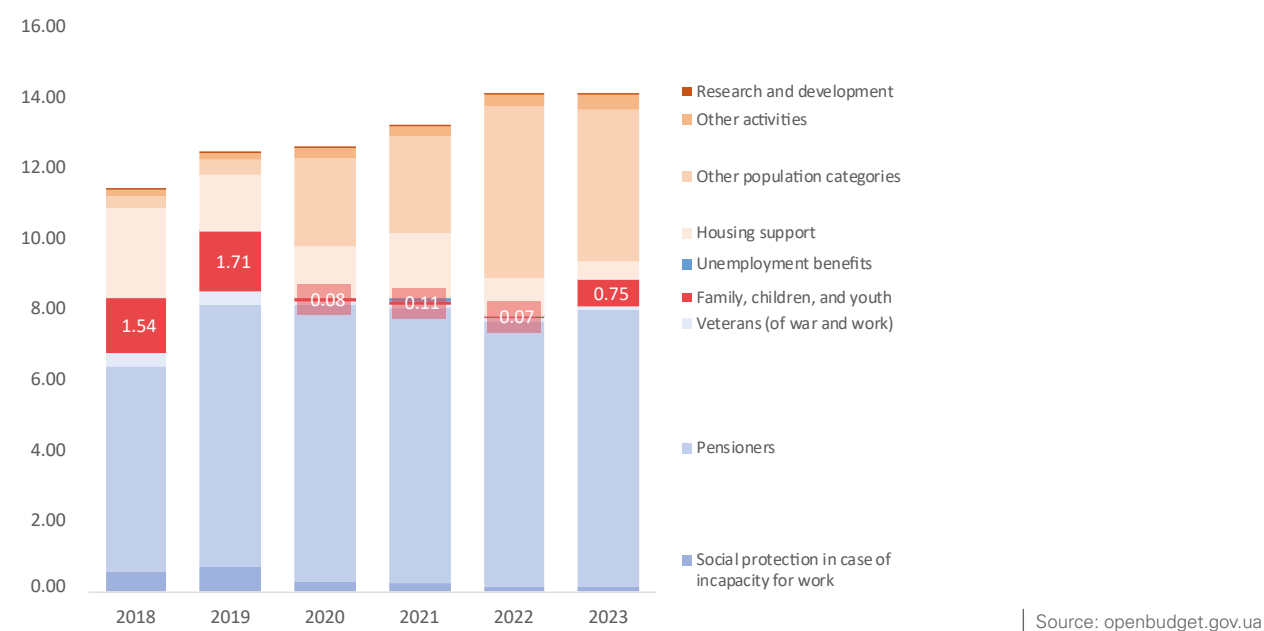
²⁰³ Open Budget, 2024

²⁰⁴ OCHA, 2024

The total cost of war-related damage to the social protection sector is estimated to be \$US0.2 billion.²⁰⁵ Damage in the social protection area mostly consists of destroyed or damaged infrastructure, such as residential care units, sanatoriums, or social service delivery centres. As of December 2023, damage to facilities providing social services increased further, with 161 social protection infrastructure assets damaged or destroyed. The greatest damage is sustained in Odeska (US\$42.3 million) and Donetska (US\$41.4 million) oblasts and Kyiv City (US\$35.8 million).²⁰⁶

With international support, the government has responded to the humanitarian crisis and launched a recovery process in war-affected areas, while increasing social protection spending by 5 per cent between 2021-2023 (in USD equivalent). At the same time, the share of social protection expenditures dropped from almost 20 per cent in 2021 to 11.58 per cent in 2023, primarily due to skyrocketing defence spending.²⁰⁷

Figure 153. Consolidated budget expenditures on social protection, by sub-categories, billions USD, 2018-2023



State budget allocations for 2024 include:

- Social protection of children and families: UAH 276 billion (+3 per cent of 2023) for more than 1.6 million recipients.
- Support for low-income families: UAH 20.2 billion (+30 per cent of 2023) for more than 250,000 families.
- Housing subsidies and benefits to citizens: UAH 49.9 billion (+32 per cent of 2023) for 3.2 million households.
- Deinstitutionalisation and ensuring the education of children in family or close to family settings (transfer to local budgets): UAH 575.3 million (a 57-fold increase from 2023, although only 74 per cent of the 2021 budget allocation).
- The 2024 State Budget Allocations for persons with disabilities are UAH 6.7 billion (+188 per cent of 2023) for more than 85,900 recipients, including 15,160 children with disabilities who will be provided with rehabilitation support.
- Despite the increase in the 2024 budget, local transfers for deinstitutionalisation and education of children in the family or close-to-family settings represent only 74 per cent of the 2021 allocations.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ World Bank, 2024

²⁰⁶ World Bank, 2024

²⁰⁷ Open Budget, 2024

²⁰⁸ UNICEF, 2023

In Ukraine, social services fall under the purview of local communities. However, financial constraints persist, especially after recent tax changes in 2023. Some communities struggle to allocate funds appropriately. Moreover, there's a lack of recognition regarding the significance of social care. According to interviews with key informants, prioritising critical issues, like domestic violence and support for young mothers with children, remains an ongoing challenge.

In different regions and districts, the funding for social services varies significantly. While some cities receive ample resources and adequately finance services, others struggle with limited funds. Unfortunately, the actual impact often falls on clients due to systemic issues stemming from the lack of comprehensive reform in social protection and welfare systems, according to an expert interviewed.

As another expert stated, certain social services are currently underfunded, both at the state and local levels. If a broader perspective is considered, these services are not specifically for individual children but rather for families. One such area is home care, especially for children with specific needs. Third-party childcare can have a greater economic impact. When parents are free to work, and a third party cares for a child, this can allow parents willing to return to the labour market to contribute to the economy and avoid long-term impacts to their careers.

Among other issues, it is worth noting that child support is not linked to the income level of parents, potentially leading to inefficient allocation of budget resources, benefiting those who may not require the support.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ UNICEF, 2023

Youth Participation

According to the 2023 State Budget Distribution,²¹⁰ UAH 41.77 million (US\$1.13 million) of the Ministry of Youth and Sport's budget were allocated to "Budget Programme 3401070: Implementation of state policy measures on youth issues and state support of youth's and children's public organisations" in 2023.

The Passport of Budget Programme 3401070 for 2023²¹¹ was published by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and provides a more detailed breakdown of the programme's budget.

The State Targeted Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine"²¹² for 2021-2025 has a total estimated budget of UAH 2.2 billion (US\$59.59 million) across all five programme years, with UAH 1.45 billion (US\$39.27 million) coming from the national budget, UAH 745.2 million (US\$20.18 million) coming from local budgets, and UAH 17.2 million (US\$466,000) from other sources. The Programme states that "the amount of expenditures necessary for the implementation of the Programme is determined annually, taking into account the capabilities of the state and local budgets when formulating their indicators."

For the year 2023, the Programme estimated a contribution of UAH 288.4 million (US\$7.81 million) from the national budget. According to the Passport of Budget Programme 3401070 for 2023,²¹³ "Youth of Ukraine" has received an allocation of UAH 31.17 million (US\$844,000) in 2023.

The report Impact of War on Youth in Ukraine (2023)²¹⁴ was conducted by Cedos Analytical Centre and Info Sapiens Research Agency, with support from the UNFPA, UNDP, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Ukraine. Findings from the report include:

- Growth in civic engagement. The share of young people engaged in volunteering increased from 20 to 42 per cent. Six per cent who started volunteering for the first time in the last 12 months in 2021. In contrast, in 2022, the number was already 30 per cent. There has also been a significant increase in the proportion of young people who said their life goals were to be useful to their country, from 6 per cent in the previous wave to 37 per cent this year.
- An increase in the share of those who do not want to leave Ukraine. This figure rose from 49 per cent in 2021 to 66 per cent in 2022.
- Unity in a vision of the conditions for peace and the future of Ukraine. Young people unanimously supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine. 86 per cent of respondents identified as absolutely unacceptable the option that 'Ukraine claims only the territory it currently controls,' and 71 per cent also rejected an option of peace in which Ukraine controls the territory as of 23 February 2022. Also, compared to 2021, support has increased significantly for joining NATO (from 59 per cent to 80 per cent) and the EU (from 57 per cent to 85 per cent).

²¹⁰ Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, 2023

²¹¹ Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2023

²¹² Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2021

²¹³ Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2023

²¹⁴ Cedos, 2023

Child Poverty

Child poverty is a significant issue that affects millions of children worldwide. It is measured by considering various factors, such as lack of access to basic necessities like food, sanitation, shelter, healthcare, and education.²¹⁵ Globally, an estimated 333 million children live in extreme poverty, and about 1 billion children are “multidimensionally” poor.²¹⁶

Absolute poverty, as defined by the United Nations, is a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.²¹⁷

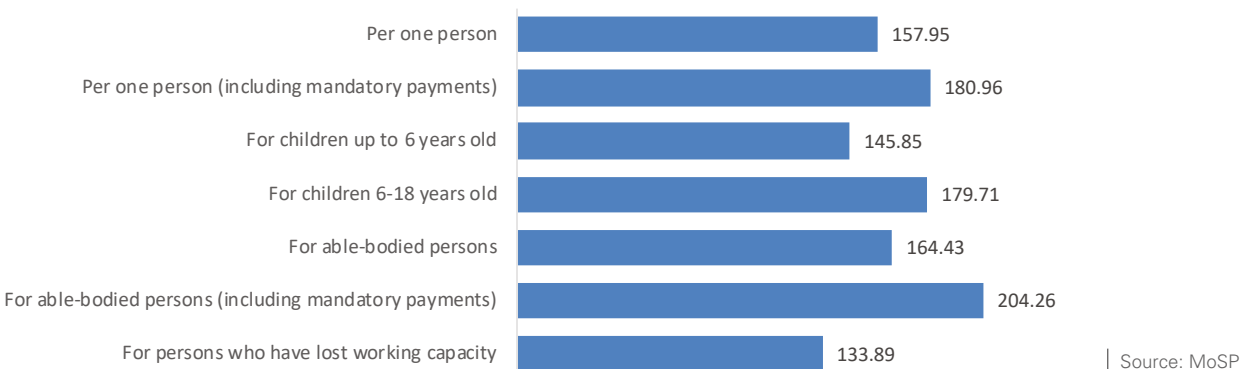
Multidimensional poverty, on the other hand, goes beyond monetary deprivations. It includes access to education and basic infrastructure along with the monetary headcount ratio at the US\$2.15 per day international poverty line. This captures the complexity of poverty that considers dimensions of well-being beyond just monetary poverty.²¹⁸

In Ukraine, child poverty has worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic and an economic and social crisis.²¹⁹ Since 2016, absolute poverty among families with children has decreased. However, the war in Ukraine has led to the emergence of sudden poverty, primarily child poverty.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) are two reinforcing agendas. The most recent CRC recommendations for Ukraine in regards to child poverty include providing universal cash benefits for children and ensuring minimum income security. It also recommends expanding social assistance benefits to all families with children in need, including refugees. Implementing these recommendations could help to ensure that the progress in poverty reduction is sustained, the impact of COVID-19 is mitigated, and the country moves towards progressive realisation of equal opportunities for children.²²⁰

Before the war, in 2021, Ukraine saw its lowest poverty rate with 39 per cent of the population living with expenditures below the actual subsistence minimum.²²¹ The poverty rate in Ukraine was steadily declining, with a relatively slight rise in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.²²²

Figure 154. **Actual monthly subsistence minimum, 2021 average, USD equivalent**



²¹⁵ UNICEF, 2024

²¹⁶ UNICEF, 2024

²¹⁷ UN, 1995

²¹⁸ World Bank, 2024

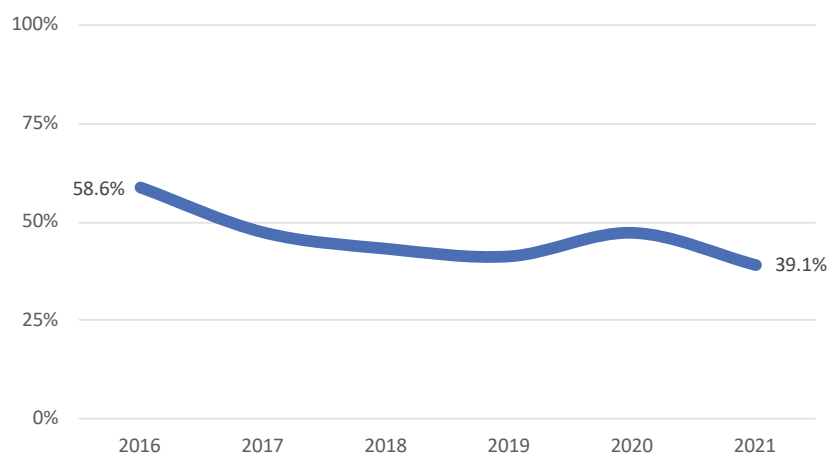
²¹⁹ UNICEF, 2021

²²⁰ UNICEF, 2021

²²¹ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2021

²²² UNICEF, 2023

Figure 155. Percentage of households living with expenditures below the actual subsistence minimum, 2016-2023



Source: IDSS / SSSU

DATA GAP

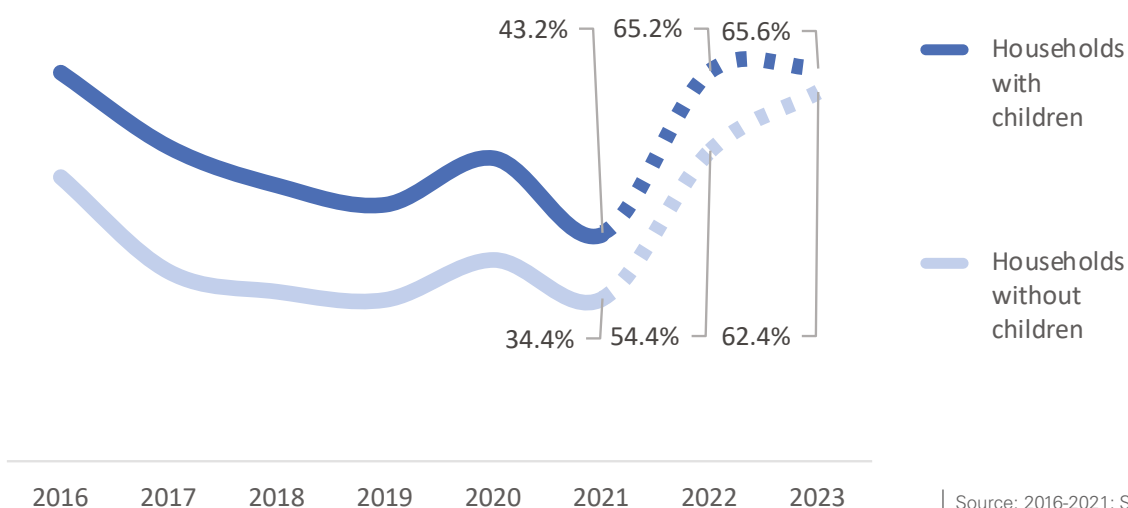
LACK OF RECENT DATA TO MEASURE CHILD POVERTY IN UKRAINE

The main source of data making it possible to measure poverty in Ukraine until the full-scale war were the quarterly household surveys (with a sample of over 8000 households [almost 16,000 individuals]) conducted by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Since 2022, these surveys have been put on hold due to martial law and security limitations on data collection. This has resulted in significant data gaps in many areas, including understanding poverty and child poverty.

UNICEF has responded to this data gap by supporting the Institute for Demography and Social Sciences to carry out estimations of poverty levels for 2022 and 2023. The analysis was based on projected trends for decreases in household incomes and on data from the State Statistics Service's household living conditions survey for 2021. The estimates were made according to the national definition of poverty by the absolute criterion (equivalent expenditure below the actual per capita subsistence minimum estimated at UAH 5,458 per person per month) in 2022.

Households with children were always more vulnerable, accounting for higher proportions of those in poverty.

Figure 156. Forecast of poverty rate in households with and without children for 2022 and 2023 (with expenditure below the actual subsistence minimum as the criterion), %

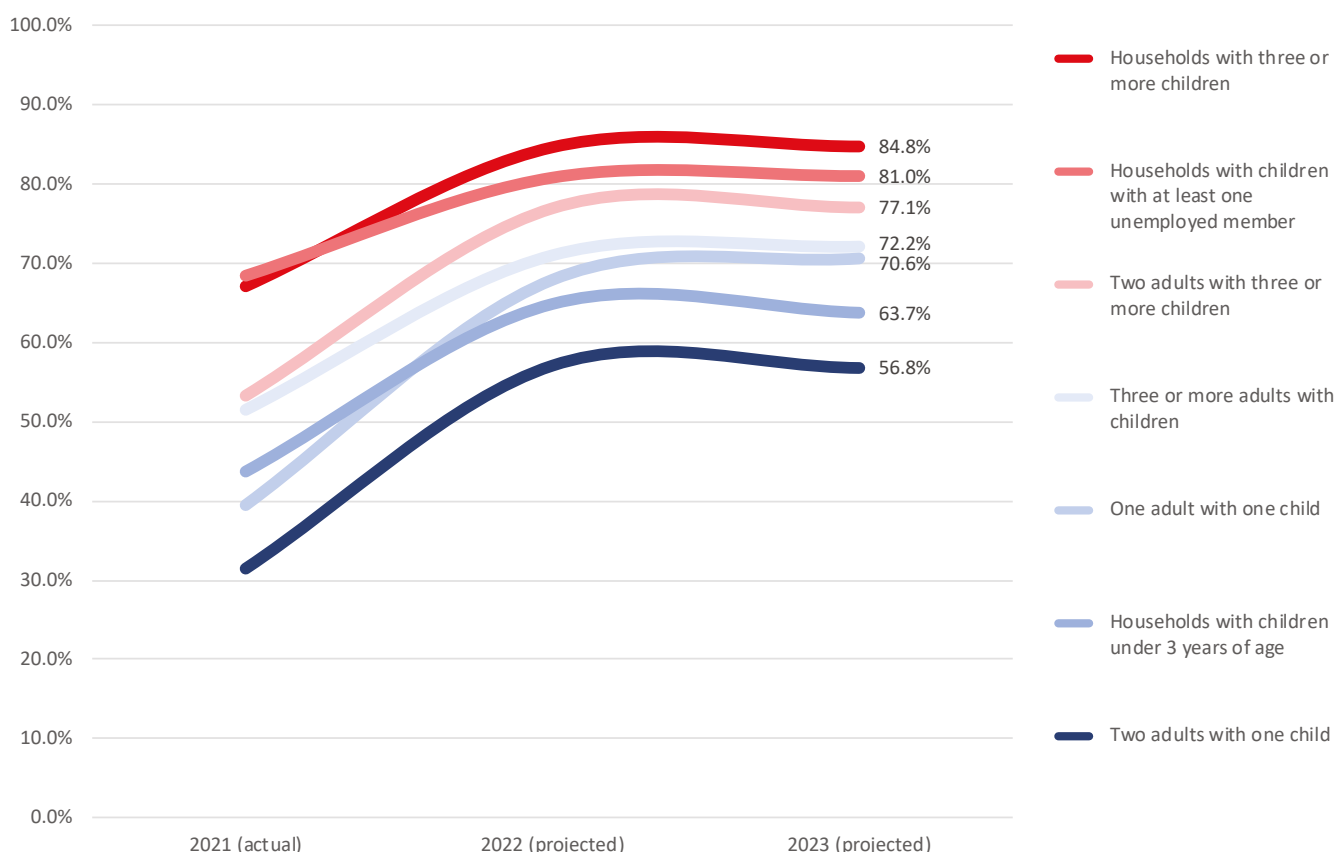


Source: 2016-2021: SSSU; 2022-2023: IDSS

43.2 per cent of households with children belonged to the poor category in 2021, according to IDSS estimates. Their share in 2022 is estimated to have increased to 65.2 per cent, and in 2023 – to 65.6 per cent.

Due to the war, in 2022, large families (with three or more children) have found themselves in the direst situation. The poverty rate among such households was 84.7 per cent; whereas, the figure for households with children with an unemployed member(s) exceeded 80 per cent.

Figure 157. Poverty rate in various types of households with children (2021 – actual data), 2022–2023 – projected estimates), %

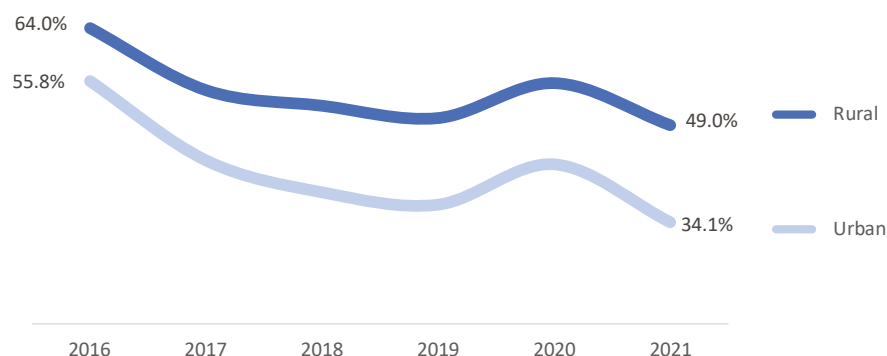


| Source: 2021: SSSU; 2022-2023: IDSS

Households with two adults and one child have had the most sudden drop in their living standard due to the war. According to estimates, their poverty rate has grown from 31.4 per cent in 2021 to 57.1 per cent in 2022, i.e., 1.8 times, with an average rate of change of 1.5 times for households with children.

A stronger than average impact is being felt due to the war by single-parent households. The poverty rate among households consisting of one adult with children was estimated to have grown 1.7 times, from 39.4 per cent in 2021 to 67.9 per cent in 2022.

Despite the continuing pre-war trend of diminishing poverty rates in Ukraine, there were discrepancies in poverty rates between urban and rural settlements, as well as among different regions of Ukraine.

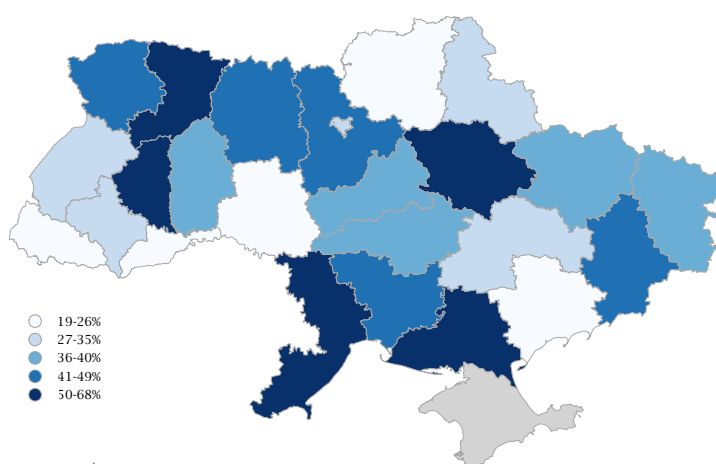
Figure 158. Percentage of households living with expenditures below the actual subsistence minimum (urban/rural), 2016-2021

Source: IDSS / SSSU

Figure 159. Percentage of households living with expenditures below the actual subsistence minimum, by region, 2016-2021

Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Vinnitska	49.4%	38.3%	37.6%	37.1%	39.3%	25.7%
Volynska	68.7%	60.3%	58.8%	46.6%	57.3%	41.2%
Dnipropetrovska	56.6%	45.6%	31.4%	37.2%	38.8%	30.6%
Donetska	62.1%	54.7%	51.5%	38.7%	47.2%	42.1%
Zhytomyrska	65.7%	57.5%	55.8%	50.6%	55.2%	49.6%
Zakarpatska	39.8%	38.9%	38.7%	45.6%	47.1%	26.8%
Zaporizka	61.0%	42.2%	30.6%	35.2%	34.7%	25.4%
Ivano-Frankivska	51.8%	41.4%	36.7%	32.1%	36.5%	31.1%
Kyivska	70.8%	69.1%	57.9%	50.3%	59.6%	46.9%
Kirovohradska	63.9%	45.4%	49.2%	36.1%	48.9%	38.0%
Luhanska	70.5%	52.3%	44.7%	46.1%	42.2%	36.7%
Lvivska	52.1%	37.4%	37.5%	33.5%	48.9%	35.8%
Mykolayivska	53.8%	48.6%	40.8%	39.3%	39.5%	48.9%
Odeska	65.3%	56.9%	53.3%	54.1%	63.7%	57.7%
Poltavska	63.5%	50.8%	47.7%	51.1%	45.5%	51.0%
Rivnenska	84.4%	72.5%	73.7%	59.4%	73.9%	68.4%
Sumska	58.3%	40.8%	46.1%	47.2%	43.9%	32.9%
Ternopil'ska	55.6%	41.5%	49.1%	38.9%	54.1%	55.9%
Kharkivska	63.7%	45.2%	43.1%	48.1%	40.6%	40.0%
Khersonska	70.1%	60.2%	65.5%	63.2%	55.6%	57.7%
Khmelnytska	66.6%	50.6%	52.6%	43.4%	64.4%	40.8%
Cherkaska	53.7%	43.7%	39.5%	43.2%	55.6%	38.9%
Chernivetska	48.3%	36.5%	27.8%	29.4%	45.4%	23.7%
Chernihivska	52.0%	36.0%	23.1%	25.3%	25.6%	19.3%
Kyiv city	39.4%	32.6%	24.7%	22.0%	36.6%	28.2%

Source: IDSS / SSSU

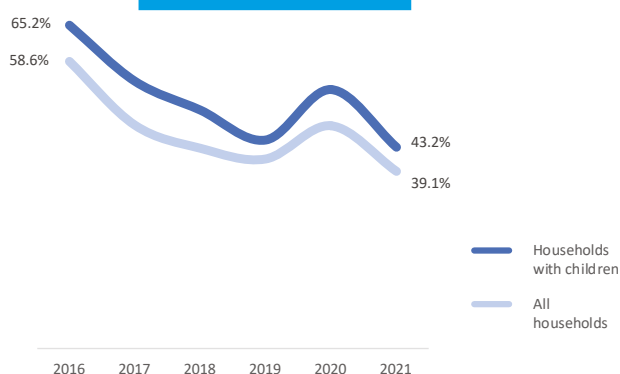
Figure 160. Percentage of households living with expenditures below the actual subsistence minimum, by region, 2021

Source: IDSS / SSSU

Before the escalation of the war, the share of households with expenditures below the actual subsistence minimum was highest in Rivnenska Oblast (68.4%) and lowest in Chernihivska Oblast (19.3%). The strongest decrease in poverty rates between 2016 and 2021 was observed in Zaporizka Oblast (by 35.6 percentage points) and weakest in Ternopil'ska Oblast (-0.3 percentage points, or a slight increase in monetary poverty).

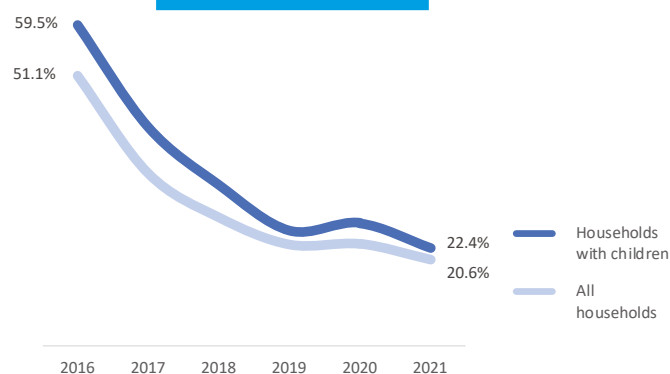
Another measurement of monetary poverty is estimating incomes (not expenditures) below the subsistence minimum. The share of households with incomes below the subsistence minimum was significantly lower compared to expenditures.

Figure 161. **Expenditure below subsistence minimum, 2016-2021**



Source: IDSS / SSSU

Figure 162. **Income below subsistence minimum, 2016-2021**



Source: IDSS / SSSU

The decrease in household income that occurred in 2020 was completely offset in 2021, and poverty indicators returned to their pre-pandemic level (even higher than the 2019 figures).²²³

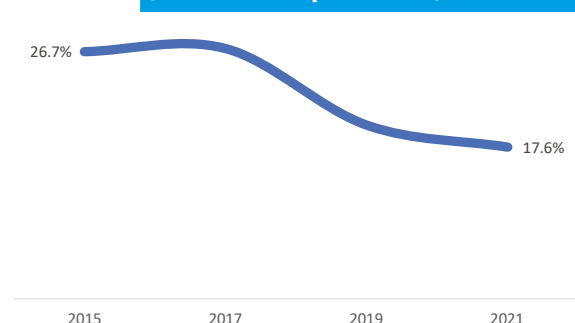
In addition to the monetary dimension of poverty, there is also non-monetary poverty linked to material deprivation. According to earlier Eurostat methodology, material deprivation refers to a state of economic strain and durables defined as the enforced inability (rather than the choice not to do so) to: pay unexpected expenses, afford a one-week annual holiday away from home, eat a meal involving meat, chicken, or fish every second day; adequately heat a dwelling; afford durable goods like a washing machine, colour television, telephone or car; and/or, prevent payment arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills, purchase instalments, or other loan payments).

The material deprivation rate measures the percentage of the population that cannot afford at least three of the following nine items:

1. pay their rent, mortgage, or utility bills
2. keep their home adequately warm
3. face unexpected expenses
4. eat meat or proteins regularly
5. go on holiday
6. a television set
7. a washing machine
8. a car
9. a telephone

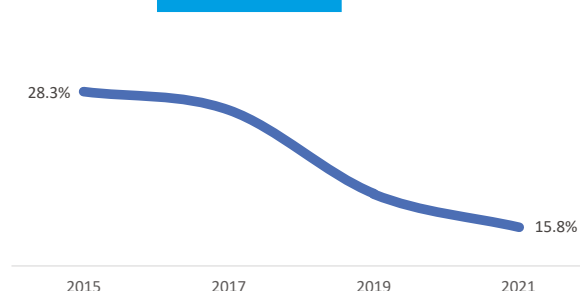
Severe material deprivation is defined as the enforced inability to pay for at least four of the above-mentioned items.²²⁴

Figure 163. **Severe material deprivation rate (4 out of 9 deprivations), all households**



Source: IDSS / SSSU

Figure 164. **Severe material deprivation rate (4 out of 9 deprivations), households with children**



Source: IDSS / SSSU

²²³ UNICEF, 2023

²²⁴ Eurostat, 2021

The non-monetary poverty rate among households in Ukraine (having four of nine attributes of deprivation due to lack of funds) was 17.6 per cent in 2021, 2.1 percentage points down from 2019 (19.7%). The non-monetary poverty rate among households with children was lower in 2021, 3.1 percentage points down from 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic did not appear to affect the non-monetary poverty dynamics.

As an additional indicator of the poverty rate in Ukraine, according to National Bank of Ukraine survey, the share of respondents who need to optimise their savings to afford food grew from 12.2 per cent in 2021 to 19.9 per cent in 2022 and 26.2 per cent in 2023.²²⁵

A significant bottleneck in alleviating child poverty is the lack of family-friendly policies for caregivers in vulnerable families, particularly parents raising children with disabilities, families with multiple children, and single parents. Inadequate support, including a lack of flexible work arrangements and affordable childcare, hinders caregivers' economic participation. Empowering these caregivers is essential to breaking the poverty cycle. Their active engagement in the workforce not only improves their economic well-being but also contributes to broader economic recovery. While some forms of such social assistance exist, their efficiency and effectiveness leave a lot to be desired.

For example, there is a "municipal nanny" programme, which aims to cover the costs of a few hours a week for a nanny or a kindergarten for a child under 3 years old, which would allow parents a moment of relaxation, time to complete certain chores, etc. However, changes were made in 2023 to the criteria for receiving this assistance,²²⁶ limiting it to families with no more than 1 child under 3 years old and families where both parents are employed full-time. This excludes families with a stay-at-home parent or a parent who has lost a job and who could immensely benefit from such assistance, for example, dedicating freed time to job search or requalification.

Another program that is aimed at involving people without employment from low-income families in economic activity is The Helping Hand programme implemented by the Ministry of Social Policy. It provides one-time, interest-free, repayable assistance of up to UAH 100,500 to start or develop a business for a period of 3 years.²²⁷

As a result of the full-scale war, new categories of vulnerable children have emerged, and each subgroup faces specific barriers that contribute to their vulnerability to poverty:

- Children in war-affected households experience profound loss in terms of family members, housing, property, and access to basic services, and bear the brunt of war's impact, leading to increased vulnerability to poverty.
- Children in areas near active hostilities or accessible zones face an elevated risk of poverty due to precarious conditions in their surroundings.
- Children in households deprived of fundamental utility services lack access to electricity, water, and heat supply, amplifying their susceptibility to poverty. They struggle to meet basic needs, further increasing their risk of living in poverty.²²⁸
- Internally displaced children encounter unique challenges that increase the risk of poverty.

In summation, the war caused a "poverty shift" with relatively well-to-do households seen falling into poverty and traditionally vulnerable families (e.g., children with disabilities, three or more children, and single parents) facing worsened deprivations.²²⁹ At the same time, there is a significant lack of recent data and evidence to better understand both monetary and non-monetary poverty in Ukraine, changes brought by war and shocks of such scale, discrepancies by regions, type of settlement, and other important factors.

²²⁵ National Bank of Ukraine, 2023

²²⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2021

²²⁷ Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2023

²²⁸ UNICEF, 2023

²²⁹ UNICEF, 2023

Bottlenecks and Strategies

Social protection system

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	- The needs of children and human capital investments are not sufficiently reflected and prioritised in national and local budgets, local transfers, or external financial contributions, such as the EU Ukraine Fund. - Inadequate regulatory frameworks and capacity to design, enact, and implement integrated social protection policies and programmes (benefits and services) that effectively contribute to poverty reduction and socioeconomic inclusion (e.g., disability, ethnicity, gender), laying out the foundations for a sustainable recovery in line with the EU acquis. - Lack of mechanisms and capacities to coordinate and monitor external support towards a coherent, well-targeted, adequate, and sustainable SP national system in line with best practices and the EU Acquis.
Strategies	- Strengthen child-sensitive budgeting to identify gaps, prioritise children's needs in national and local budgets, and establish shock-responsive financial mechanisms. - Strengthen regulatory frameworks and the capacity to design, enact, and implement evidence-based, inclusive, and gender-transformative social protection legislation and programmes in line with best international standards, EU policies, and benchmarks. - Support legislative and administrative frameworks needed to ensure adequate and effective benefits and care for children with disability. - Establish agile coordination and monitoring mechanisms to oversee external support for the SP System reform and maintenance.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	Insufficient human and financial capacities and delivery mechanisms to implement integrated social protection programmes for providing inclusive, timely, and flexible assistance that effectively contributes to emergency responses, poverty reduction, reintegration of IDPs, inclusion of persons with disabilities, gender equality, and prevention of institutionalisation.
Strategies	Allocate human and financial resources to operationalise recommendations for improved social protection programmes in Ukraine, and enhance delivery mechanisms for providing flexible and shock-responsive social assistance, including for children with disabilities.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	Lack of specialised knowledge and understanding of public budgets and social sector reforms among the general population, caregivers, and other key stakeholders to ensure civic engagement on relevant issues.
Strategies	Disseminate evidence and conduct awareness and engagement campaigns and dialogues on national budget priorities and reforms with the public, including caregivers, the media, NGOs, and CSOs.

Child poverty**Enabling environment**

- Bottlenecks**
- Lack of quality data to regularly measure multidimensional child poverty and deprivations.
 - Lack of family friendly policies for caregivers from vulnerable families to actively engage in economic activities and contribute to economic recovery.
 - Lack of effective and sustainable mechanisms and standards for adolescent and youth participation and engagement on matters that affect them.
 - Children's needs and human capital investments are not sufficiently reflected and prioritised in national and local budgets, local transfers, and external financial contributions, such as the EU Ukraine Fund.

- Strategies**
- Develop tools and methods for continuous data collection, analysis, and monitoring of multidimensional poverty and deprivations.
 - Cost, develop, and adopt family friendly policies (e.g., family leave, affordable and accessible care grants for children with disabilities) enabling caregivers to participate in the labour market and contribute to economic recovery while ensuring children's wellbeing and care.
 - Establish sustainable mechanisms for youth participation on issues that matter to them.
 - Strengthen child-sensitive budgeting to identify gaps and prioritise children's needs in national and local budgets, and establish shock-responsive financial mechanisms.

Supply

- Bottlenecks**
- Lack of human and financial capacity at local levels to plan, finance, implement, and monitor integrated child-sensitive multi-sectorial programmes.
 - Limited capacity of local authorities to design and implement functional and sustainable mechanisms for meaningful youth participation in action and in decision-making on matters that affect them.

- Strategies**
- Strengthen the capacity of local authorities to plan, finance, implement, and monitor integrated child-sensitive programmes.
 - Develop, fund, and implement effective and sustainable standards and scalable models for young people's meaningful participation, anchored in the national youth policy and EU youth strategy.

Demand

- Bottlenecks**
- Lack of specialised knowledge among right holders (adolescents and youth) and duty-bearers (e.g., local authorities) to ensure youth civic engagement on relevant issues.

- Strategies**
- Develop skills and implement awareness and civic-engagement interventions for increased civic engagement of youth.



June 7, 2023, Kherson, Ukraine.

On the morning of 6 June 2023 in Ukraine, the Kakhovka Dam was destroyed. The Kakhovka dam was a power plant on the Dnipro River in Nova Kakhovka, a port city located on the Kakhovka reservoir's southern bank. The flooding caused by the damage of the dam poses a grave risk, as it not only causes further displacement for children who have already been through so much, but also impacts their access to safe water and electricity. This was yet another attack on infrastructure that is vital to the wellbeing of children in Ukraine. Some houses have been destroyed by flooding, and some parts of Kherson city have been flooded. The streets in the central part of the city were flooded up to 5 meters in some places, and the ground floors of buildings were completely submerged in water.

Mykyta, a 14-year-old boy from Kherson, had to climb through his second floor window to enter a rescue boat. He was evacuated by water police to a safer part of the city. Yesterday, the boy, along with his grandmother, grandfather, and dog, found themselves trapped on the fourth floor of their apartment building, surrounded by water.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Before the escalation of the war in 2022, Ukraine had made modest improvements in water quality, wastewater treatment, waste management, and sanitation. As a result of modernisation of urban treatment facilities, expansion of treatment capacities, and introduction of new technologies, the discharge of polluted water was reduced from 875.1 million cubic metres in 2015 to 543.1 million cubic metres in 2021.²³⁰

The war has destroyed or damaged 1,108.5 linear kilometres of water supply networks, 82 water pumping stations, 12 water treatment plants, and 327 linear kms of sewerage networks.

The largest such damage occurred during the Kakhovka Dam destruction in June 2023. The event left up to 1 million people without access to drinking water, impacting 80 settlements in four regions impacted by the resulting flood, causing US\$5.04 billion in recovery and reconstruction costs and massive environmental damage.²³¹

Even before the destruction caused by the war, 40 per cent of national water and sanitation systems were in critical condition due to ageing infrastructure, exacerbating the strain and likelihood of system collapses.²³² The ongoing war has compounded these challenges, resulting in over US\$11.6 billion in sector losses.²³³

By the end of 2023, about 1.7 million children lacked access to safe water and 3.4 million to safe sanitation.²³⁴

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Water Strategy of Ukraine until 2050 in 2022 and approved an operational plan for its implementation until 2024. This Strategy is a crucial document for Ukraine on its way to fulfilling its international obligations in the field of water security, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, and the UN General Assembly's Global Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.²³⁵

The governance of the WASH sector in Ukraine is fragmented, with administrative and legislative gaps that affect the coordination and performance of oblast and regional administrations. At the state level, the following stakeholders are responsible for forming and executing state policies:

- Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine
- Ministry of Health of Ukraine
- Ministry for Communities, Territories, and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine
- Regional Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
- Public Health Centre of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine
- State Environmental Inspectorate of Ukraine
- State Water Resources Agency
- State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection
- National Commission for State Regulation of Energy and Public Utilities

However, local governments are responsible for providing WASH services. Such services at all levels of government are provided through local government communal enterprises.

There were a few changes with ministries and institutions in the WASH sector, such as the merger of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Communities and Territories Development in 2022, or dissolution of the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service of Ukraine in 2017 as the tasks were split between the Centre for Disease

²³⁰ Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, 2022

²³¹ United Nations Ukraine, 2023

²³² World Bank, 2021

²³³ World Bank, 2024

²³⁴ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

²³⁵ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022

Control and Prevention, the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection, and the Labour State Service (under the Ministry of Economy). The mergers and dissolutions necessitate creating new teams.

These frequent shifts in leadership make it difficult to carry out strategic planning and decision-making consistently, hindering the efficient and effective addressing of critical needs in the sector.

Water Supply

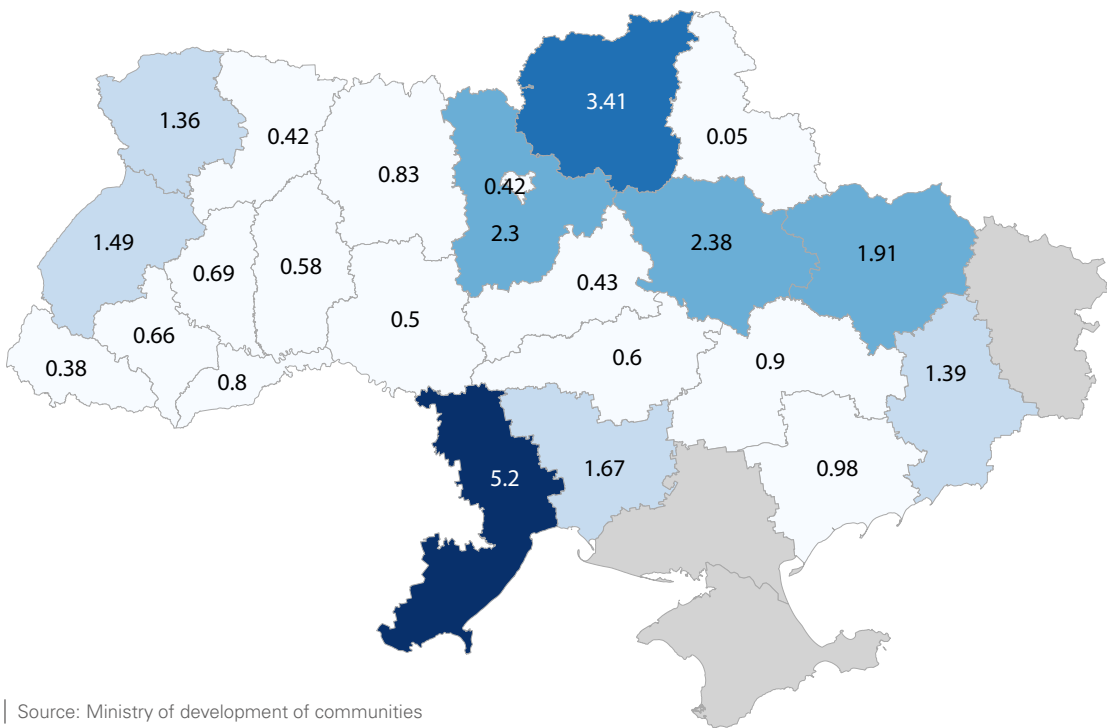
Forty per cent of national water and sanitation system was in critical condition before the full-scale war due to decades of underinvestment and poor maintenance. Now it is on the brink of collapse.²³⁶

According to 2021 data, the total length of water supply networks in 2020 was 121,921 km, including: dilapidated and emergency networks (46,602, or 38%). 991 km (2.1 %) of the need were renewed during the year.²³⁷

In 2020, the average accident rate of the centralised water supply network amounted to 1.83 accidents per 1 km of the network.²³⁸

Regarding regional discrepancies in the pre-war condition of water supply networks, the largest number of accidents was in the Kyiv region with 6.38 accidents, and in Odesa with 4.92 accidents per 1 km of centralised water supply network. The lowest was in the Cherkasy region with 0.04.²³⁹ The average water loss on a national scale is estimated to be approximately 36 per cent.²⁴⁰

Figure 165. **Accidents per 1 km of the network of water supply, 2022** ²⁴¹



Source: Ministry of development of communities

²³⁶ World Bank, 2021

²³⁷ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2021

²³⁸ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2021

²³⁹ Mahats, N. / AGORA International Journal of Economical Sciences, 2023

²⁴⁰ Economic Pravda, 2023

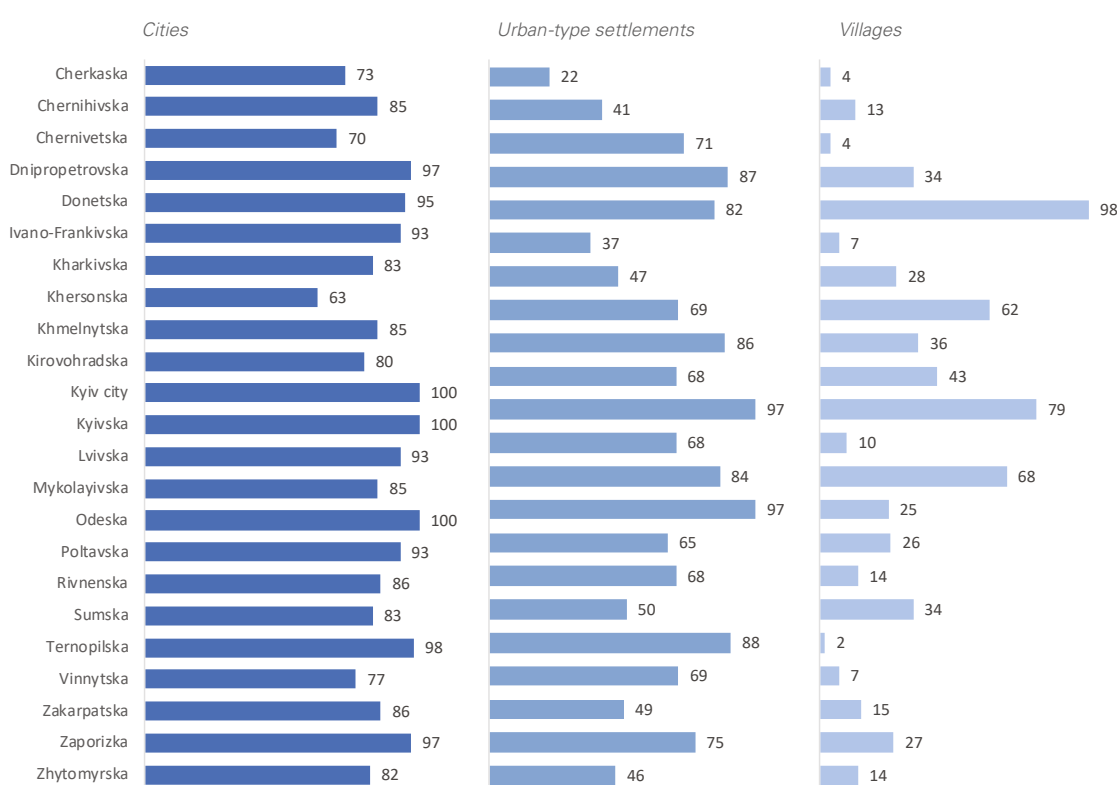
²⁴¹ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

In 2022, the highest percentage of pipes requiring replacement due to their critical condition was in Donetsk (56.8%), Kharkiv (52.8%), Volyn (51.6%), Zaporizhzhia (50.9%), and Kirovohrad (50.7%) Regions. In 11 regions and Kyiv City, this indicator ranged from 30-50 per cent; while in the rest of the regions, it ranged from 13-30 per cent. As a result, on average, 1 accident per km was observed among the water supply network with significant outliers, such as Odesa (5.20 accidents per 1 km), Chernivtsi (3.41), and Kyiv (2.3) Regions.

In 2020, only 70 per cent of the population had access to centralised piped water supply services, leaving 10 million people without piped water supply.²⁴² Figures from 2022 show that approximately 10 million people in Ukraine, approximately 1.7 million children, still lack access to safely managed water services.²⁴³

According to Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, more than 75 per cent of rural areas in Ukraine did not have access to centralised water supply and sanitation systems in 2020-2021. Only 23.5 per cent of rural settlements in Ukraine had access to centralised water supply.²⁴⁴

Figure 166. Provision of the population with centralised water supply, % of the total population, 2022, by type of settlement ²⁴⁵



Source: Ministry of development of communities

There is a significant difference in the use of centralised water supply between urban and rural households, with 74.4 per cent in urban areas compared to 40.3 per cent in rural regions in 2022. In 2022, 87 per cent of population in cities were covered with centralised water supply, while 100 per cent of the population in the cities of Kyiv Region and in Kyiv City was fully supplied with centralised water supply services. About 66 per cent of the population within urban-type settlements, on average per region, are covered with centralised water supply, while the population in villages were only covered by 29 per cent, on average per region. Despite the high water supply coverage of the population in the Donetsk Region, due to active hostilities, 60 per cent of the population within this region now experience interruptions in their 24-hour water supply.²⁴⁶

²⁴² Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

²⁴³ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

²⁴⁴ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

²⁴⁵ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

²⁴⁶ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

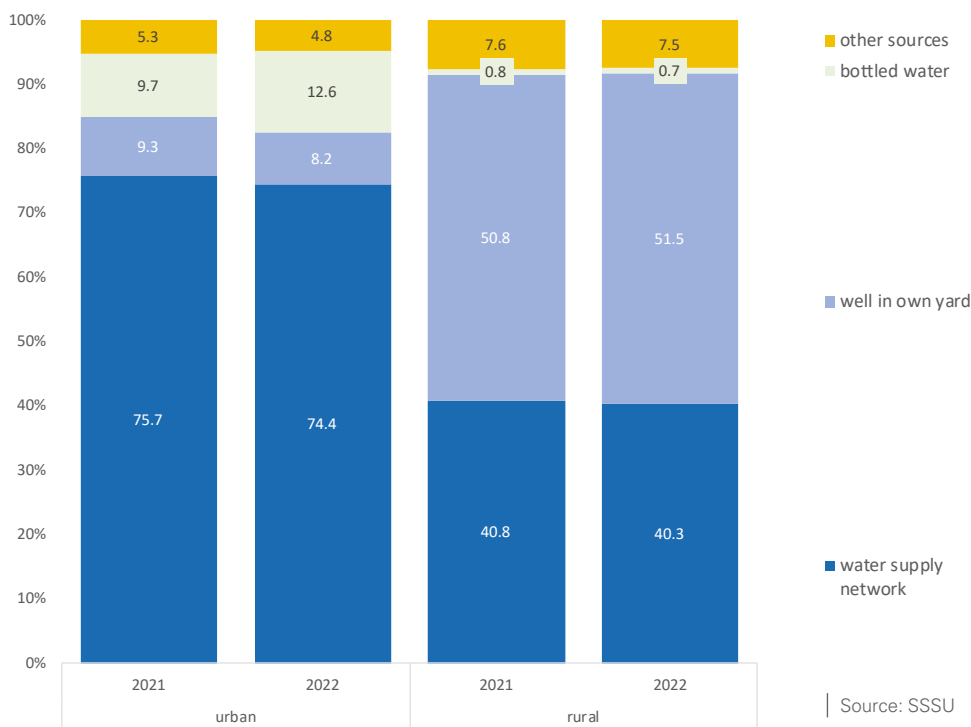
DATA GAP

HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS ON PAUSE

Quarterly household surveys (with a nation-wide representative sample of over 8,000 households and over 16,000 household members) were conducted by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine before the full-scale war. These could be an important source of water usage data disaggregated by types of households, households with children, income, region, type of settlement, etc. Unfortunately, for over two years, these surveys have not been conducted.

In 2022, household water wells play a crucial role in rural areas, comprising 51.5 per cent of total water supply sources, while in urban areas constitute only 8.2 per cent. Other sources include public hand-operated water pumps, public wells, springs, rivers, lakes, ponds, water trucking, bottled water, and miscellaneous sources. These contribute to the diverse water supply options available to Ukrainian households, with a notable share of bottled water in urban households (12.6%).²⁴⁷

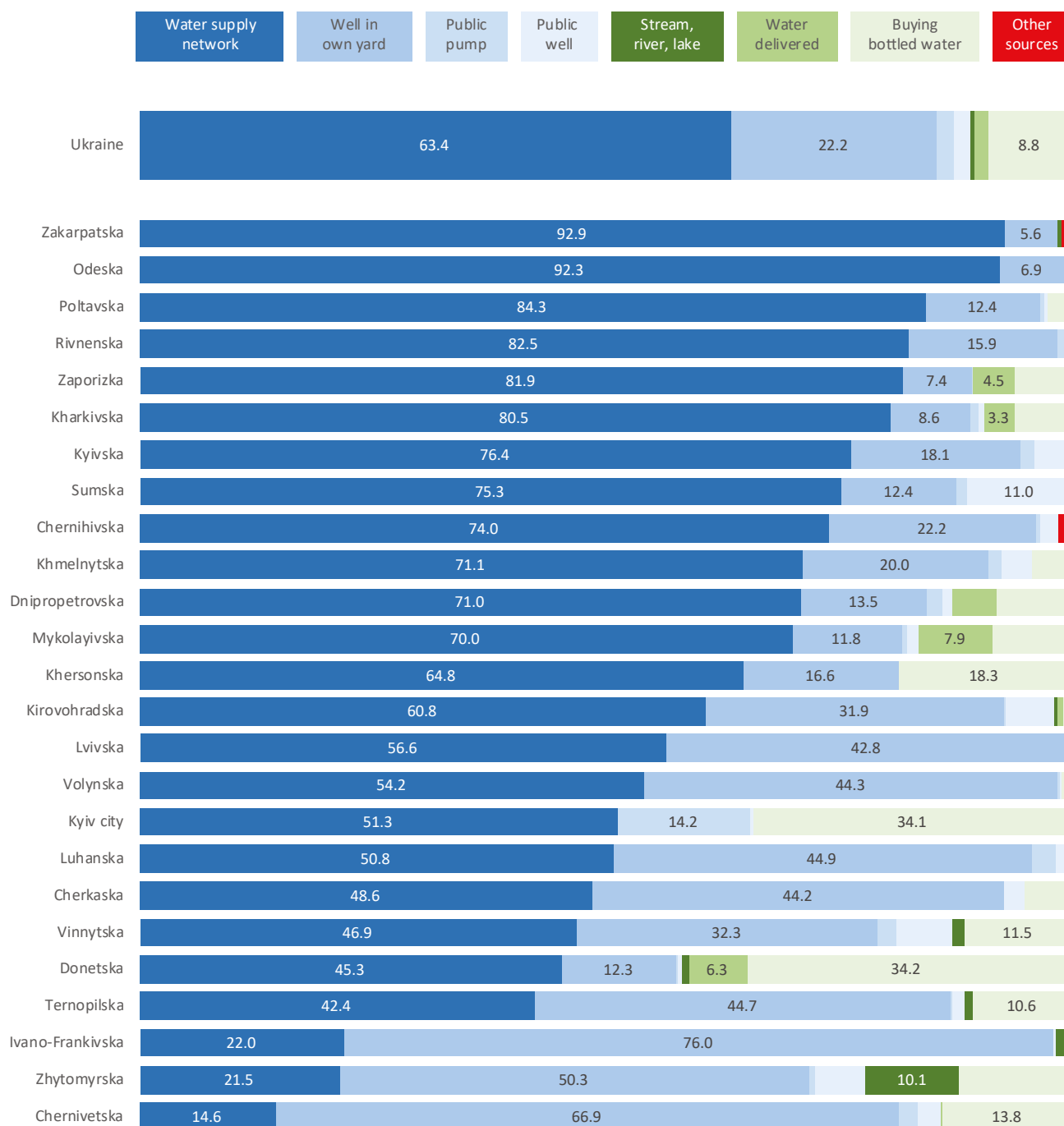
Figure 167. Distribution of households (%) by type of main source of water they use for drinking and cooking, 2021-2022 ²⁴⁸



²⁴⁷ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2022

²⁴⁸ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2022

Figure 168. Distribution of households (%) by type of main source of water they use for drinking and cooking, by region, 2022 ²⁴⁹



Source: SSSU

Regional disparity also persists in terms of water supply sources. In some regions, a high prevalence of water supply from the water network is observed, such as Zakarpatska (93%), Odeska (92%), Poltav'ska (84%), and Rivnenska (82%); while others have a significant share of households supplying water from a well in their own yard, such as Ivano-Frankiv'ska (76%), and Chernivetska (67%).

²⁴⁹ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2022

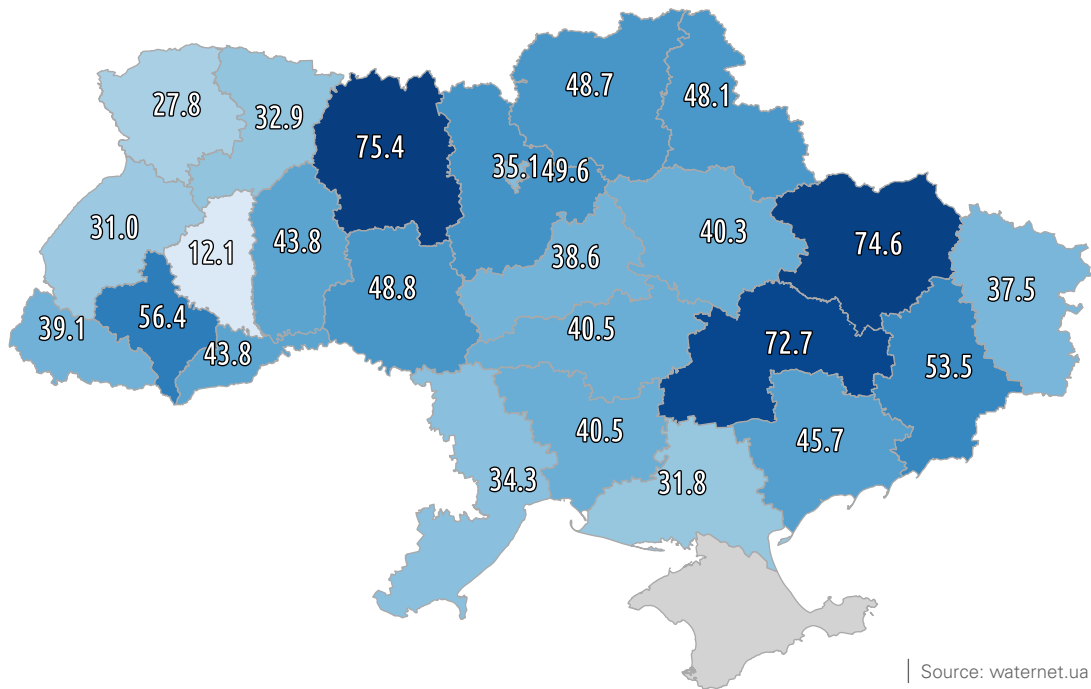
Water quality issues persist with one-third of samples failing national standards and inadequate sewage treatment presenting public health risks, including disease outbreaks such as suspected cholera in Mariupol and a Hepatitis A outbreak in Southern Ukraine.²⁵⁰ According to the Ministry of Ecology, 32.6 per cent of water sources did not meet the sanitary-chemical parameters, and 15.7 per cent did not meet the microbiological parameters.²⁵¹ These percentages are considerably higher compared to some European countries; for example, Spain had a failure rate of only 5.5 per cent in 2022,²⁵² Austria less than 1 per cent in 2017,²⁵³ and Germany less than 0.1 per cent from 2014 to 2016.

In Ukraine, the quality of drinking water is regulated by DSanPiN 2.2.4-171-10;²⁵⁴ there is a modified version of this standard in effect during martial law. This modified standard “softens” certain parameters outlined in the national standard, which could potentially compromise water quality standards during periods of heightened conflict or emergencies.

According to data collected by WaterNet professional association, different regions face different problems with water quality. Problems also depend on the type of water source and type of water supply: centralised supply / vodokanal (an enterprise responsible for managing the water supply, water treatment and wastewater systems for settlements), well, or borehole.²⁵⁵

The key issue for water quality in centralised supply is turbidity (cloudiness or haziness of a fluid caused by large numbers of individual particles that are generally invisible to the naked eye). Over 70 per cent of water probes taken in Zhytomyrska, Kharkivska, and Dnipropetrovska Oblasts were unsatisfactory by this indicator.

Figure 169. Water quality in centralized water supply – turbidity (% of tested samples exceeding the norm for given indicator)



²⁵⁰ Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, 2022

²⁵¹ Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, 2022

²⁵² Ministry of Health of Spain, 2022

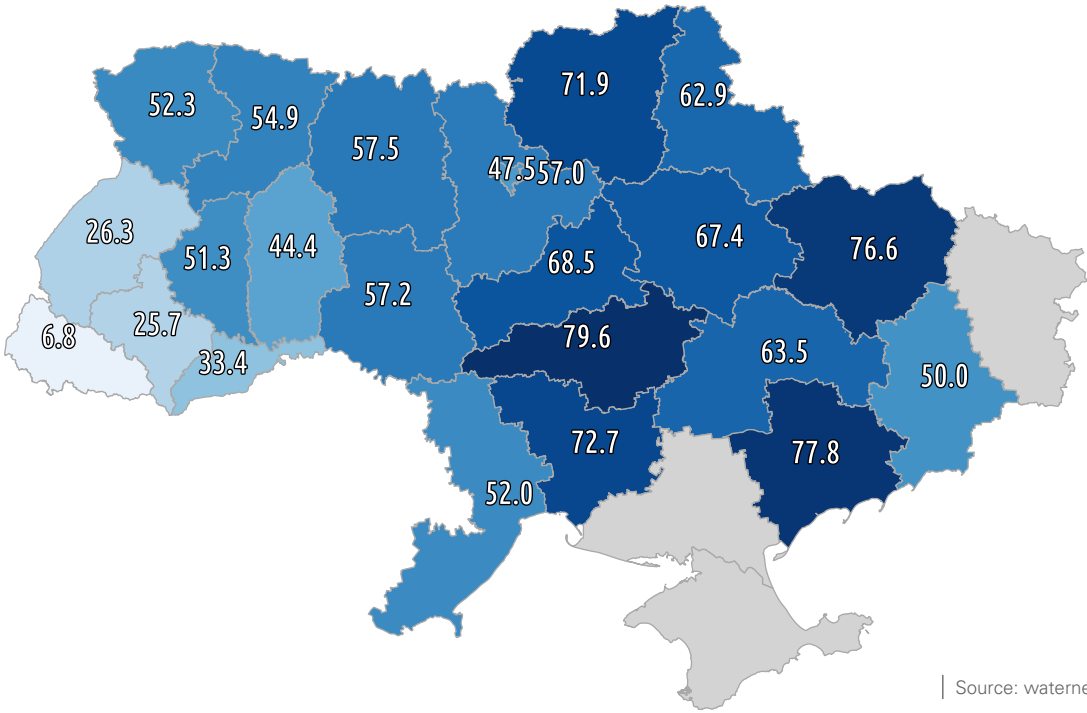
²⁵³ OECD, 2018

²⁵⁴ Ministry of Health of Ukraine, 2010

²⁵⁵ WaterNet, 2024

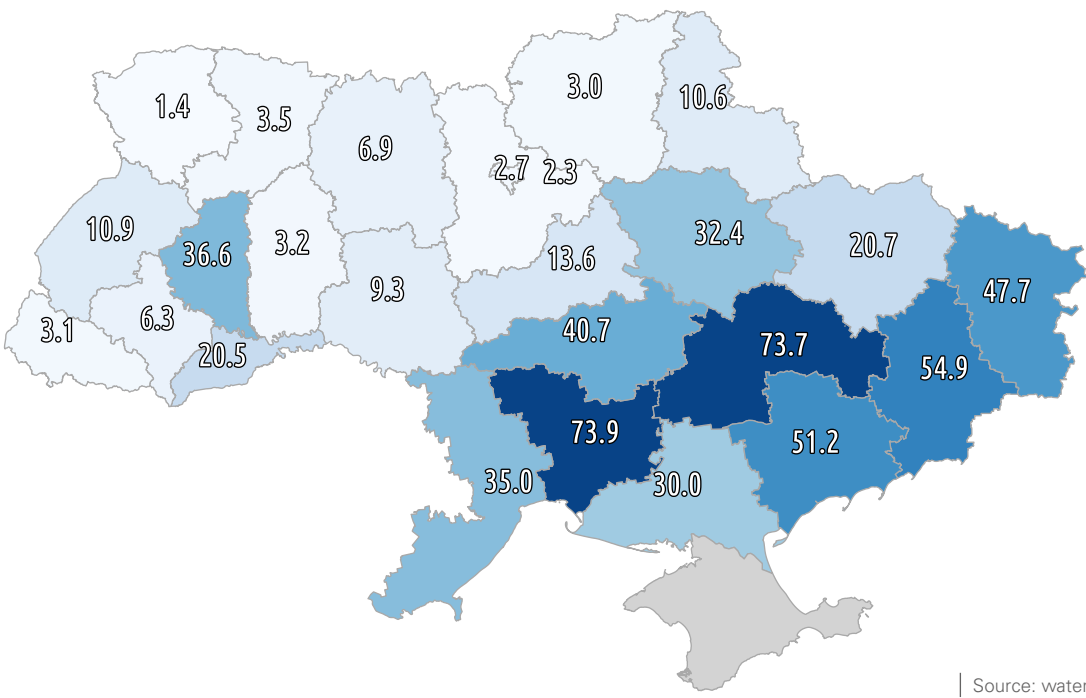
For water samples taken from wells, contamination with nitrates (originating mostly from intensive agriculture) is a serious problem. For example, almost 80 per cent of probes taken from wells in Kirovohradska Oblast had nitrates exceeding the norm.

Figure 170. Water quality in wells – nitrates (% of tested samples exceeding the norm for given indicator)



For water supplied from boreholes, a widespread issue is increased salinity. This water quality problem is characteristic for southern regions of Ukraine, particularly Mykolayivska and Dnipropetrovaska Oblasts.

Figure 171. Water quality in boreholes – salinity (% of tested samples exceeding the norm for given indicator)



DATA GAP

LACK OF SYSTEMATIC AND REPRESENTATIVE WATER SAMPLING

The current data available (including that collected by private companies and professional associations) provide important insights to understanding key issues with data quality in Ukraine. At the same time, the number of samples collected in different regions for different indicators of data quality vary greatly, which results in representativeness issues. For example, with over 10,000 samples for turbidity of centrally supplied water, almost half (4,800) of those were taken in Kyiv City alone, while about 350 samples were available from Kharkivska Oblast, and only 37 samples from Kirovohradska Oblast. The availability of more systematic and representative data on water quality is essential for understanding the needs and continuing and targeted support – both by the national government and the donor community.

After the start of the full-scale war, numerous water supply and treatment objects were damaged or destroyed (June 2022): 10 water treatment facilities, 38 water pumping stations, 816 km of water supply networks; 24 wells, 5 laboratories, 16 clean water tanks, and 32 water towers.²⁵⁶

The war in Ukraine has caused extensive damage to crucial water supply infrastructure. Preliminary estimates show that 1,108.5 linear kilometres of water supply networks have been destroyed, and 82 water pumping stations are impaired. Notably, 13 of these stations were located in Luhansk, 11 in Donetsk, and 52 in the Kharkiv area. Additionally, 40 wells, primarily located in the Kharkiv Region, have been destroyed or damaged, aggravating the challenges of ensuring reliable water access. Furthermore, the facilities responsible for analysing water supply in the regions have been destroyed or damaged, with preliminary estimates indicating that three laboratories were affected.²⁵⁷

In Mykolaiv, the population was left without a centralised water supply for more than a month in 2022. Water was supplied with interruptions from an alternative source later, which had excessive concentrations of chlorides, sulphates, and other mineral salts even after treatment.²⁵⁸

Kakhovka Dam disaster

The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam on 6 June 2023 is considered as one of the largest environmental and humanitarian manmade disasters in recent history. The impact zone of influence for this tragedy covered at least 5,000 square kilometres, either flooded or drained. According to the Kakhovka Dam Disaster Post Disaster Needs Assessment by the World Bank, direct damage to infrastructure and assets is estimated at US\$2.79 billion and losses are estimated at over US\$11 billion, with the lasting environmental impact being the biggest concern.²⁵⁹

The abrupt release of over 18 cubic kilometres of water within a four-day period resulted in the loss of more than 14.7 cubic kilometres of water contained in the dam, affecting 80 settlements across four oblasts—Kherson, Mykolaiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zaporizhzhia. This catastrophic event directly impacted 100,000 residents, causing a loss of drinking water access for up to a million people, while 140,000 were left without electricity.²⁶⁰

The water supply and sanitation systems in the areas were affected. These areas were already facing shortcomings before the tragedy, and suffered additional damage (US\$65.92 million) and losses (US\$82.82 million) due to the flooding. The water and sanitation recovery and reconstruction efforts in both downstream flooded areas and upstream regions with water shortages are estimated to cost US\$700.92 million. Municipal facilities and equipment sustained damages amounting to US\$127.8 million. Additionally, the costs for debris

²⁵⁶ Mahats, N. / AGORA International Journal of Economical Sciences, 2023

²⁵⁷ Kyiv School of Economics, 2023

²⁵⁸ Nature, 2023

²⁵⁹ United Nations Ukraine, 2023

²⁶⁰ United Nations Ukraine, 2023

removal and revenue losses of waste management entities amount to US\$6.2 million. The broader recovery needs of Municipal Services and Community Infrastructure are estimated at US\$292.6 million, highlighting the significant resources required to rehabilitate and strengthen the WASH sector in the aftermath of this devastating event.

Also, water costs have risen sharply, while demand and affordability have declined drastically.²⁶¹

Energy is the second biggest cost component (at around 30 per cent) for Ukrainian water supply and sanitation utilities, after staff costs. Meanwhile, with most municipalities in Ukraine having centralised heating systems, water supply is an integral component is heating service delivery. Disruption in any of these services have critical impact on the others. Significant damages attributed to war are greatly adding to these related struggles to provide essential services in extremely difficult circumstances. Ukraine continues to face mass drone and missile attacks, and WASH and related heating and electrical infrastructure have been damaged or destroyed. According to the Vodokanal Association, the financial debt of the water supply sector to the energy sector in Ukraine is UAH 7.9 billion. Of this, UAH 3.5 billion was accrued by VodaDonbasu and UAH 1.8 billion by Kharkiv Vodokanal.²⁶²

Public awareness and access to water supply remain ambiguous, as 39 per cent of respondents in a study confirmed reducing household water consumption. It is uncertain whether this reduction reflects heightened ecological awareness or is merely a consequence of limited access to water supply.²⁶³

Sanitation and Wastewater Treatment

According to MinRegion data from 2021, the centralised sanitation networks extended 46,602 km in 2020, including 16618 km (35.6%) dilapidated and emergency; only 186 km (1.1 %) of the need were renewed during the year.²⁶⁴

In 2020, the average accident rate of the centralised sanitation network amounted to 1.54 accidents per 1 km of the network.²⁶⁵

Considering the different levels of wear in the sanitation system, the largest number of accidents was in the Kyiv Region at 6.0 accidents per 1 km of the network and Kharkiv with 4.3 accidents per 1 km; the lowest was in the Kirovohrad Region with 0.09.

²⁶¹ Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, 2022

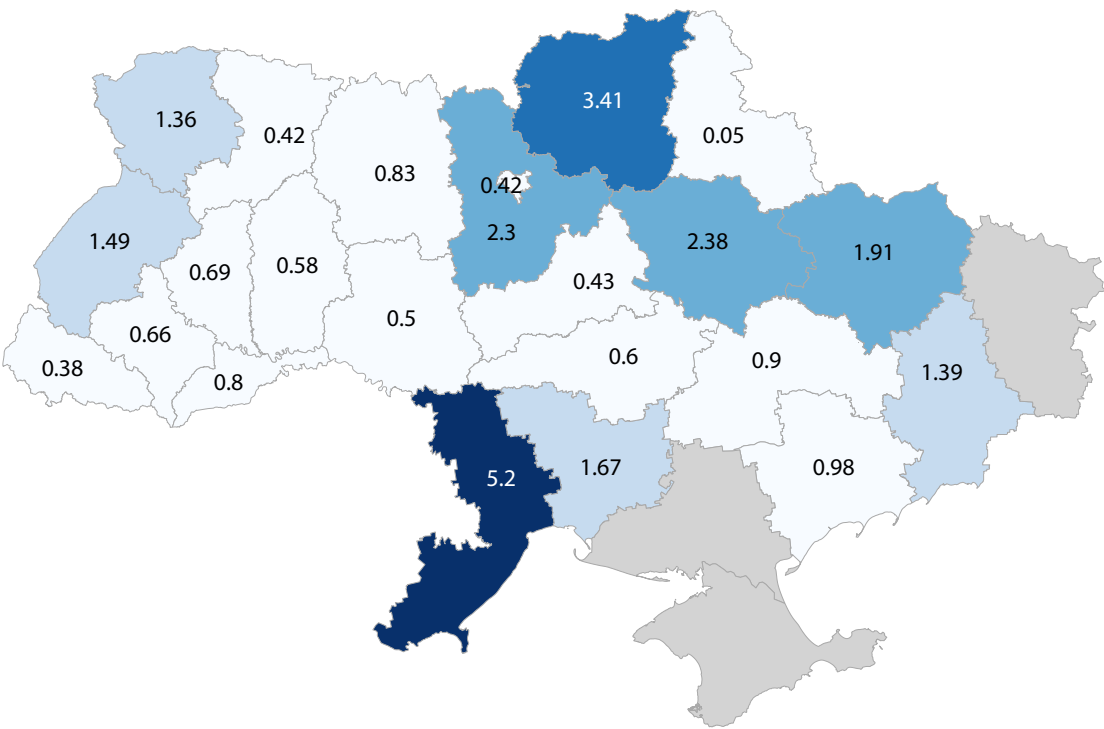
²⁶² UkrVodokanalEkologiya, 2024

²⁶³ Society and Environment RAC, 2023

²⁶⁴ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2021

²⁶⁵ Mahats, N. / AGORA International Journal of Economical Sciences, 2023

Figure 172. **Accidents on 1 km of the centralised wastewater network, 2022** ²⁶⁶



Source: Ministry of development of communities

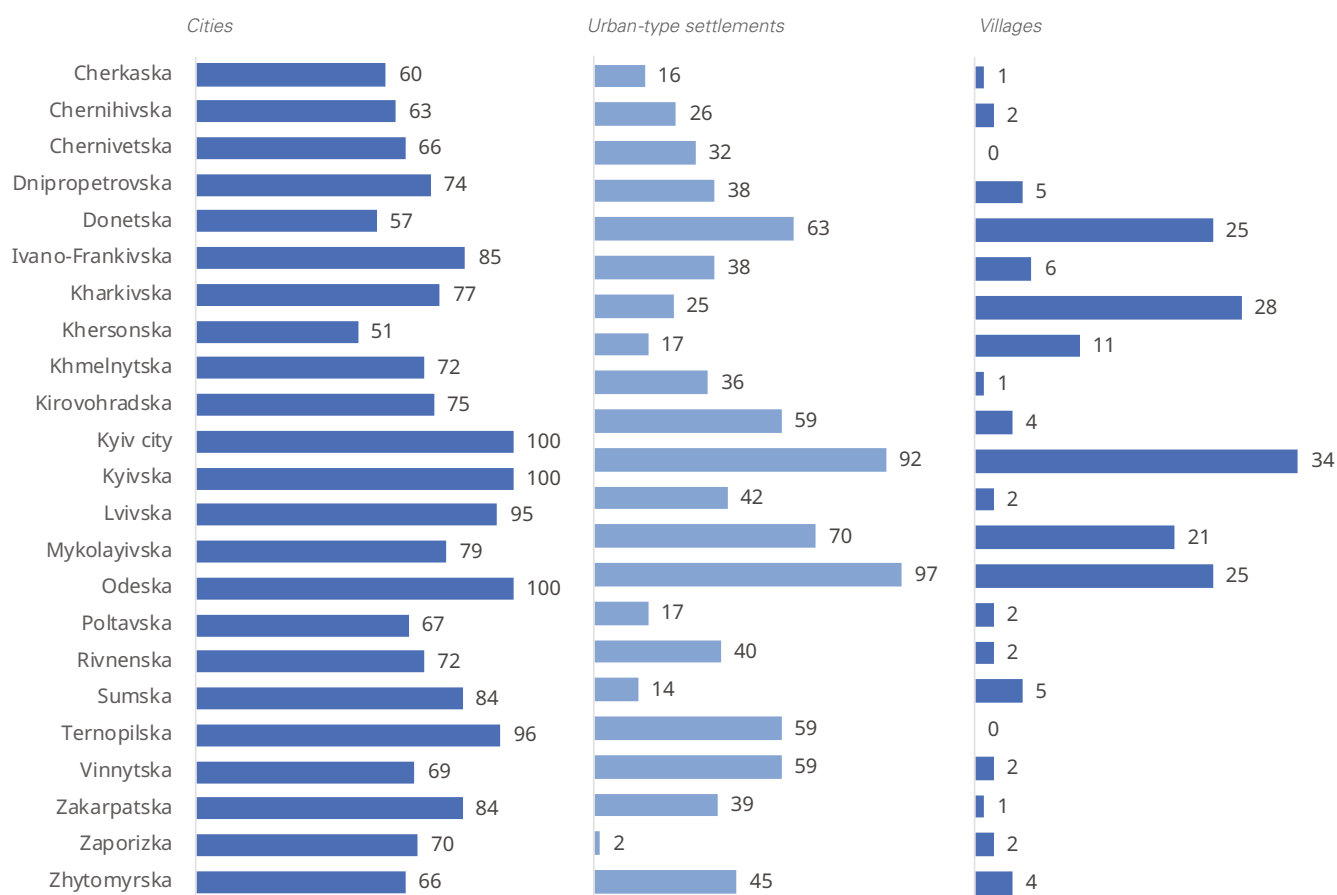
The situation with centralised sewerage in Ukraine is diversified. In 2022, 100 per cent population coverage was only in Kyiv City, Kyiv and Odesa regions. On average, 76 per cent of the population of Ukrainian cities is provided with centralised sewerage. The worst situation is in the cities in Donetsk and Kherson regions, where only 57 per cent and 51 per cent of the population, respectively, have access to the service there.

According to Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, in 2020-2021, more than 75 per cent of rural areas in Ukraine did not have access to centralised water supply and sanitation systems. In 2021, only 1.45 per cent of rural settlements has access to centralised sanitation. About 50 per cent of the population, or 20 million people, were without centralised wastewater services.²⁶⁷

The level of centralised water drainage in villages and urban-type settlements is much lower; only 7 per cent and 42 per cent of residents, respectively, are provided with the service. The worst situation is in villages of the Ternopil and Chernivtsi Regions with an extremely low percentage of population covered (<1%). In rural areas, private sewage systems are still in common usage (e.g., septic tanks, etc.).

²⁶⁶ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

²⁶⁷ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2023

Figure 173. Provision of the population with centralised sewerage % of the total population, 2022 268

Source: Ministry of development of communities

Even prior to the full-scale war, urban sewage management faced challenges, with 33 per cent of sewage undergoing treatment, according to the Danube Water Program.²⁶⁹ This is a stark contrast to the 82 per cent reported by the European Commission.²⁷⁰ Comparisons with other countries, such as the Czech Republic (at 75 per cent), Poland (at 87 per cent), and the Netherlands (achieving 100 per cent), emphasise the need for enhanced sewage treatment infrastructure in urban areas in Ukraine.

As of 2022, a substantial portion of sewage treatment facilities require urgent upgrades, with 59 per cent of units in need of reconstruction.²⁷¹ However, only a small fraction of these facilities have undergone any form of reconstruction. This sluggish progress is compounded by insufficient funding and worsened by ongoing hostilities. Indeed, after the start of the full-scale war, numerous objects were damaged or destroyed (June 2022): 14 wastewater treatment facilities; 41 sewage pumping stations; 241.6 km of sanitation networks.²⁷² Additionally, the sector faces frequent accidents and disruptions in the centralised wastewater network, particularly in regions such as Kyiv, Donetsk, Chernivtsi, and Odesa.

Moreover, significant challenges persist due to deficient regulatory and governance frameworks that inhibit quality wastewater treatment. Recent efforts have been made to address these issues, including the approval of the Water Strategy of Ukraine until 2050 and the adoption of legislation such as the Law of Ukraine

²⁶⁸ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2023

²⁶⁹ IBRD / World Bank, 2015

²⁷⁰ Water Information System for Europe, 2024

²⁷¹ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2023

²⁷² Mahats, N. / AGORA International Journal of Economical Sciences, 2023

“On Wastewater Disposal in Settlements” in 2023. Despite this, governance remains fragmented, and regulatory deficiencies persist. Although multiple stakeholders are responsible for forming and executing state policies at the national level, local governments are tasked with providing WASH services, leading to inconsistencies in implementation and enforcement. Utility ownership issues further complicate matters, with excessive fragmentation stemming from the transfer of communal enterprises to local governments, leaving municipal authorities ill-prepared to manage WSS systems effectively. The governance framework continues to suffer from administrative and legislative shortcomings, resulting in limited coordination and efficiency between national and local administration efforts.

Regulatory deficiencies persist, with the sector regulatory body, National Energy and Utilities Regulatory Commission (NEURC), lacking independence and the adequate tools to incentivise investments in public utilities. Tariff approval processes remain outdated and lack transparency, resulting in tariffs that do not cover costs, hindering investments in wastewater treatment infrastructure. Inadequate national policies combined with inconsistent governance and regulatory approaches undermine efforts to improve wastewater treatment and service delivery.

Against this background, work in this area requires the introduction of appropriate organisational, economic, engineering, technical, and technological measures, and the creation of appropriate conditions and mechanisms of influence at the levels of the state, local governments, NGOs, and enterprises. Thus, in accordance with Article 12 of the Law, local governments must adopt the following local rules for:

- acceptance of wastewater into the centralised sanitation system of a settlement;
- the collection, transportation, and treatment of wastewater in a settlement from facilities that are not connected to centralised sanitation systems;
- acceptance of surface wastewater into the system of drainage of surface wastewater from a settlement.²⁷³

Overall, Ukraine’s sanitation services sector faces significant challenges stemming from poor infrastructure and management capacities. The escalation of the war has further exacerbated the situation, causing direct damage to infrastructure and service provision, as well as economic losses, exceeding 2.2 billion USD.²⁷⁴ A high percentages of critical pipe replacements occurred in various regions, indicating the widespread deterioration of water supply networks, with aging infrastructure dating back to the 1970s-80s. These challenges underscore the pressing need for substantial investment and effective management to ensure efficient and equitable sanitation services for all in Ukraine.

WASH in Institutions

According to the HeRAMS Ukraine Baseline Report 2023, out of 2,182 surveyed healthcare facilities, 96 per cent have water available in their institutions, 4 per cent – partly available, and <1 per cent – not available. The main causes of unavailability were: lack of equipment (79%), lack of supplies (42%), lack of financial resources (33%), lack of staff (4%), and lack of training (2%).

The main sources of water in healthcare facilities were: piped supply network (91%), tube well/ borehole (20%), protected dug well (7%), protected spring (4%), and tanker truck (3%). Up to 1 per cent also indicated unprotected dug well, surface water, and rain water as water sources in healthcare facilities.²⁷⁵

In 2022-2023, the worst situations with water availability in healthcare facilities were in Donetska, Khersonska, Zaporizka, Odeska, Mykolaivska, Kharkivska, and Kyivska Oblasts – the ones that suffered most from the war.

²⁷³ [Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023](#)

²⁷⁴ [World Bank, 2023](#)

²⁷⁵ [WHO, 2021](#)

In the study year of 2022-2023, there were a total of 12,425 of secondary schools in Ukraine, according to the data of Institute of Educational Analytics. It was reported that 97 per cent of all schools (12,003) have running water (centralised water supply), 50% have hot water (6,251), and 97% (12,037) have centralised sewage. In rural areas, the share of schools with centralised water supply is slightly less (95%) than in urban areas (98%). Similarly, an insignificant discrepancy was recorded for the availability of centralised sewage (98% in urban schools, 96% in rural schools). Region-wise, the lowest share of schools with centralised water supply was in Donetska (87%), Zaporizka (88%), Zhytomyrska (88%), and Lvivska (94%) Oblasts. The highest rates (100%) were in Kyiv City and Kyivska, Poltavska, Khmelnytska, Odeska, and Cherkaska Oblasts. The same regions are the worst and the best in terms of availability of centralised sewage.²⁷⁶

Ensuring high-quality and safe WASH and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) standards remains a pressing concern. This issue is marked by the absence of essential elements and hinders the delivery of optimal healthcare services, placing patients and healthcare workers at risk. The Medical Guarantee Program for 2024, although expanded, does not cover costs for updating the equipment for safe water and sanitation.²⁷⁷

The healthcare facilities usually do not have a separate line of financing for healthcare waste management (HCWM); and, in most cases, their budgets cannot fully cover all HCWM costs. There is a trade-off in how resources are allocated. In state-owned healthcare facilities, HCWM is financed as a residual. Most of the HCFs interviewed have approved waste management schemes, but they are formal and not adapted to the local conditions in which the HCFs operate.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ [Institute of Educational Analytics, 2024](#)

²⁷⁷ [National Health Service of Ukraine, 2024](#)

²⁷⁸ [UNDP, 2020](#)

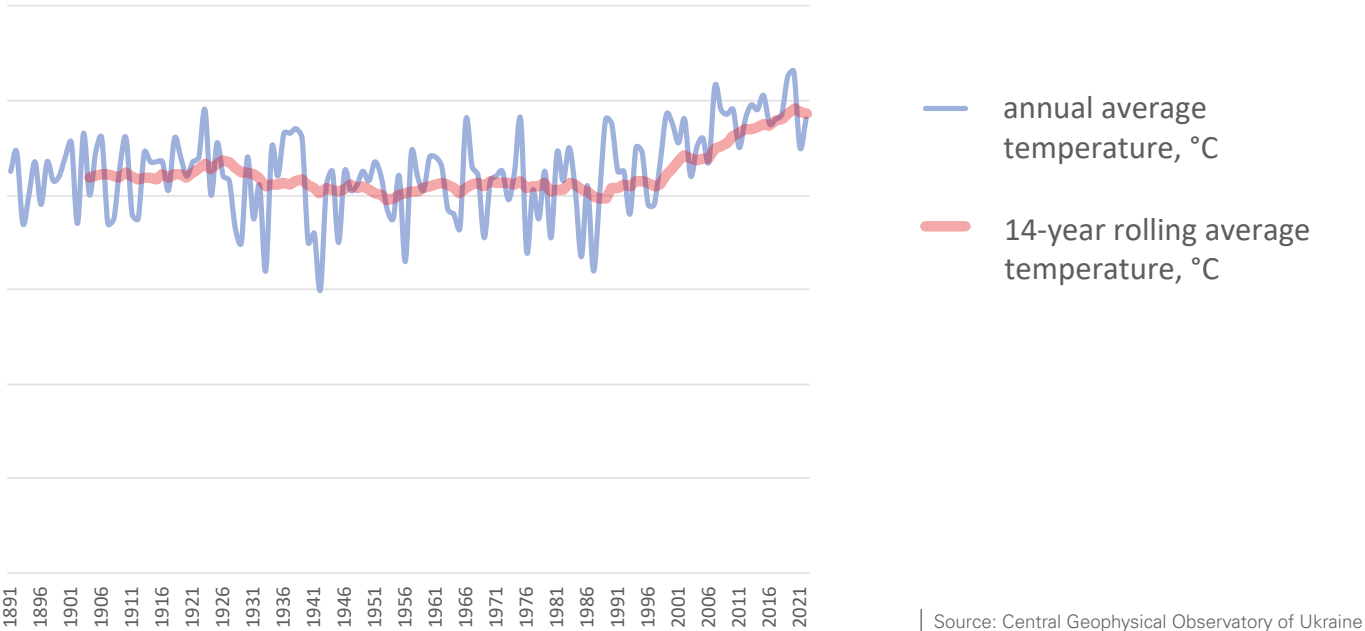
Climate and Environment Risks and Hazards

Ukraine is particularly vulnerable to climate-related risks, which together with hazardous water quality, droughts and floods, and low recycling rate, might cause Ukraine to import drinking water as of 2050.²⁷⁹

On average, the projected range of the temperature change in Ukraine from 2011–2030 is expected to vary from –0.1°C to 0.8°C with the maximal values in the northeast.²⁸⁰

According to the data of Central Geophysical Observatory of Ukraine, the annual average temperature in Ukraine increased from 8.3°C in 1891 to 9.83°C in 2022.²⁸¹

Figure 174. Annual average temperature, Ukraine, 1891-2022



The deteriorating quality of Ukrainian rivers is another pressing concern, with the National Hydrometeorological Service reporting toxic compound concentrations 30-40 times higher than the maximum permissible standards. The Institute of Water Problems and Reclamation projects that, due to pollution, Ukraine might have to import drinking water by 2050.²⁸²

In the coming years, the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine, including the Donbas and Kryvyi Rih areas, are anticipated to encounter increased water demand, leading to heightened water stress by 2030, as outlined by the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade, and Agriculture.²⁸³ This anticipates a future where water scarcity may pose significant challenges to agriculture, ecosystems, and communities in these regions.

²⁷⁹ State Environmental Inspection of Ukraine, 2021

²⁸⁰ Shvidenko A, Buksha I, Krakovska S, Lakyda P / Sustainability, 2017

²⁸¹ Central Geophysical Observatory of Ukraine, 2024

²⁸² State Environmental Inspection of Ukraine, 2021

²⁸³ World Bank, 2021

The ongoing war is impacting the global climate. As of September 2023, the total greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions attributable to the war were 150 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e), surpassing the annual GHG emissions from a highly industrialised country, like Belgium.²⁸⁴

Environmental sustainability challenges due to inadequate solid waste management have been made worse by the damage to critical infrastructure. Only 0.14 per cent of solid waste is recycled, and most of the remaining amount is disposed of in landfills, which fail sanitary standards.²⁸⁵

Frontline or near-frontline areas suffer more from contamination of water and ground from active fighting, destruction of industry, property, and infrastructure.

The key environmental challenges in Ukraine include man-made disasters (in particular, the Chernobyl accident); damage to land, surface, and ground water by the extractive industry; industrial pollution of air, soils, surface water, and groundwater, especially by the energy, chemical, and metallurgical industries; irrational farming practices; improper management of household and industrial waste; and, inefficient wastewater treatment.

A significant knowledge gap exists among young people in Ukraine regarding environmental protection measures and initiatives within their communities, with 53 per cent reporting no awareness of such efforts. Only a minimal 6 per cent of both male and female respondents acknowledged the presence of environmental events and initiatives in their communities, and their personal involvement in them. Despite this, a significant majority (85%) of young people expressed the personal importance they attach to environmental protection issues. When queried about the most critical environmental concerns in their communities, respondents often pointed out the increase in waste volume, water pollution stemming from industrial activities, and air pollution caused by vehicular emissions. This underscores the strong awareness and concern among the youth regarding environmental challenges.²⁸⁶

The broader context of waste management in Ukraine reveals significant challenges even before the war. In 2019, the country produced nearly 11.86 million tons of solid waste, averaging 280.5 kg per person. However, 78 per cent of the population had access to waste disposal services. The recycling rate was minimal at 0.14 per cent, and 1.7 per cent of waste was incinerated for energy. The majority of waste – 98.16 per cent – ended up in landfills and dumps, highlighting a significant demand for enhanced waste management practices.²⁸⁷

The severity of the situation is further underscored by the conditions of landfills and dumps in Ukraine. Among 5,470 landfills, 305 (5.6%) were overloaded, and 1,646 (30%) did not meet environmental safety standards. Experts estimate that more than 99 per cent of currently operational landfills fall short of European standards. This highlights the urgent need for comprehensive interventions in waste management to address both immediate and longstanding challenges.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ Environmental Policy and Advocacy Initiative in Ukraine, 2023

²⁸⁵ DLF, 2021

²⁸⁶ IOM, 2022

²⁸⁷ DLF, 2021

²⁸⁸ DLF, 2021

Bottlenecks and Strategies

Water supply

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	Complex and outdated regulatory and governance frameworks that inhibit quality and equitable water supply and sanitation.
Strategies	Reform national regulatory and governance frameworks.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	Limited infrastructure and management capacities at the national and local levels to provide efficient, resilient, and equitable drinking water supply service.
Strategies	Develop solutions to provide modern WSS infrastructure and strengthen capacity to build back better with an energy-efficiency, cost efficiency, resilience, and sustainability lens.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	Lack of awareness of right holders about safe drinking water supply services.
Strategies	Design and implement effective public engagement and social accountability around safe drinking water supply services.

Sanitation and wastewater treatment

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	Deficient regulatory and governance frameworks that inhibit quality wastewater treatment.
Strategies	Revise regulatory and governance frameworks for quality, resilient, safe, and equitable wastewater treatment and sanitation services.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	Poor infrastructure and management capacities to provide efficient and equitable sanitation services for all.
Strategies	Develop solutions to expand improved, resilient sanitation services to underserved areas / last mile communities (rural / urban).
Demand	
Bottlenecks	Lack of awareness and practices related to environmentally friendly and hygienic waste management.
Strategies	Evidence-based SBC campaigns to increase awareness and adherence to social and behavioural norms, such as enhanced recycling and environmental consciousness.

WASH in institutions**Enabling environment**

- Bottlenecks**
- Lack of resources, policies, and capacities to ensure quality / safe WASH / IPC standards in HCFs.
- Strategies**
- Improve funding, planning, and monitoring of WASH / IPC in HCF.

Supply

- Bottlenecks**
- Inadequate, gender-insensitive, non-inclusive, and poorly maintained WASH infrastructure in institutions.
- Strategies**
- Develop/upgrade child-friendly, disability-inclusive, and gender-responsive WASH infrastructure with appropriate maintenance in the long-term.

Demand

- Bottlenecks**
- Misinformation and misguided practices related to personal and menstrual hygiene, and infection prevention and control (IPC).
- Strategies**
- Develop, fund, and implement SBC programmes about positive WASH-related beliefs and behaviours.

Climate and environment risks and hazards**Enabling environment**

- Bottlenecks**
- Weak preparedness of DRR system, and absence of relevant risk management and child focus in climate resilience plans.
- Strategies**
- Enhance national and local capacities for efficient and equitable response to climate change and environmental sustainability.

Supply

- Bottlenecks**
- Limited national partner resources, capacities, and knowledge hindering resilience to climate change and environmental risks that impact children.
- Strategies**
- Enhance national and local capacities for efficient and equitable response to climate change and environmental sustainability.

Demand

- Bottlenecks**
- Lack of knowledge around the impact of conflict, climate, and environment risks and hazards, particularly for children and youth.
- Strategies**
- Develop and adopt platforms and tools for youth engagement, and implement community interventions for child-focused disaster, conflict, climate, environment preparedness, and risk reduction.

February 19, 2023, Myrnohrad, Donetsk region, Ukraine.

Every day, 12-year-old Amina visits her former school in Myrnohrad in eastern Ukraine. Nowadays, after 12 months of war, she only comes here to collect drinking water. Constant shelling of the frontline city's utility infrastructure has left it without a stable water supply for a year. There are several drinking and utility water points in the city, which help families in the absence of a stable water supply. One of them is a borehole in the yard of Amila's school.

"I'd prefer to go to school for studying, not for collecting water," says Amina, sadly.

As the violence in Ukraine continues, many children are struggling to access drinking water.

As part of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme, water supply networks in several districts of Myrnohrad have been reconstructed and drinking water storage tanks have been installed.

