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Situation Analysis of Children in Ukraine 2024

Executive Summary

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2. Introduction

The Situation Analysis of children's rights and wellbeing in Ukraine is an equity-focused, rights-based report aimed at informing policy dialogue and partnerships to improve the lives of children amidst the full-scale war. It examines the context and enabling environment for children's rights, covering areas such as health, education, protection, participation, and a safe environment.

UNICEF's research aims to protect children's rights, meet their basic needs, and expand opportunities for their full potential in Ukraine. The report, grounded in human rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, uses secondary data analysis and key informant interviews to assess the Ukrainian context. It identifies barriers and areas needing support to improve the environment and access to quality services, adhering to the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

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

The authors adhered to ethical guidelines to prevent stigma, discrimination, or harm to children or participants. They followed professional research standards, UNICEF's ethical procedures, and UNEG norms, ensuring integrity, accountability, respect, and beneficence. Transparency was maintained throughout the process.

This document was produced by UNICEF Ukraine Country Office, it presents a summary of the most important findings from the full Situational Analysis. The statements in this publication are the views of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the policies or the views of UNICEF. The designations employed in this publication and the presentation of the material do not imply on the part of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) the expression of any opinion concerning the legal status of any country or territory or its authorities or the delimitations of its frontiers.

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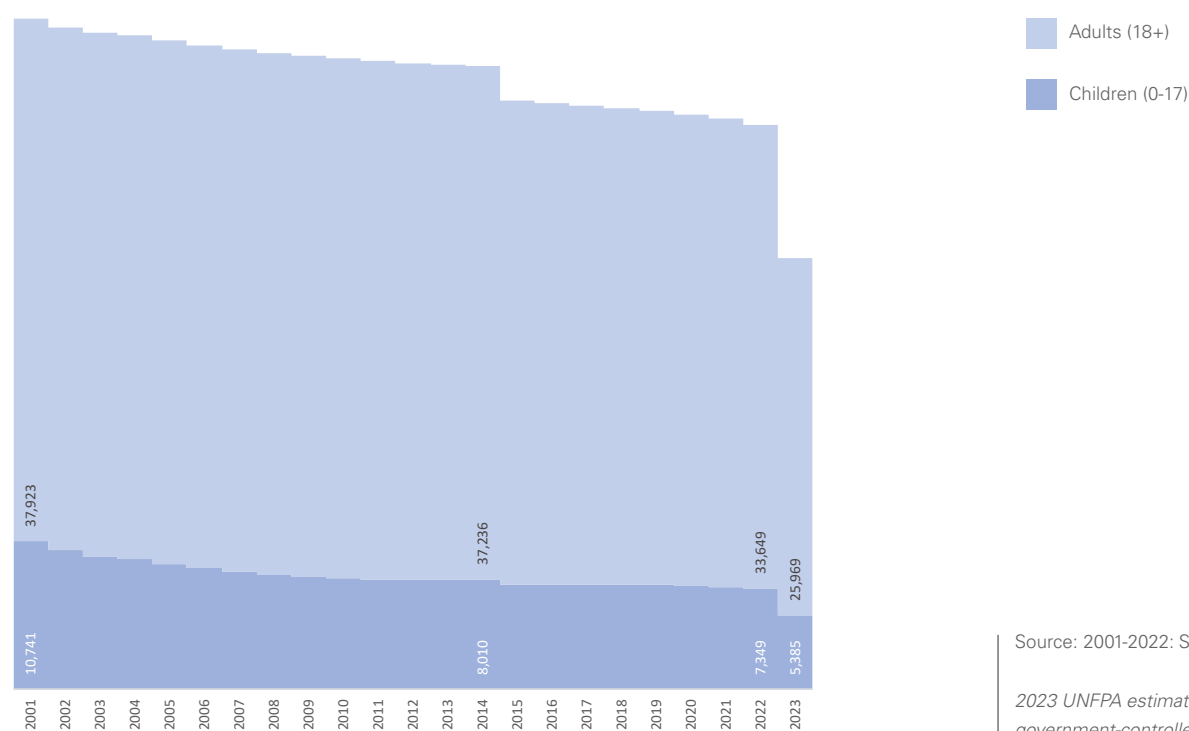
3. Country Overview

Demographics

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.

According to the latest available data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in early 2022, the population of Ukraine was 40,997,698.¹ By July 2023, an estimated 32 million people lived in government-controlled areas.²

Figure 1. **Population change in Ukraine, 2001-2023, thousands**



Due to massive refugee flow and partial occupation, 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.³ About 6.5 million are refugees,⁴ of which 34 per cent are estimated to be children.⁵ 3.7 million people remain internally displaced in Ukraine.

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.

DATA GAP

The last population census in Ukraine was conducted in 2001, leading to increasing uncertainty about the population's number and composition. The full-scale war and martial law have further complicated this, as the State Statistics Service of Ukraine stopped publishing accurate demographic data, such as births and deaths, due to sensitivity and accuracy concerns. The publication of many official statistical indicators may resume three months after martial law ends.

¹ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

² UNFPA, 2023

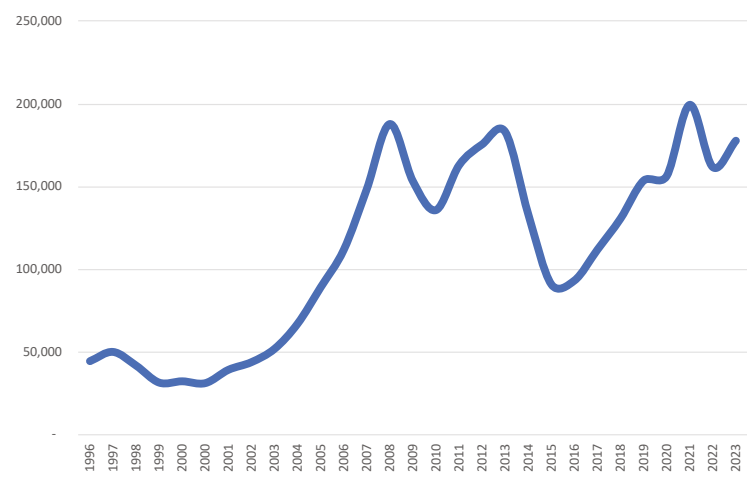
³ IOM, 2024

⁴ IOM, 2024

⁵ UNESCO, 2023

Economy

Figure 2. Ukraine GDP, million USD



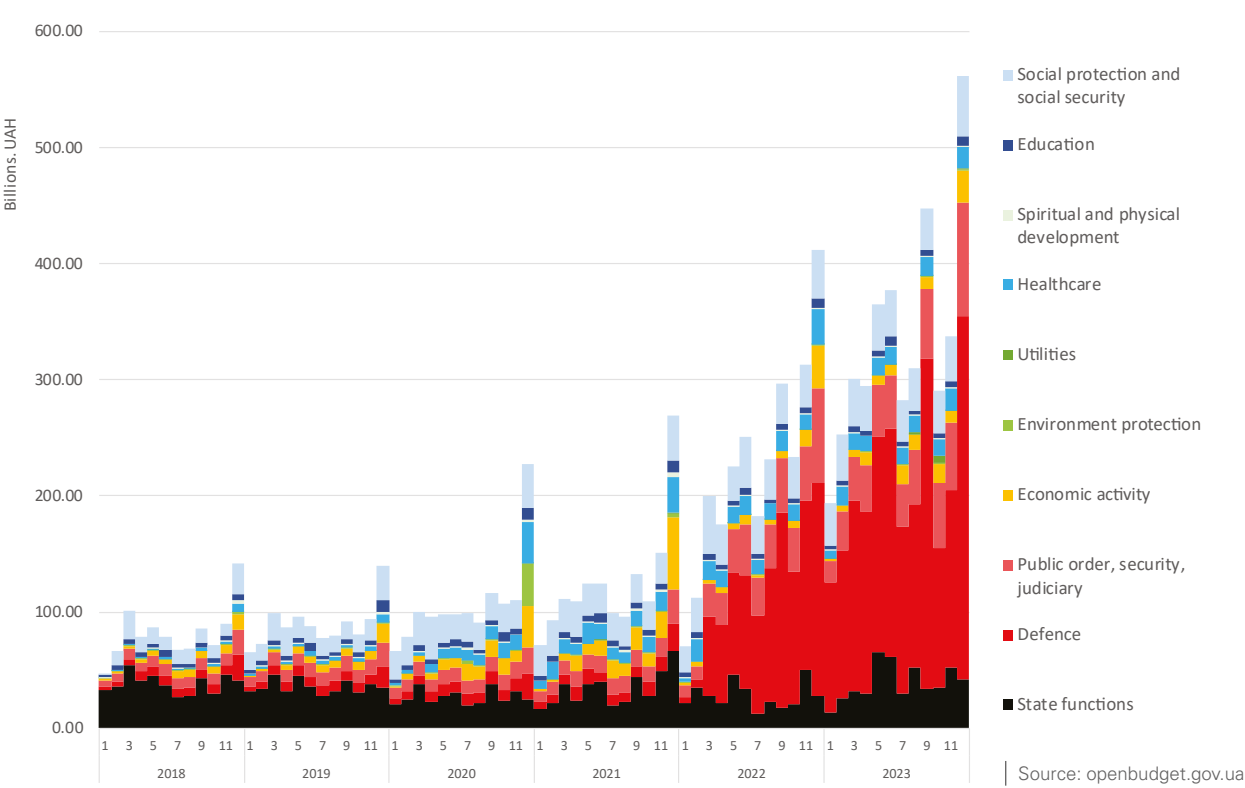
Over the past 20 years, Ukraine’s GDP has faced multiple sharp declines and recoveries due to major external events, including the 1998 Asian/Russian financial crisis, the 2008 global financial crisis, the 2014 annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas, and the escalation of war in 2022. Inflation has also fluctuated significantly, spiking to 27% in 2022 before stabilizing at 5% in 2023. For 2024, the Ministry of Economy forecasts a modest GDP growth of 5% and an average inflation rate of 13.8%.

Source: SSSU
Actual prices

Public Finance

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

Figure 3. State budget expenditures, monthly, UAH billions, 2018-2022



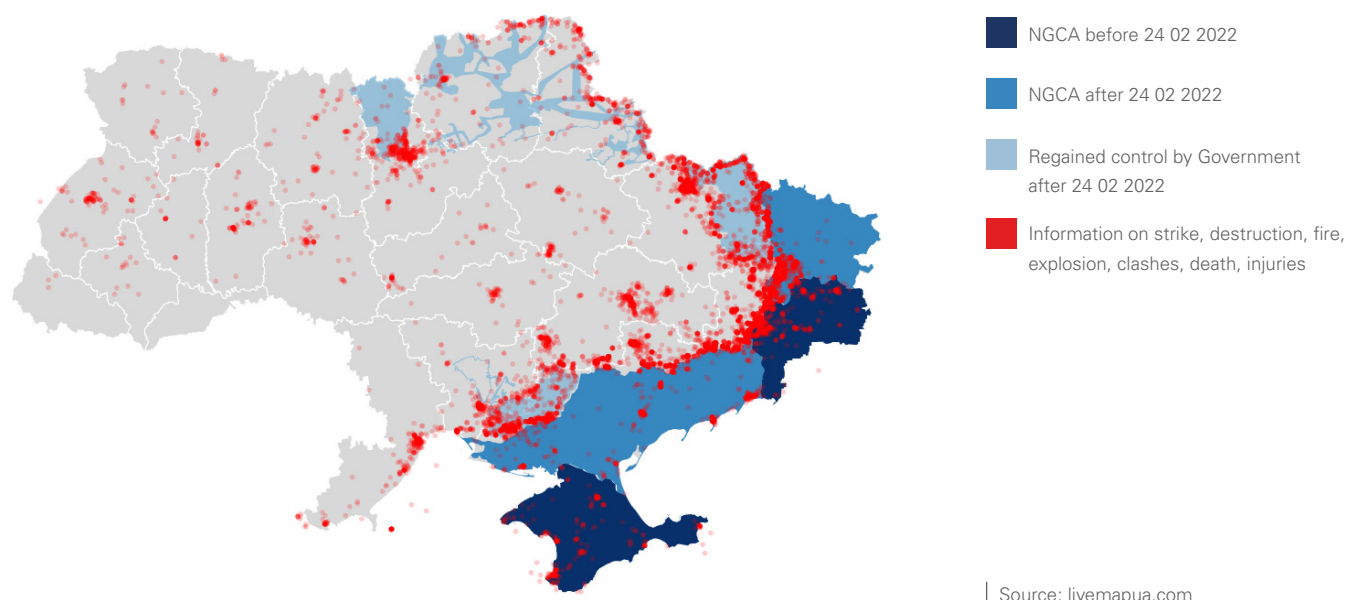
The total consolidated budget (State and local budgets together) in UAH grew almost 2.5 times between 2021-2023. In USD equivalent, it increased by only 56 per cent.

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.

Humanitarian Risk Profile

Ongoing fighting continues 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 4. **Areas in Ukraine controlled and not controlled by the Government (as of February 2024)**



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.⁶

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.⁷ By February 2024, at least 1,242 medical facilities, 3,809 educational institutions, 1,108.5⁸ 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.⁹

Approximately 4 per cent of households nationwide have at least one child not living with the family. This rate is even higher in frontline areas across the eastern and southern regions.

Gender Profile

Ukraine has committed to several key international obligations to promote gender equality, including ratifying CEDAW in 1981, adopting the Beijing Declaration in 1995, and joining the Biarritz Partnership in 2020. The country also ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2022 and signed a cooperation framework with the UN on conflict-related sexual violence. Additionally, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, fully in force since 2017, aims to ensure equal opportunities for women and men.

Ukraine has implemented significant national legislation, strategies, and action plans to advance gender equality, including constitutional articles, various laws, amendments, and strategies from 2005 to 2023, covering areas such as equal rights, anti-discrimination, domestic violence prevention, military service equality, gender quotas in elections, and closing the gender pay gap.

⁶ OCHA, UNCHR, 2024

⁷ World Bank, 2024

⁸ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2024

⁹ UNICEF, 2023

Since 2019, Ukraine has implemented gender-responsive budgeting, abolished employment restrictions for women, introduced equal childcare leave for both parents, and established roles and commissions to coordinate gender equality policies.

Despite progress, gender inequality persists in Ukraine, with societal stereotypes often assigning domestic responsibilities to women. Women disproportionately handle unpaid domestic work, averaging 36.2 hours per week compared to men's 14.8 hours. Men have low involvement in childcare, and women make up 92% of single parents. Patriarchal norms hinder women's participation in decision-making and access to resources, with women underrepresented in high-level positions, comprising only 21% of the Verkhovna Rada. The full-scale war has exacerbated these issues, with many women becoming primary breadwinners and caregivers.

From childhood, men in Ukraine are often taught to suppress emotions and resort to alcohol, tobacco, or violence, leading to risky behaviors and less frequent medical help-seeking. This contributes to a lower life expectancy for men (68 years) compared to women (78 years). Toxic masculinity manifests in high levels of gender-based violence, with 67% of women over 15 experiencing some form of violence. The war has exacerbated gender inequalities, increasing domestic violence reports and widening gender gaps in employment and wages. Women are taking on more unpaid work and responsibilities traditionally held by men, while adolescent girls face increased unpaid care work, affecting their education and leisure.

4. Enabling environment

Legislation

Ukraine ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on 27 February 1991, before declaring independence. The country has signed most core UN human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention Against Torture. It has also adopted two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, three aspects from UN documents and the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption remain to be incorporated into Ukrainian laws. Under the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, Ukraine committed to child protection, abolishing child labor, improving maternal and child health, and controlling alcohol use by children.

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.^{10, 11}

The Government of Ukraine is aligning domestic legislation with international obligations to protect children's rights. Key laws include the Family Code, the Comprehensive Law on Childhood Protection, and the National Youth Strategy 2030. Between 2014 and 2018, numerous laws, decrees, resolutions, and social programs were adopted to safeguard children. In May 2018, the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was approved, followed by the Human Development Strategy until 2025 in June 2021.

Child rights governance

Three key bodies oversee child rights protection in Ukraine: the Ministry of Social Policy, the National Social Service, and the State Service on the Issues of Children. The Ministry of Social Policy handles policy formulation and implementation for social welfare and children's rights, though its dual role can cause conflicts. The National Social Service ensures compliance with social support legislation, while the State Service on the Issues of Children focuses on child protection, family support, and adoption. Other ministries, including Education, Health, Justice, Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Reintegration, and Finance, also play crucial roles in safeguarding children's rights and well-being.

¹⁰ OHCHR, 2023

¹¹ ICC, 2023

In September 2023, Ukraine established the State Service on the Issues of Children, tasked with child rights protection, social support, health and recreation, and family-based care and adoption. It coordinates child protection activities, analyzes legal compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and monitors adherence to child protection laws. The Service will manage records on orphans, prospective adoptive parents, and children in difficult conditions, and will maintain various centralized information systems, including databases on IDPs, social services, disabilities, and health and recreation facilities for children.

Child rights monitoring

A comprehensive child rights monitoring (CRM) system is essential for tracking progress, making evidence-based policy decisions, and providing timely support using reliable data. The Ministry of Social Policy is the central authority in CRM and child protection but faces financial, human resource, and operational challenges. Various bodies, such as the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Childhood Protection, Coordination Headquarters for Children's Rights under Martial Law, and the State Service of Ukraine on Children's Issues, have been established to monitor child rights. However, parliamentary committees are not fully utilizing their strategic position, and Child Rights Ombudspersons play a crucial role in monitoring.

Ukraine lacks coherent state policies on child rights monitoring, leading to fragmented and uncoordinated efforts. This inefficiency hampers the protection and well-being of children. The absence of robust management structures and a comprehensive monitoring system undermines effective enforcement and assessment of child rights policies. In November 2018, Ukraine presented its Consolidated V and VI Periodic National Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, highlighting achievements and challenges from 2011 to 2017.

In 2018, the Ombudsman office developed an Alternative CRC report, and the Child Rights Network of NGOs created a shadow CRC report. The "National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child" State Social Programme until 2021 was approved in May 2018, outlining measures to ensure children's rights. Although an initial draft for the next National Action Plan was formulated in 2021, it remains incomplete.

Even before escalation of war in 2022, Ukraine lacked sufficient disaggregated data on child-related issues, with the last census in 2001 and the last MICS in 2012. The situation has worsened due to martial law, limiting accurate data on children's well-being. Reliance on administrative data often overlooks unregistered children, and decentralization has further degraded data quality. There is no unified statistics system at the community level, and ministries lack formal data-sharing mechanisms.

Coordination issues among government bodies collecting their own data hinder effective analysis and planning for child welfare in Ukraine. The lack of consolidated data undermines program evaluation and planning. The State Statistics Service of Ukraine leads SDG monitoring efforts, but coordination among stakeholders needs improvement. Modernizing statistical processes, adopting new methodologies, and integrating new data sources are essential. Strengthening subnational statistics and enhancing data dissemination and communication are crucial for accurate monitoring and informed policymaking, contributing to sustainable development.

The biggest challenge in data availability for Ukraine is the lack of official, reliable, and detailed population data, with the last census conducted in 2001. This long gap has increased uncertainty about the population's number and composition. The full-scale war and martial law have further complicated matters, as the State Statistics Service of Ukraine stopped publishing population data due to sensitivity and accuracy concerns. Publication of many official statistical indicators may resume within three months after martial law ends.

Comparing pre-war official statistics with recent UNFPA population estimates highlights flaws in official data, such as undercounting in urban areas and overcounting in rural areas. Internal migration has been poorly tracked, and there are gaps in youth statistics. Comprehensive and accurate data collection across various spheres is crucial for addressing the needs of Ukrainian youth. Medical statistics, while valuable, suffer from a lack of detailed disaggregation. Similar issues exist in education, criminal, and judicial statistics. Utilizing e-Health individual patient-level data could significantly improve data accuracy and utility.

5. The Rights of Children (Analyzed Dimensions)

Health and nutrition

Health system

The war has caused approximately US\$1.4 billion in damage to the health sector in Ukraine.¹² 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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.

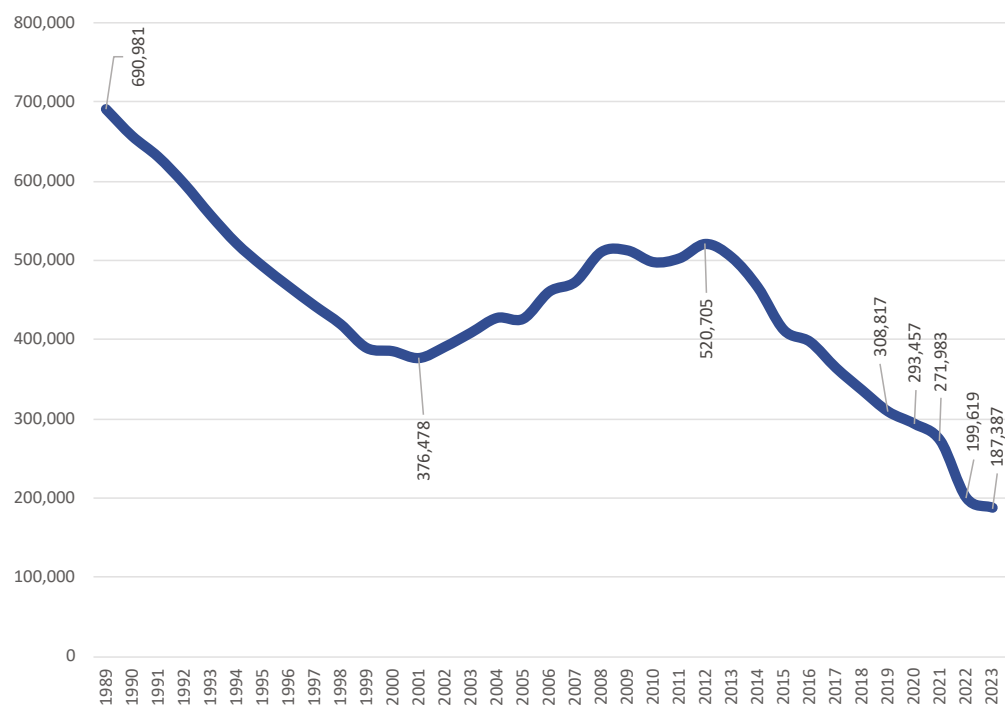
At the same time, the healthcare system has demonstrated a good level of resilience since the escalation of the war.¹⁵ According to one expert interviewed, international organizations initially streamlined their efforts in a classic emergency response modality (i.e., substituting for local healthcare 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.

Healthcare data issues in Ukraine include underutilization for policy development, incomplete or incorrect e-Health data, lack of integration between medical information systems and lab tests, limited patient access to electronic health records, inaccurate data and limited analytics, resource constraints and low salaries, and insufficient control and penalties for data entry fraud. Providers often view the e-Health system primarily as a financial reporting tool, and the NHSU has overlooked data quality during the war.

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 5. Total livebirths in Ukraine, 1989-2023



Source: SSSU, Medical Statistics, Ministry of Justice

¹² World Bank, 2024
¹³ Ministry of Health of Ukraine, 2024
¹⁴ World Bank, 2024
¹⁵ WHO, 2024

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.¹⁶

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.

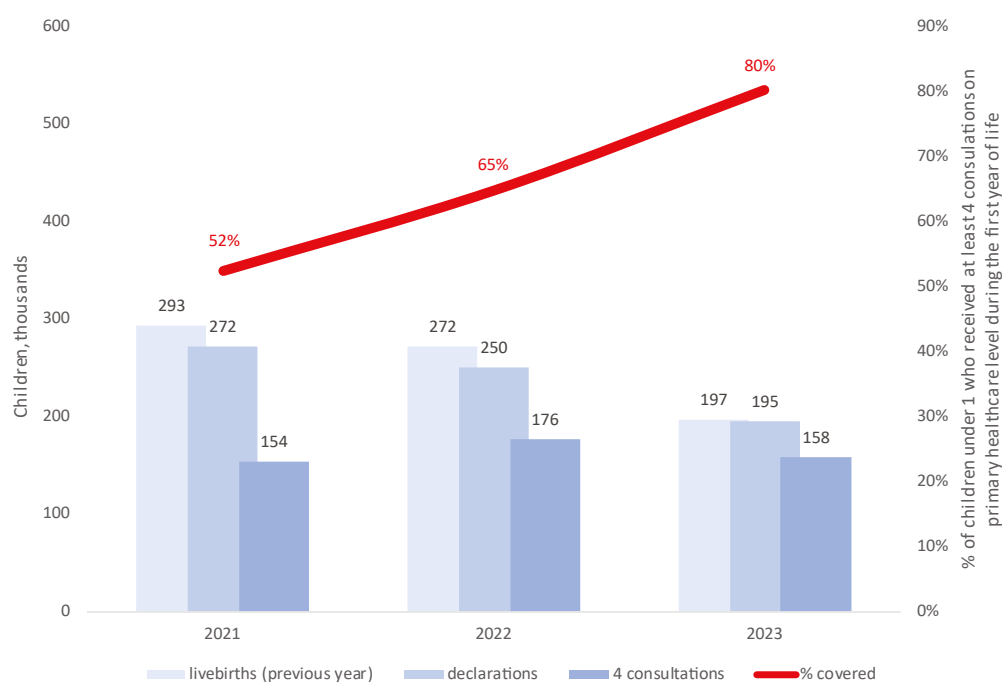
Child mortality rates also differ greatly by region. Historically, the highest level of child mortality for the ages of 0-4 years old is in Zakarpattia (13.25 deaths per 1,000 livebirths, average for 2008-2020), Kirovohrad, and Donetsk Regions. The lowest rate is in Kyiv Region (7.21, average for 2008-2020), Kyiv City, Poltava, and Ternopil Regions.¹⁷

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.¹⁸

An expert highlighted the lack of industry standards for neonatal pathologies in Ukraine, causing regional variations in outcomes. Specialized care improves health and safety for mothers and infants, but financial concerns and inadequate local leadership often prioritize childbirth over optimal care, leading to adverse outcomes. Local doctors may lack qualifications, risking inadequate treatment, especially for premature infants, whose transport increases the risk of long-term disabilities. Post-delivery transfers indicate that childbirth occurred at a lower, inappropriate level of perinatal care. 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.

According to NHSU data, the share of children who received at least 4 consultations on the primary healthcare level during the first year of life (out of those who were born in previous year) increased from 52% in 2021 to 80% in 2023.¹⁹

Figure 6. **Monitoring of child development during the first year of life at the primary healthcare level**



Source: NHSU

Comparison of livebirths (total number of children under 1), number of declarations for those children, number of children who reached 1 year and had at least 4 consultations on the primary healthcare level during the first year of life.

¹⁶ World Bank, 2022

¹⁷ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

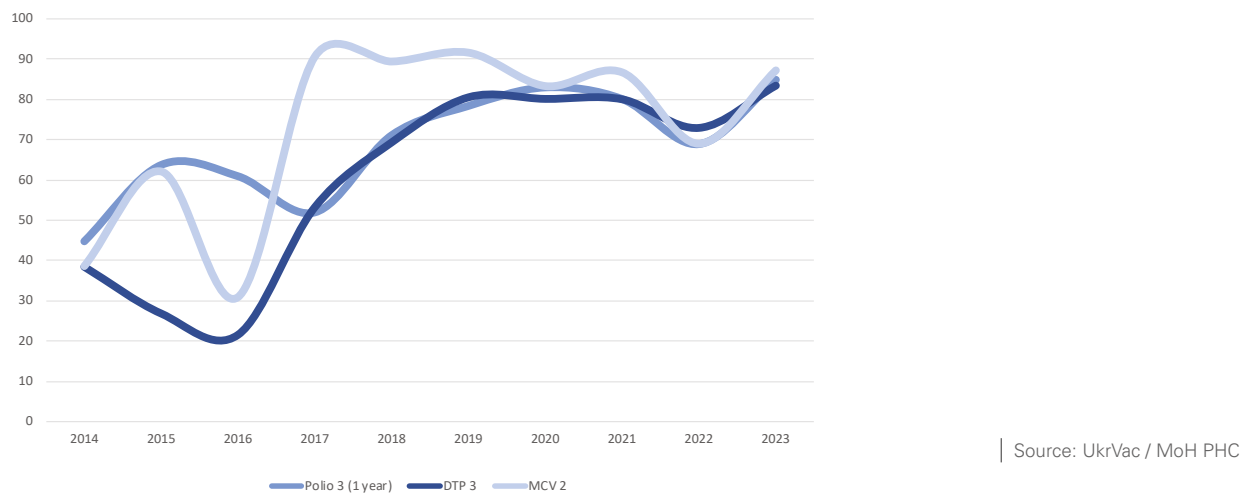
¹⁸ WHO, 2023

¹⁹ National Health Service of Ukraine, 2024

Immunization

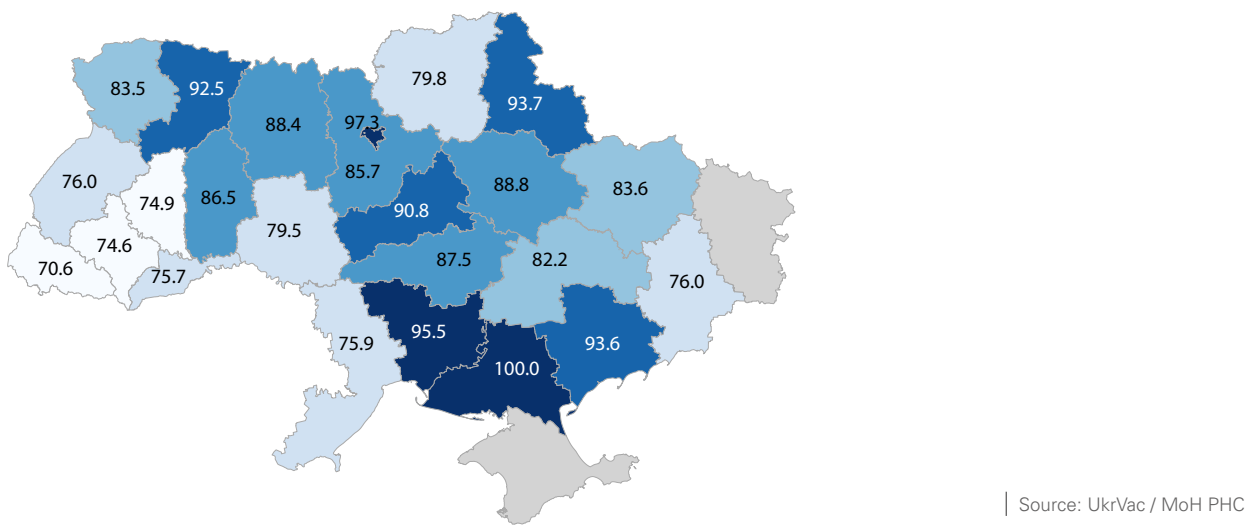
Ukraine has one of the lowest vaccination coverage rates in the World Health Organization’s (WHO) European Region,²⁰ remaining below the 95 per cent threshold in 2023. The share of children receiving, however, their second dose of measles vaccine increased from 69 to 87 per cent between 2022-2023.²¹

Figure 7. Selected vaccination rates, %, 2014-2023



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

Figure 8. DTP 3 vaccination rates, %, by regions, 2023



The state’s immunization efforts are commendable, bolstered by strong political will and support from doctors. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) play a crucial role in leading these 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. 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. Attitudes toward vaccination have improved, even during wartime, but anti-vaccination sentiments are still wide-spread.

²⁰ WHO, 2024
²¹ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2024

Nutrition

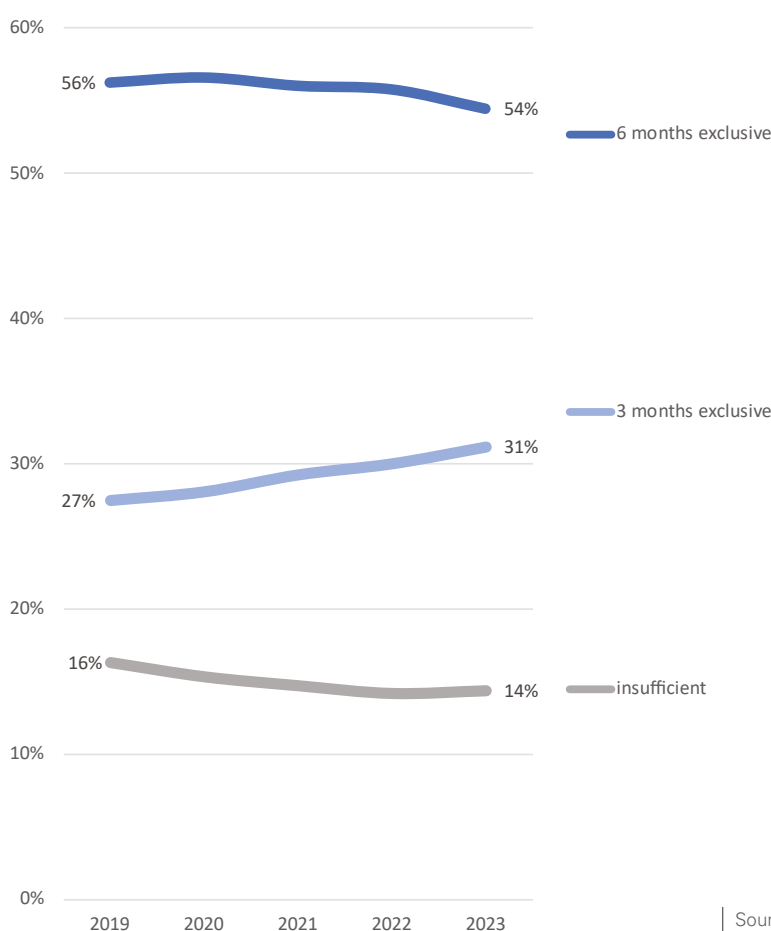
The already low pre-war breastfeeding rates during the first six months of life remain sub-optimum (between 15-50²² per cent, as per 2023 assessments). Despite the limited geography, the 2023 study²³ offered a comprehensive overview of current infant and young child feeding practices in Ukraine. The 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.

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.

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.²⁴

Figure 9. **Breastfeeding of children up to 1 year old, 2019-2023**



²² International Medical Corps, 2023

²³ International Medical Corps, 2023

²⁴ Medical Statistics of MoH of Ukraine, 2024

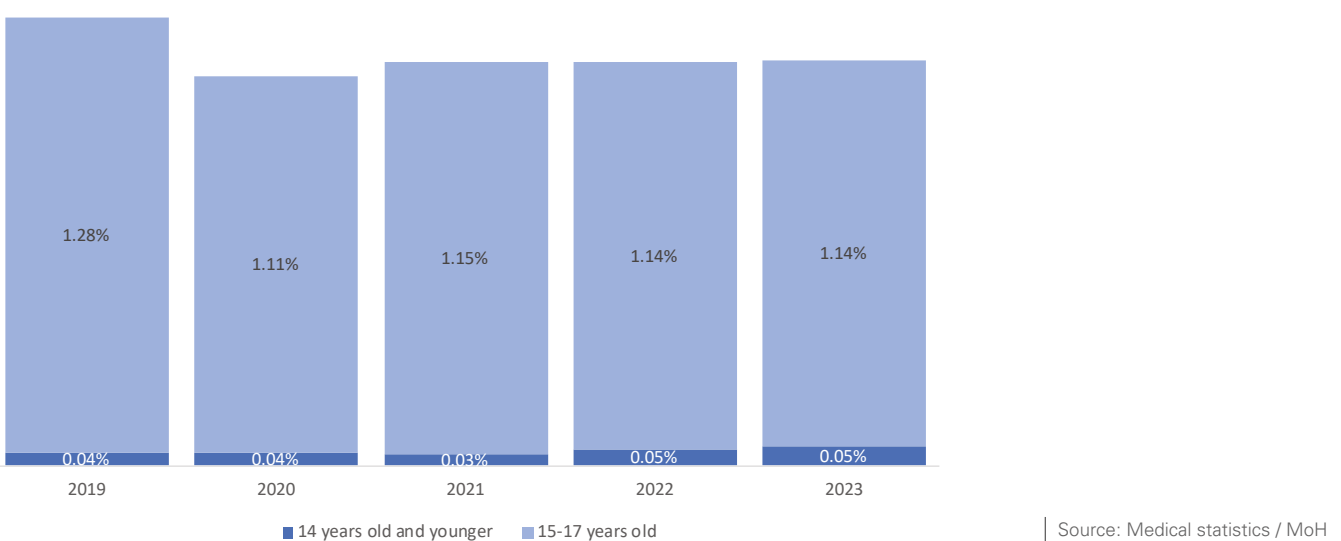
Adolescent Physical, Mental and Reproductive Health

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).²⁵ 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 2022.²⁶

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.²⁷

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.²⁸

Figure 10. **Share of childbirths by teenage mothers (% of all deliveries), 2019-2023**



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

Prior to escalation of war in 2022, approximately 10 per cent of the Ukrainian population was living with some degree of mental health conditions.²⁹ 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.³⁰ Nearly 61 per cent of parents believe their children have signs of stress, such as poor sleep;³¹ 24 per cent of young people aged 14–24 believe their psychological state has deteriorated; and, 11 per cent believe they need psychological help.³²

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. 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.

²⁵ TransMonEE / State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2023

²⁶ Medical Statistics of MoH of Ukraine, 2024

²⁷ Medical Statistics of MoH of Ukraine, 2024

²⁸ Medical Statistics of MoH of Ukraine, 2024

²⁹ Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2023

³⁰ Reuters, 2023

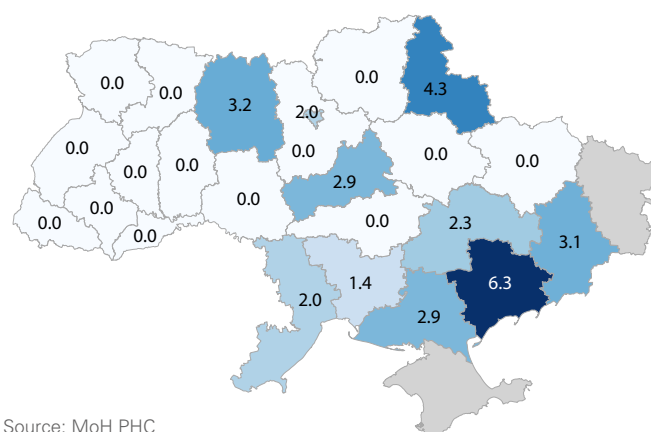
³¹ Cedoss, 2023

³² World Bank, 2024

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). 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.

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%).³⁴

Figure 12. Rate of HIV transmission from mother to child, based on early HIV diagnosis in newborns, 2022 36



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.

³³ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2022

³⁴ Public Health Center of Ukraine, 2022

³⁵ Public Health Center of Ukraine. 2023

³⁶ Public Health Center of Ukraine. 2023

Demand	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt and fund the updated immunisation policy on EVM, vaccine forecasting, and procurement. Improve quality of data and interoperability of MIS.

Supply	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate quality of evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services offered to children, adolescents, and youth.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop evidence-based digital solutions to provide MHPSS services to adolescents and youth.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

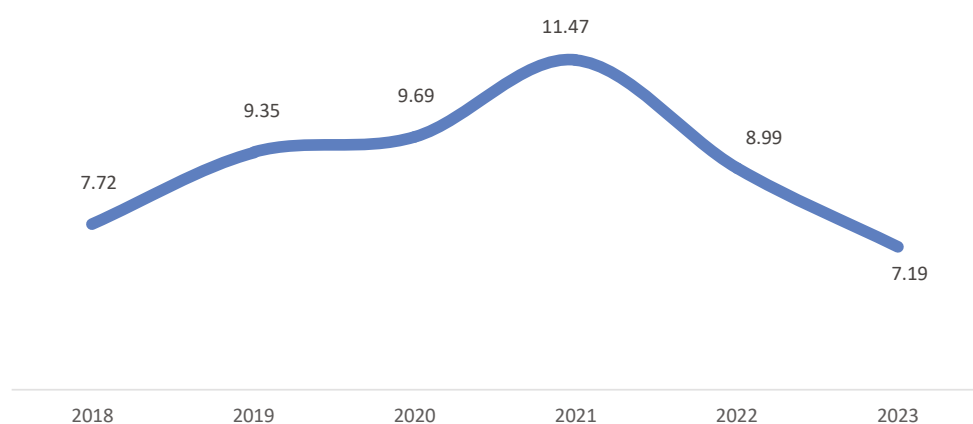
Education

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.³⁷

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



Source: openbudget.gov.ua

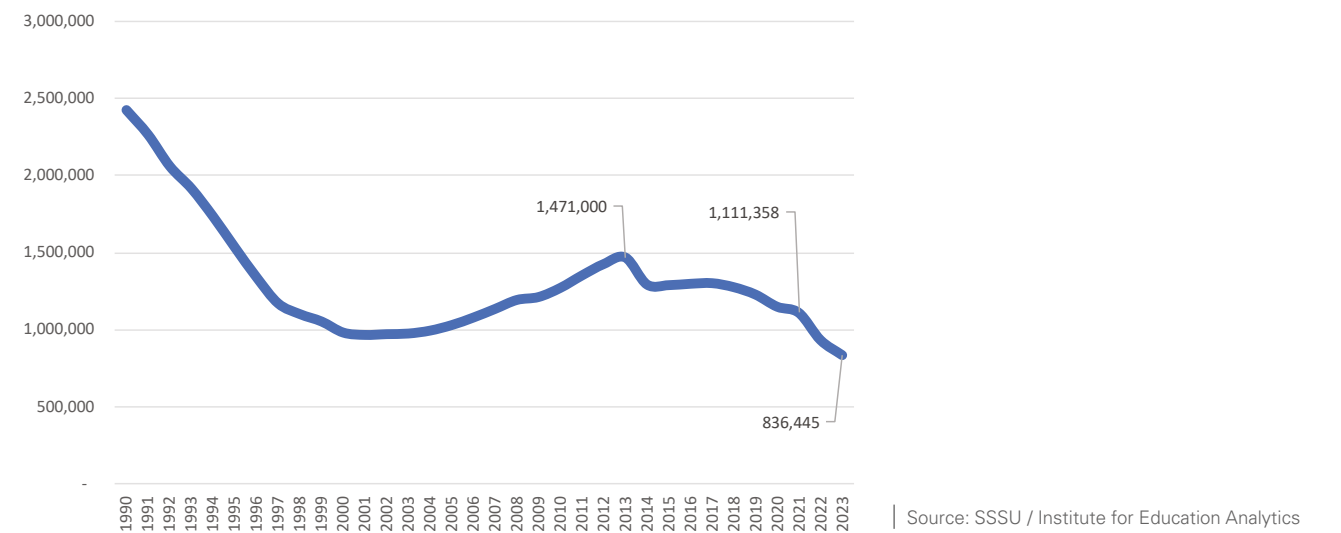
³⁷ World Bank, 2024

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).

Pre-school education

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

Figure 14. Children in kindergartens in Ukraine



Since 2021, the number of children in early education dropped by 25 per cent due to the occupation of territories and many mothers with children leaving Ukraine following the full-scale war in 2022. A total of 861,515 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.³⁸

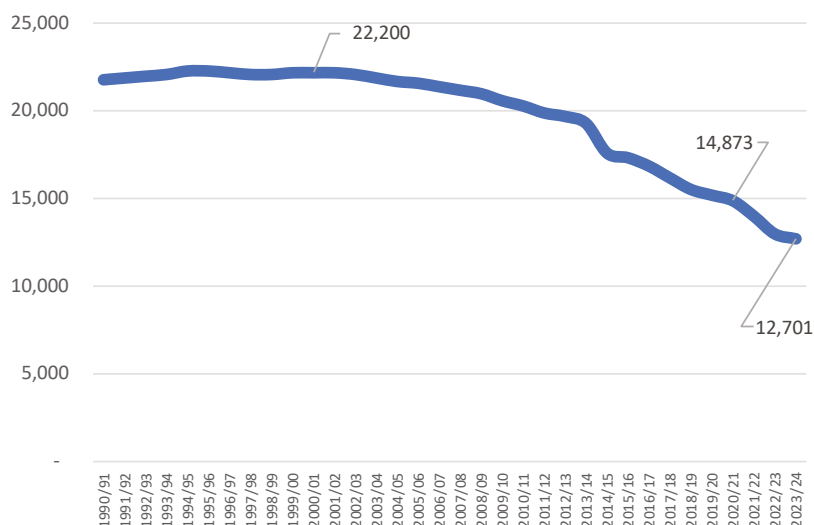
About 77 per cent of all kindergarten children live in cities, while 23 per cent live in rural areas. According to State Statistics in 2022, 84 per cent of children aged between three and five in urban areas were attending ECE, compared to only 53 per cent in rural areas.³⁹ Enrolment numbers are falling faster in cities, while the situation in rural areas is more stable.

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.

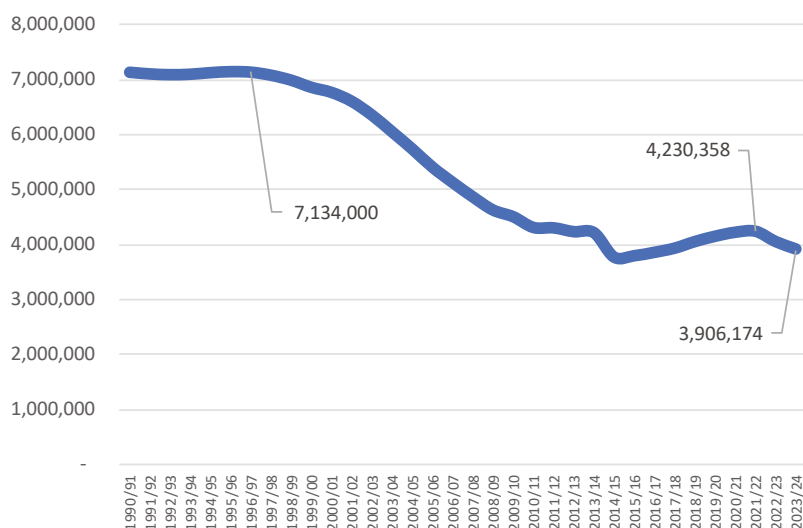
Primary and secondary education

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.⁴⁰ Half of the country's 3.8 million schoolchildren rely on online or blended learning.⁴¹ Distance learning, stress, and trauma during the pandemic and the war have caused substantial learning and skills losses.

³⁸ Institute of Educational Analytics, 2024
³⁹ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2022
⁴⁰ World Bank, 2024
⁴¹ Institute of Educational Analytics, 2024

Figure 15. Number of secondary education institutions (schools) at the beginning of study year, 1990-2023

Source: SSSU

Figure 16. Number of children in primary and secondary education (pupils) at the beginning of study year, 1990-2023

Source: SSSU

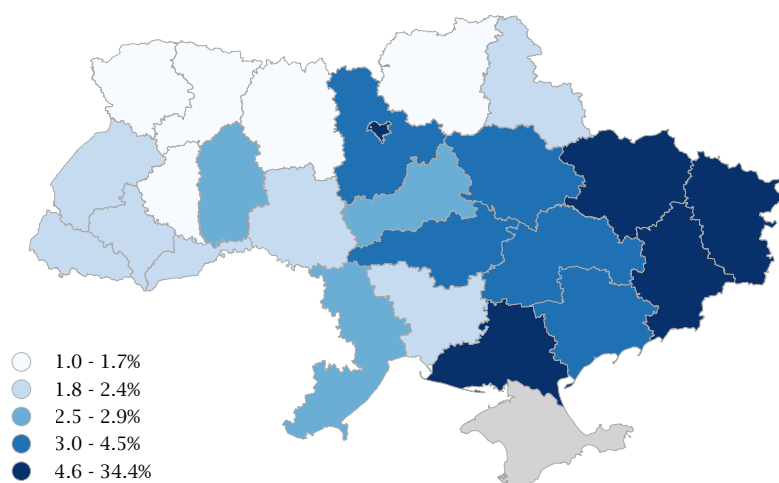
In regions affected by war, accessibility to education faces security challenges. Safety concerns influence learning formats, and traditional in-person education is often unfeasible due to shelling and other limitations.

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

Children from low-income families⁴² 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.

⁴² 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 17. Share of IDPs among pupils in secondary education (2023/2024)



Source: Institute for Education Analytics

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.⁴³

Regarding learning outcomes, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) evaluates the competencies of 15-year-old students in mathematics, reading, and science. 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.

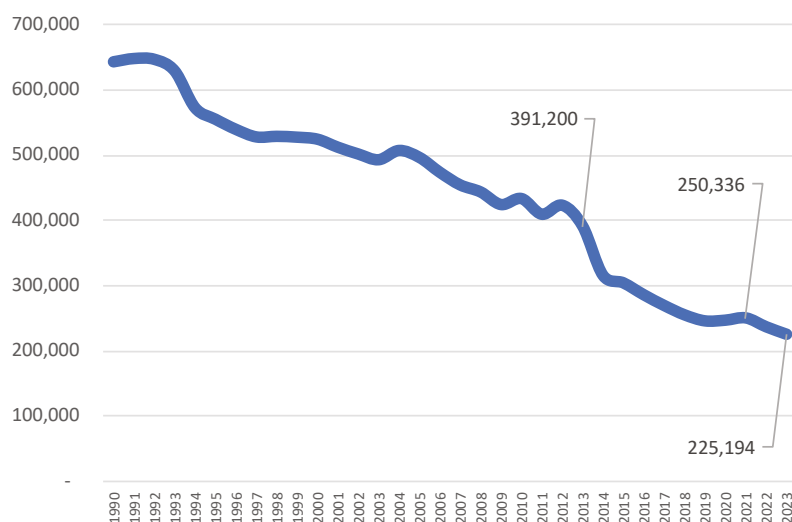
Students with high socio-economic status have higher results in math, reading, and science than those with low socio-economic status.

Vocational (professional) education

Since the 1990s, the number of vocational schools have been steadily declining. 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).⁴⁴

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



Source: SSSU

⁴³ Institute of Educational Analytics, 2024

⁴⁴ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

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

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).⁴⁵

At the same time, Ukrainian youth 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.⁴⁶

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.

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.⁴⁷

Bottlenecks and Strategies

Early childhood education

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

⁴⁵ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2024

⁴⁶ World Bank, 2017

⁴⁷ OECD, 2015

Demand	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of real-time, comprehensive transparent data for evidence planning and implementing education policies and framework.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop comprehensive transparent, nationally-owned education data systems to inform decision making at school national, oblast, and hromada levels.

Supply	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

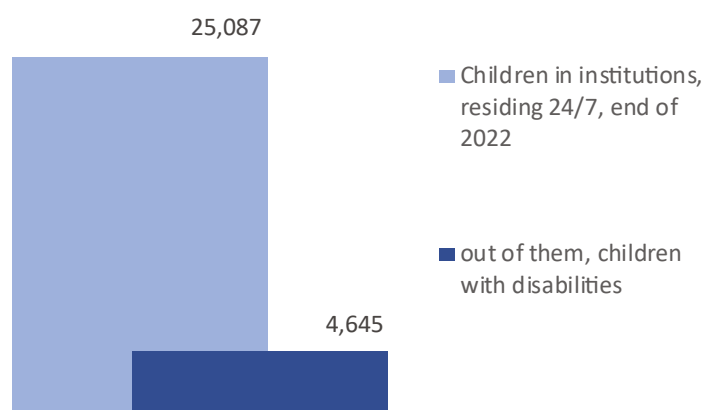
Child Protection

Alternative care

In the first days of the war, more than 38,000 of the 48,000 children in institutional care were returned to their families; more than 4,000 children from institutions were evacuated to EU, Moldova, or Türkiye, and more than 1,600 to other regions in Ukraine. More than 7,000 children have been relocated (evacuated).⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹

Figure 19. Number of children aged 0-17 in formal residential care, at the end of 2022



| Source: National Social Services Agency (NSSA)

⁴⁸ UNICEF, 2022

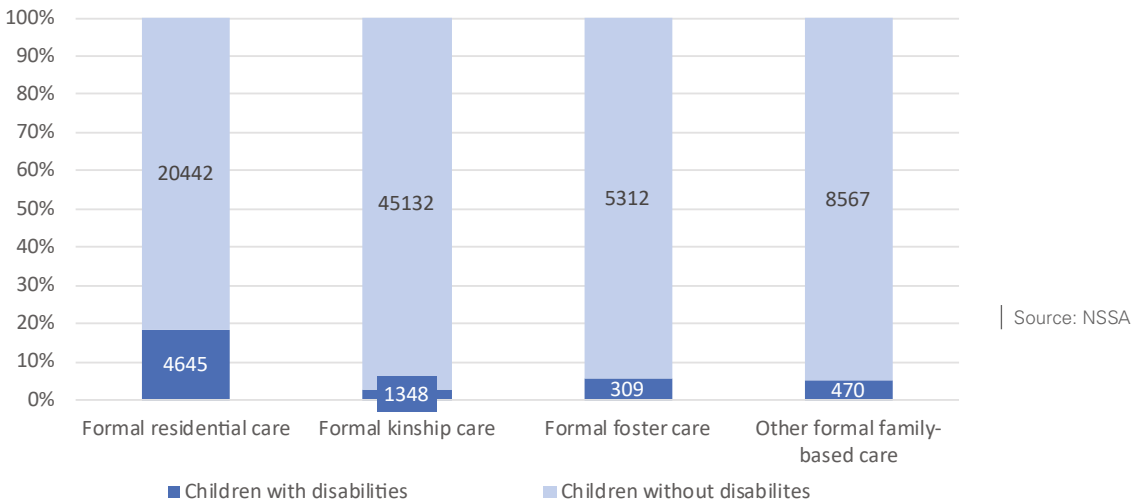
⁴⁹ National Social Services Agency of Ukraine, 2024

About 19 per cent of children in institutions are children with disabilities.

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)⁵⁰.

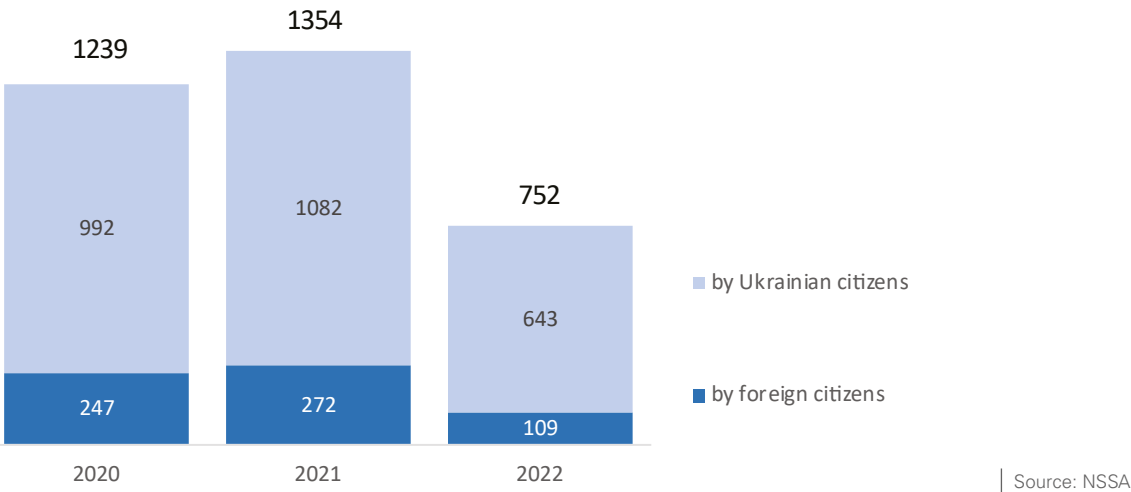
The share of children with disabilities in different forms of alternative care differs significantly.

Figure 20. Children in alternative care, by type and disability status, end of 2022 ⁵¹



The ongoing war has significantly reduced the number of adoptions, with international adoptions of Ukrainian children being largely suspended since martial law was declared in 2022. Exceptions to this suspension include cases where the adoptive candidate is a relative, wishes to adopt a sibling of a previously adopted child, or one spouse wants to adopt the other's child.

Figure 21. Total number of children aged 0-17 formally adopted, during the year, 2020-2022

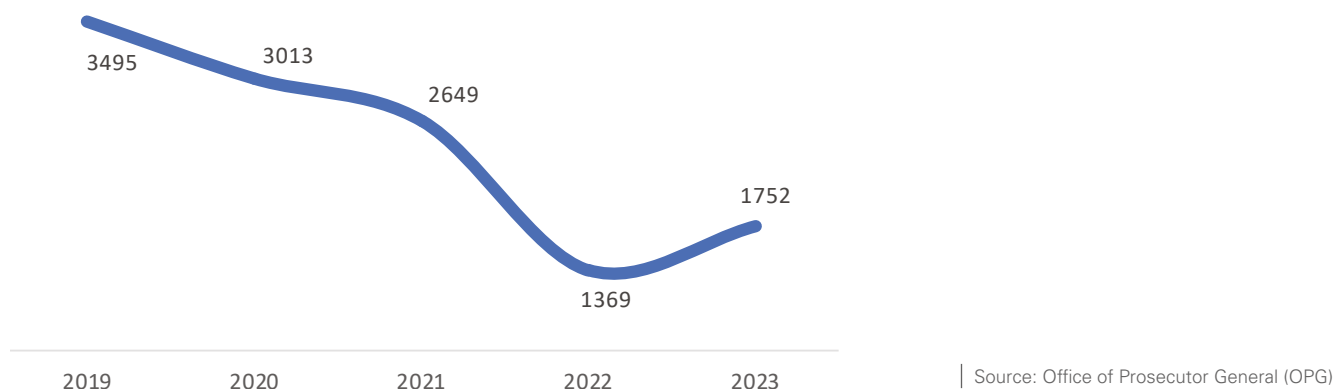


⁵⁰ National Social Services Agency of Ukraine, 2024
⁵¹ National Social Services Agency of Ukraine, 2024

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 2023,⁵² with custodial or alternative sentences reaching a historic low of 336 in 2022.⁵³

Figure 22. Number of children charged with crimes, 2019-2023



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

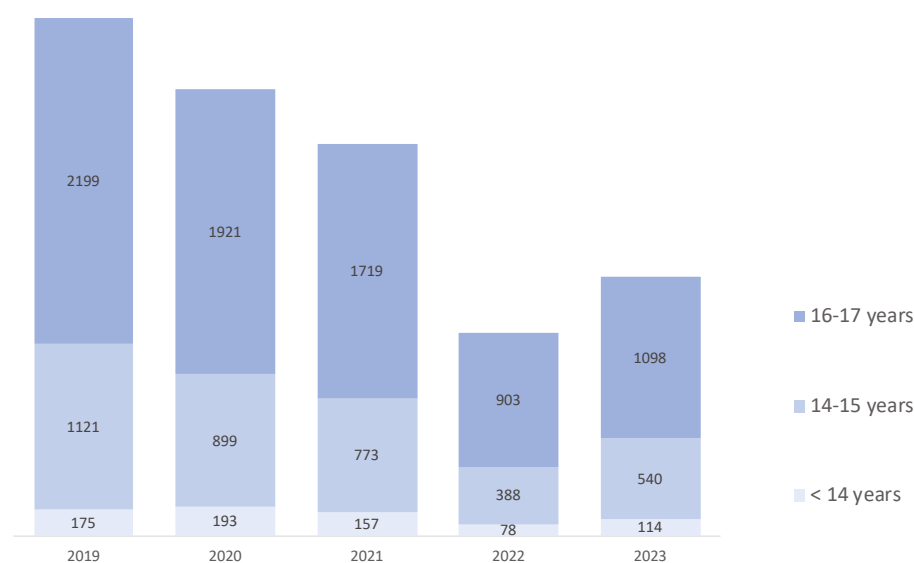
Within the overall landscape of criminal offenses, 55 per cent were offenses against property, 19 per cent against life and health, 9 per cent regarding traffic safety, and 6 per cent linked to drug trafficking. The top criminal offences charged against children in 2023 were theft (46%), other crimes against life and health (15%), robbery (6%), illegal possession of vehicle (5%), and fraud (4.5%).⁵⁴

Children sentenced to alternative measures during 2022 also were at a historical low: 170 (compared to 393 in 2021; 591 in 2020).⁵⁵ However, the trend rebounded in 2023 to 214 custodial sentences and 282 alternative measures.⁵⁶ There were only 120 children in detention at the end of 2022 (down from 414 in 2015).

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 11,495.⁵⁷ 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 23. Distribution of children, charged with crimes, by age groups, 2019-2023



⁵² Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 2024

⁵³ TransMonEE / State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2023

⁵⁴ Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 2024

⁵⁵ TransMonEE / State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2023

⁵⁶ State Court Administration of Ukraine, 2024

⁵⁷ Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 2024

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 24. **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 possession of vehicle	-	272	191	81	92
Fraud	65	52	57	48	79
Related to drugs without intention to sell	-	77	68	49	68
Hooliganism	-	106	76	35	56

| 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. 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).

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).

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.

During the war, domestic violence receives less attention, and the law enforcement system struggles to ensure safety. Training for police and juvenile prevention workers is inconsistent due to high turnover and relocations. Effective response depends on their preparedness and experience, with some regions performing better than others. Law enforcement often views domestic violence as a family matter, necessitating better education and training. The Istanbul Convention’s ratification should bring judicial changes, but the status of children affected by domestic violence remains unclear.

Legal assistance is provided by both the government and civil society organizations, with a national hotline offering legal support. However, psychological assistance availability is uncertain. Civil society organizations like La Strada-Ukraine play a crucial role in supporting victims. Barnahus centres, created with UNICEF, aim to protect children during investigations, but there are regional shortages and coordination issues. Larger cities offer more services, while smaller communities face challenges. Plans exist to expand the shelter network, but there were only around 30 shelters before the war escalated. Civil society organizations drive many initiatives, but a significant shortage of shelters remains.

Bottlenecks and Strategies

Alternative care

Enabling environment

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Bottlenecks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop regulatory frameworks, guidance, and capacities for specialised justice system professionals.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficiently shock- responsive CP and GBViE system to respond adequately and efficiently to emergency context.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited availability and access to CPiE and GBViE specialised services responding to specific humanitarian needs.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement, and institutionalise a positive parenting programme nationwide to ensure parents/caregivers improve engagement through the positive nurturing care of young children.

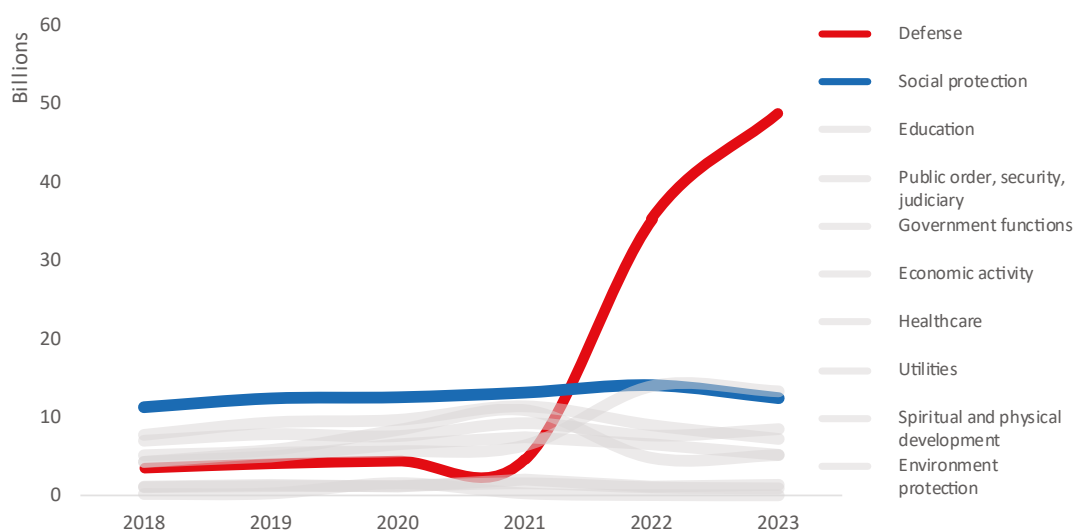
Social Policy

Social protection system

The system's architecture is complex, featuring both contributory and non-contributory schemes. It includes social insurance (like pensions and unemployment benefits), social assistance (means-tested and categorical benefits for low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities), and social services (care for vulnerable children and elderly care). While the system has performed well in coverage and responsiveness, it faces challenges in adequacy, efficiency, and resource allocation.⁵⁸ 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.⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰ 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.

Figure 25. Consolidated budget expenditures, billions USD, 2018-2023



Source: openbudget.gov.ua

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 2021.⁶¹

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).

State budget allocations for 2024 include:

- Social protection of children and families: UAH 27.6 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).

⁵⁸ PeReHID, 2024

⁵⁹ socialprotection.org, 2023

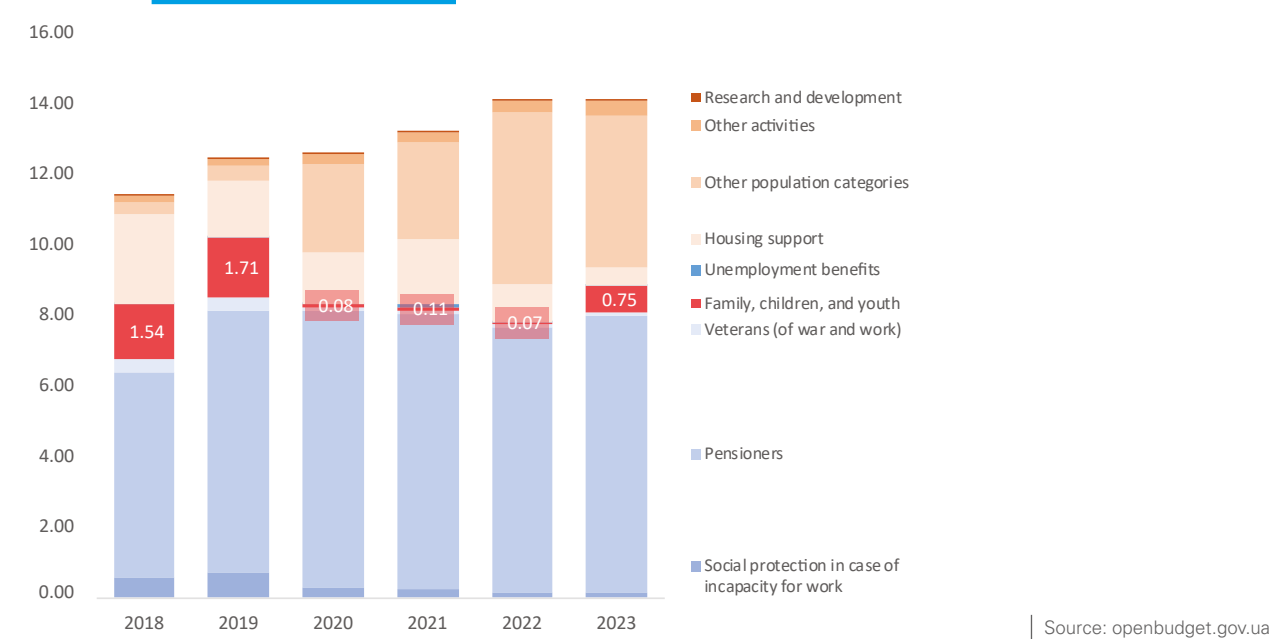
⁶⁰ PeReHID, 2024

⁶¹ Open Budget, 2024

- 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.⁶²

Funding for social services varies widely across regions and districts. Some cities receive ample resources, while others struggle with limited funds, impacting clients due to systemic issues and lack of comprehensive reform. Certain social services are underfunded at both state and local levels, affecting families rather than individual children. Home care for children with specific needs is one such area. Third-party childcare can economically benefit parents by allowing them to return to work. Additionally, child support is not linked to parents’ income levels, potentially leading to inefficient budget allocation.

Figure 26. Consolidated budget expenditures on social protection, by sub-categories, billions USD, 2018-2023



Youth participation

In 2023, the Ministry of Youth and Sport allocated UAH 41.77 million (US\$1.13 million) to “Budget Programme 3401070” for youth policy measures and support of youth and children’s organizations. The “Youth of Ukraine” programme for 2021-2025 has a total budget of UAH 2.2 billion (US\$59.59 million), with contributions from national and local budgets and other sources. For 2023, UAH 288.4 million (US\$7.81 million) was estimated from the national budget, with UAH 31.17 million (US\$844,000) allocated to “Youth of Ukraine.”

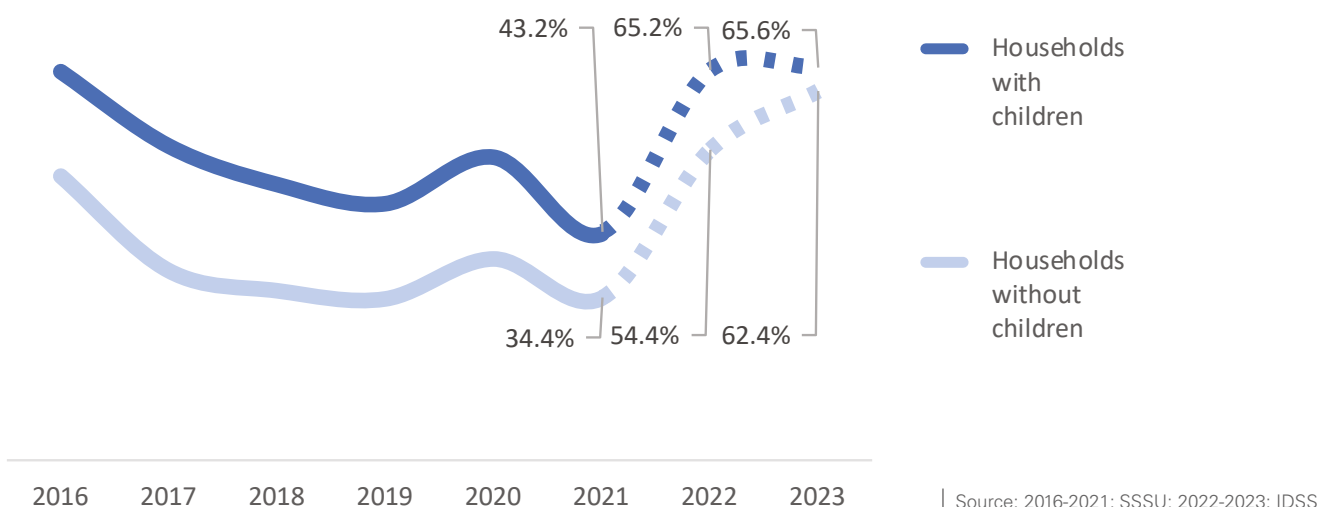
The “Impact of War on Youth in Ukraine” report highlights increased civic engagement, with volunteering rising from 20% to 42%. More young people now aim to be useful to their country, and fewer want to leave Ukraine. There is strong support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity and increased backing for joining NATO and the EU.

Child poverty

In Ukraine, child poverty has worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic and an economic and social crisis.⁶³ 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.

⁶² UNICEF, 2023
⁶³ UNICEF, 2021

Figure 27. Forecast of poverty rate in households with and without children for 2022 and 2023 (with expenditure below the actual subsistence minimum as the criterion), %



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.

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 2023.⁶⁴

Bottlenecks and Strategies

Social protection system

Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop skills and implement awareness and civic-engagement interventions for increased civic engagement of youth.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)

Before the escalation of the war in 2022, Ukraine had made significant strides in improving water quality, wastewater treatment, waste management, and sanitation. Modernization efforts reduced the discharge of polluted water from 875.1 million cubic meters in 2015 to 543.1 million cubic meters in 2021.

However, the war has caused extensive damage to the water infrastructure, including 1,108.5 km of water supply networks, 82 water pumping stations, 12 water treatment plants, and 327 km of sewerage networks. The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in June 2023 was particularly devastating, leaving up to 1 million people without access to drinking water and causing \$5.04 billion in recovery costs.

Even before the war, 40% of the national water and sanitation systems were in critical condition due to aging infrastructure. The ongoing conflict has exacerbated these issues, resulting in over \$11.6 billion in sector losses. By the end of 2023, about 1.7 million children lacked access to safe water, and 3.4 million lacked access to safe sanitation.

In 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Water Strategy of Ukraine until 2050, aiming to fulfil international obligations and sustainable development goals. However, governance in the WASH sector remains fragmented, with various state and local entities responsible for different aspects, complicating coordination and effective response.

Frequent changes in leadership and institutional structures have further hindered strategic planning and decision-making, making it challenging to address critical needs efficiently.

Water supply

40 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.⁶⁵

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.⁶⁶ Figures from 2022 show that approximately 10 million people in Ukraine, approximately 1.7 million children, still lack access to safely managed water services.⁶⁷

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.⁶⁸

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.⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰

According to data collected by WaterNet professional association, different regions face different problems with water quality (also depending by the type of water source [centralised supply / vodokanal, well, or borehole])⁷¹.

⁶⁵ World Bank, 2021

⁶⁶ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

⁶⁷ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

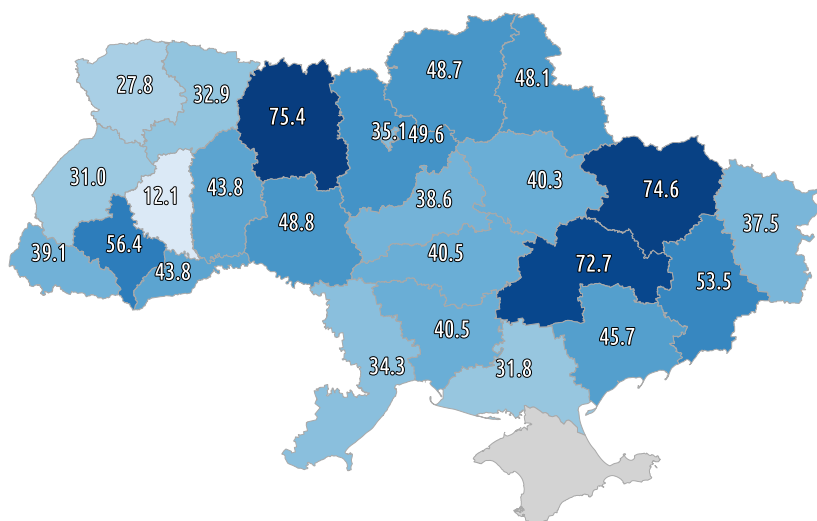
⁶⁸ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2022

⁶⁹ Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, 2022

⁷⁰ Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, 2022

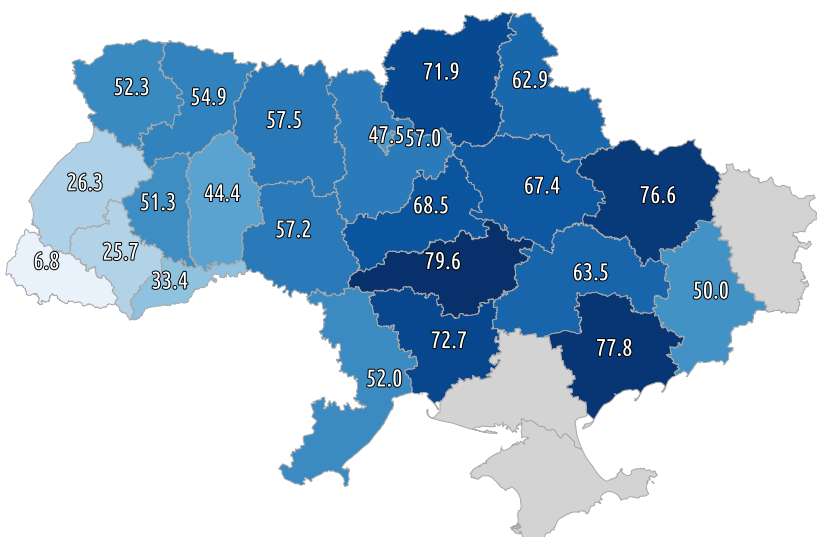
⁷¹ WaterNet, 2024

Figure 28. **Water quality in centralized water supply – turbidity (% of tested samples exceeding the norm for given indicator)**



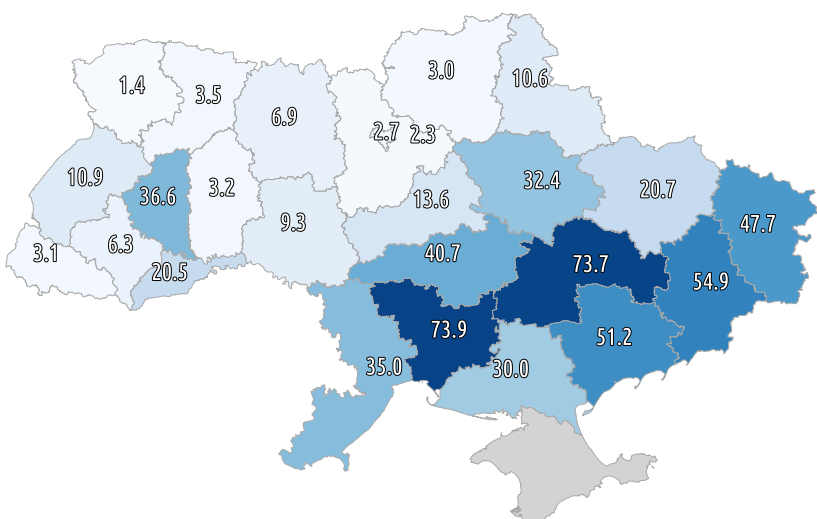
Source: waternet.ua

Figure 29. **Water quality in wells – nitrates (% of tested samples exceeding the norm for given indicator)**



Source: waternet.ua

Figure 30. **Water quality in boreholes – salinity (% of tested samples exceeding the norm for given indicator)**



Source: waternet.ua

After the escalation of the 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.⁷² 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.⁷³

On June 6, 2023, the Kakhovka Dam was destroyed, causing a massive environmental and humanitarian disaster. The flooding and draining affected 5,000 square kilometres and caused over \$11 billion in losses. The sudden release of water impacted 80 settlements, leaving up to a million people without drinking water and 140,000 without electricity.

The water supply and sanitation systems, already in poor condition, suffered additional damage and losses totalling \$148.74 million. Recovery efforts are estimated to cost \$700.92 million, with broader municipal recovery needs at \$292.6 million.⁷⁴

Water costs in Ukraine have risen sharply, while demand and affordability have declined. Energy costs, making up about 30% of expenses for water utilities, are a significant burden. Centralized heating systems in many municipalities rely on water supply, so disruptions in one service affect the others. War-related damages have exacerbated these challenges, with targeted attacks on WASH and related infrastructure.

Sanitation and wastewater treatment

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. 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.⁷⁵

Significant challenges in Ukraine's wastewater treatment persist due to deficient regulatory and governance frameworks. Despite recent efforts like the Water Strategy of Ukraine until 2050 and new legislation, governance remains fragmented. Local governments are responsible for WASH services, leading to inconsistencies. Utility ownership issues and regulatory deficiencies, such as the lack of independence of the NEURC, hinder investments and effective service delivery.

Addressing Ukraine's sanitation challenges requires comprehensive organizational, economic, engineering, and technological measures. Local governments must adopt rules for wastewater management, including acceptance, collection, transportation, and treatment. The sector faces significant issues due to poor infrastructure and management, worsened by the war, causing over \$2.2 billion in damages.⁷⁶ Aging infrastructure from the 1970s-80s highlights the urgent need for investment and effective management to ensure equitable sanitation services.

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 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.⁷⁷

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

⁷² Mahats, N. / AGORA International Journal of Economical Sciences, 2023

⁷³ Nature, 2023

⁷⁴ United Nations Ukraine, 2023

⁷⁵ Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, 2023

⁷⁶ World Bank, 2023

⁷⁷ WHO, 2023

(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%). Centralised sewage was available in 98% of urban and in 96% of rural schools.

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 2050.⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹

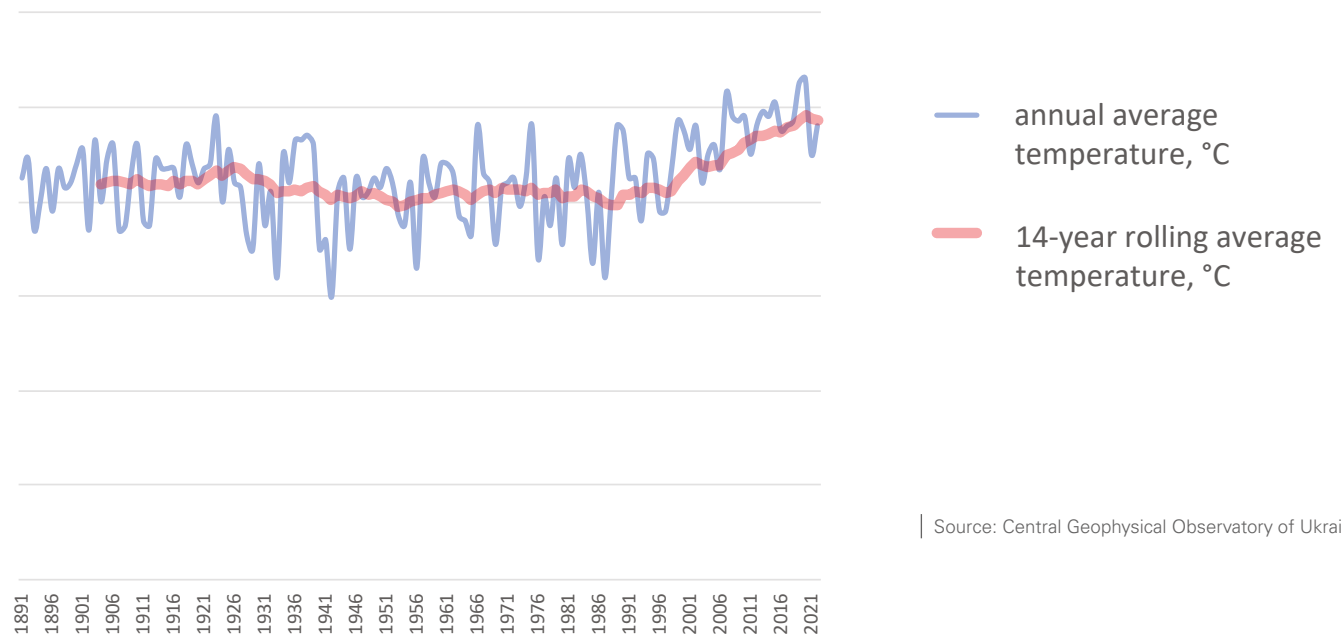
According to the data of Central Geophysical Observatory of Ukraine, the annual average temperature in Ukraine increased from 8.3°C in 1891 to 9.83°C in 2022.⁸⁰

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 tCO₂e, surpassing the annual GHG emissions from a highly industrialised country, like Belgium.⁸¹

Environmental sustainability in Ukraine faces severe challenges due to inadequate solid waste management and war-related infrastructure damage. Only 0.14% of solid waste is recycled, with most ending up in substandard landfills. Frontline areas suffer from water and ground contamination due to active fighting and industrial destruction.

Key environmental issues include man-made disasters, industrial pollution, irrational farming, and poor waste management. A significant knowledge gap exists among youth regarding environmental protection, despite their concern for these issues. The majority of waste management practices are outdated, with most landfills failing to meet European standards, highlighting the need for urgent intervention.

Figure 31. Annual average temperature, Ukraine, 1891-2022



⁷⁸ State Environmental Inspection of Ukraine, 2021
⁷⁹ Shvidenko A, Buksha I, Krakovska S, Lakyda P / Sustainability, 2017
⁸⁰ Central Geophysical Observatory of Ukraine, 2024
⁸¹ Environmental Policy and Advocacy Initiative in Ukraine, 2023

Bottlenecks and Strategies

Water supply

Enabling environment

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Bottlenecks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex and outdated regulatory and governance frameworks that inhibit quality and equitable water supply and sanitation. |
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform national regulatory and governance frameworks. |

Supply

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Bottlenecks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited infrastructure and management capacities at the national and local levels to provide efficient, resilient, and equitable drinking water supply service. |
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of awareness of right holders about safe drinking water supply services. |
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implement effective public engagement and social accountability around safe drinking water supply services. |

Sanitation and wastewater treatment

Enabling environment

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Bottlenecks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deficient regulatory and governance frameworks that inhibit quality wastewater treatment. |
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise regulatory and governance frameworks for quality, resilient, safe, and equitable wastewater treatment and sanitation services. |

Supply

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Bottlenecks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor infrastructure and management capacities to provide efficient and equitable sanitation services for all. |
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop solutions to expand improved, resilient sanitation services to underserved areas / last mile communities (rural / urban). |

Demand

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Bottlenecks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of awareness and practices related to environmentally friendly and hygienic waste management. |
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of resources, policies, and capacities to ensure quality / safe WASH / IPC standards in HCFs. |
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve funding, planning, and monitoring of WASH / IPC in HCF. |

Supply	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate, gender-insensitive, non-inclusive, and poorly maintained WASH infrastructure in institutions.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/upgrade child-friendly, disability-inclusive, and gender-responsive WASH infrastructure with appropriate maintenance in the long-term.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misinformation and misguided practices related to personal and menstrual hygiene, and infection prevention and control (IPC).
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, fund, and implement SBC programmes about positive WASH-related beliefs and behaviours.
Climate and environment risks and hazards	
Enabling environment	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak preparedness of DRR system, and absence of relevant risk management and child focus in climate resilience plans.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance national and local capacities for efficient and equitable response to climate change and environmental sustainability.
Supply	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited national partner resources, capacities, and knowledge hindering resilience to climate change and environmental risks that impact children.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance national and local capacities for efficient and equitable response to climate change and environmental sustainability.
Demand	
Bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of knowledge around the impact of conflict, climate, and environment risks and hazards, particularly for children and youth.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and adopt platforms and tools for youth engagement, and implement community interventions for child-focused disaster, conflict, climate, environment preparedness, and risk reduction.

