

## Internal forced displacement in Ukraine as a challenge to social resilience

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### Abstract

The article examines internal displacement caused by large-scale aggression by the Russian Federation from the perspective of social resilience, which is a new approach. The humanitarian, economic, and social problems of displaced persons are systematized according to indicators that belong to generally accepted resilience assessment tools. The analysis led to the conclusion that forced migration is a serious challenge to stability at the level of individuals, communities, and society as a whole. In the context of a protracted war, the long-term solution to the problems of IDPs lies not only in creating conditions for their safe return to their places of permanent residence, but also in facilitating their integration into host communities. This is an extremely difficult task, which should be a priority for politicians and a subject of constant attention for civil society. Methodologically, the study is based on the use of historical, logical, comparative, and scientific abstraction methods.

**Keywords:** the factor of military confrontation, internal forced displacement, situation of IDPs, challenge to social resilience.

### Introduction

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction glossary defines resilience as “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management” (UNDRR, 2015).

The term originated in the physical and natural sciences, has been widely used in medicine, psychology and ecology, and now increasingly is being used in economic, social and political research. The interest in studying the resilience of social actors is driven by the rapid changes taking place in the modern world, the increasing instability of political systems, the scale of financial crises, and the growing risks of natural and man-made disasters and military conflicts.

Social resilience is considered in the literature in three dimensions: as the ability of social actors to overcome various types of adversity; as the ability to adapt to challenges; and as the ability to transform, to create institutions that promote individual well-being and societal resilience in times of crisis (Keck, M., Sakdapolrak, P., 2013).

Researchers generally agree that the key to social resilience is mutual trust and support, which are influenced by informal social ties, as well as power relations, access to resources and information, and thus issues of equity, justice and human rights.

Increased global risks and hybrid threats, and aggravation of geopolitical confrontation increase the relevance of implementing the management concept of resilience. Starting from 2020, the European Commission has defined resilience as a “new compass of EU policy”, characterized as the ability to maintain functionality and recover from shocks from various factors. Social resilience is considered in the literature as the ability of social actors to overcome various types of adversity (Keck, M., Sakdapolrak, P., 2013) and is characterized by the sustainability of functioning (Kozlovsky S.V., 2012); sustainability and flexibility (Bliznyuk V.V., Yatsenko L.D., 2025) and the availability of adaptive capabilities (Rodin, J., 2009). Recent studies have shown that the most important determinants of social sustainability are: accumulated human and social capital, industrial diversification, high export capacity and low financial constraints, i.e., comprehensive macroeconomic and financial sustainability of the system (Dube, J., PoleSe, M., 2016; Hijzeni, A.,

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Kappelerii, A., Paki, M., 2017). Social resilience, defined as the dynamic capacity of individuals, communities, and societies to successfully adapt to threats or significant hardships (Ungar, 2011, p. 15), is of critical importance in the context of forced displacement. In Ukraine, a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is not only a consequence of the ongoing war, but also a significant factor affecting the social resilience of host communities.

For the theoretical search and practical implementation of measures to ensure social sustainability, it is important to be aware of the challenges they face and the risks they have to overcome. Without this, it is impossible to find adequate means to counteract the danger and achieve the necessary transformation of the social system, which would allow it to function successfully despite the negative factors affecting it.

It is quite clear that today the main challenge to social resilience in Ukraine is the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation, the casualties and destruction it has caused, including the massive forced displacement of the population. The evacuation and flight of millions of citizens poses serious dangers to the forced migrants themselves, to their communities of origin and settlement, and to the country as a whole. To find the ways to ensure social sustainability — especially with regard to vulnerable groups, which certainly include IDPs — seems to be not only a scientific but also a political task.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the problems faced by IDPs, the challenges to their resilience and the resilience of society as a whole, the state's response to them, and possible further steps to address them.

The article provides an overview of the situation of war-related IDPs, the consequences of forced migration for individuals and communities, and the situation at the national level according to the main indicators included in the generally accepted resilience assessment tools, in particular the intensity of forced migration, property differentiation, risk of poverty and social exclusion, employment, gender gap in employment and income, meeting education and health needs, the level of social cohesion (European Commission, 2023).

The final part of the article is devoted to assistance to the affected population, i.e., targeted activities of the state and civil society, measures taken in response to the danger and aimed at ensuring social resilience, including assessment of the situation, accumulation of resources and development of a constructive approach to improving the situation of IDPs.

The purpose of the study is to substantiate the institutional architecture of ensuring social sustainability in the context of the spread of risks of forced internal displacement.

### ***Methodology***

The research methodology integrates historical, logical, comparative, and scientific abstraction methods to analyze how the spread of internal displacement influences social sustainability. The use of these methods, combined with empirical research, are important tools for a deep and comprehensive justification of the management tools of state social policy. The historical method is used to study the genesis and evolution of problems related to internal displacement and social resilience. The use of this method allows us to understand how approaches to supporting IDPs have changed, what historical events have influenced their situation, and what lessons can be learned from past experience. Building theoretical models, formulating hypotheses and drawing deductive conclusions about the relationship between various factors affecting social sustainability, substantiating cause-and-effect relationships and logical contradictions is possible through the use of logical and comparative methods. Methods of scientific abstraction involve highlighting the essential properties and relationships of the phenomenon under study, distracting from unimportant details. Using this method, the authors create theoretical constructs and concepts that reflect the key aspects of the impact of the phenomenon of internal displacement on social stability in a country in a state of protracted war.

### ***Results***

The forced displacement of people as a result of war and its massive scale is an obvious challenge to social stability. Internal displacement creates complex social challenges that put pressure on social resilience. Increases in population in host regions can put strain on infrastructure and resources, including housing, social services, and utilities. As noted by Berry (Berry, J.W., 1997), acculturation processes that occur during migration can be accompanied by social tensions and complications in intergroup relations due to differences in cultural norms, values and socioeconomic status. In addition, the influx of IDPs can cause economic imbalances, particularly in the labor market (Torosyan, Karine & Pignatti, 2018). The psychological effects of traumatic experiences should not be underestimated, both for IDPs who have experienced displacement and related losses, and for members of host communities who may experience secondary stress (Fazel et al., 2012).

Forced displacement of the population as a result of the war and its massive scale is an obvious challenge to social stability. The available data on the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is rather conditional and belongs to the category of estimates. Two main sources are usually used. The first is administrative data on the registration of citizens as IDPs, which is carried out by social services. However, it should be borne in mind that the possibilities for statistical accounting are limited in the context of war. Moreover, the situation is constantly changing. Some people have been able to return to their homes, while others are forced to flee the regions of hostilities. Moreover, some of the actually displaced persons do not officially register as IDPs, while others do not deregister after returning home. The second source is survey data and estimates based on it. In times of war, when face-to-face interviews are virtually impossible, sociologists communicate with respondents through various online platforms or by dialing randomly selected phone numbers. Thus, when using sociological survey data, it should be borne in mind that, firstly, the range of respondents is limited to those who use the Internet and mobile communications, and secondly, the destruction of infrastructure has led to communication disruptions in many regions, which reduces the likelihood of getting into the sample of their residents. At the same time, the surveys are the main source of information about the needs, problems and attitudes of IDPs.

The first wave of forced internal displacement occurred in Ukraine in 2014. As a result of the annexation of Crimea and the hybrid war which Russian Federation began in the part of territory of Donbas, approximately 1.5 million IDPs were registered. The full-scale invasion of the Russia on February 24, 2022 led to an increase in the number of internal forced migrants by approximately 3.6 million people. As of 2024, 4,9 IDPs were registered by relevant authorities (Ministry of Social Policy, 2024).

According to estimates based on the IOM forced migration surveys (from April 2022 17 rounds of such surveys have been conducted, which makes it possible to monitor the dynamics of forced displacement and the needs of IDPs), the number of Ukrainians who were forced to change their place of residence after February 24, 2022, was 3.7 million as of August 2024 (IOM, 2024a). The IOM estimates of the number of IDPs reflect the dynamics of forced displacement, which was most active in the spring of 2022, as well as the return of displaced persons, which significantly intensified in the summer of 2022 due to the liberation of some occupied territories, but slowed down with the onset of winter 2022-2023 as a result of massive enemy attacks on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure caused by the destruction of electricity and heat supply systems. Some increase in the number of IDPs was also observed in 2024 as a result of certain successes of the Russian army at the front and increased shelling of Ukrainian cities. (Fig. 1).

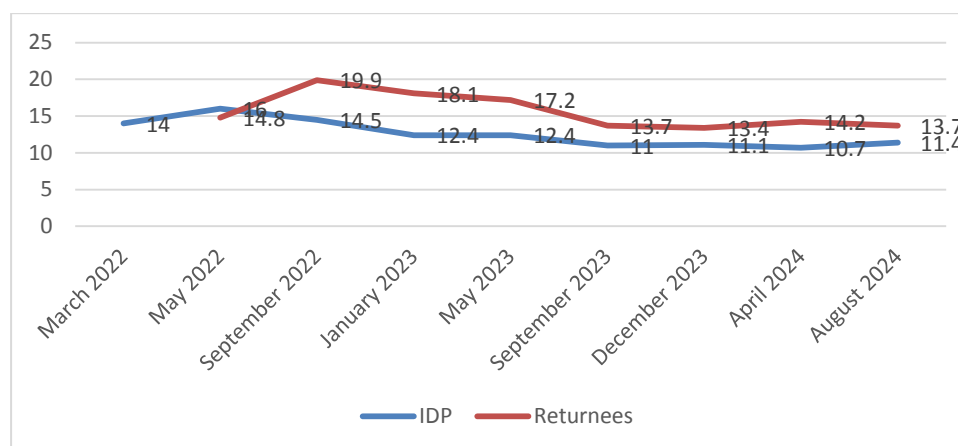


Figure 1. Share of IDPs and returnees in the total population of Ukraine according to IOM surveys from Round 1 (March 2022) to Round 17 (August 2024)

Note — compiled by the authors based on the source (IOM, 2024a).

Among citizens who found themselves in a situation of forced displacement after the beginning of the Russian invasion, 52 % are women, 48 % are men. A quarter of displaced persons (24 % each) are children or aged 60 or older (IOM, 2024a). IDP households are characterized by a high proportion of members belonging to vulnerable groups of the population. 29 % of them include disabled and 42 % chronically ill people.

ple (IOM, 2024a). Thus, not only the scale, but also the composition of forced displacement poses a challenge to social resilience.

Institutions at the local level were often unprepared for the sudden increase in population. Communities that received large numbers of IDPs faced overloading of healthcare, education, housing infrastructure and social protection systems (Malynovska O., Yatsenko L., 2024). For example, in the western regions, the burden on schools has increased by 30–40 %, which has led to restrictions on access to quality education for local children. Internally displaced persons often have different social, economic, and cultural characteristics compared to the host population. According to a UNDP analytical report, more than 60 % of IDPs report difficulties in integration, including alienation, stigmatization or prejudice from local residents. Social cohesion is crucial for social resilience, as Putnam (Putnam R.D., 2007) emphasizes in his social capital theory. Loss of horizontal ties, trust and intergroup solidarity can lead to escalation of local conflicts, fragmentation of communities and reduced collective efficiency.

The institutional capacity of local governments is critical for social resilience, as, according to the Ostrom E. (Ostrom E., 2007), approach, it is local communities that have the potential to develop adaptive mechanisms for managing common resources. In the context of war, lack of funding, human resources and institutional fragmentation reduce the effectiveness of the response. In times of war, it is important to ensure the institutional capacity of not only host communities, but also communities close to the contact line.

It is important to note that since April 2022, when IOM began collecting information on returns, the share of returnees who assume that they will flee again if the situation changes has steadily decreased from 15 % to 5 % as of August 2024 (IOM, 2024b). People are gradually adapting to the conditions of protracted war. At the same time, returnees often continue to face the problems that led to their forced migration. According to an assessment of the conditions faced by returning IDPs conducted in the April-May 2024 (which analyzed the situation in 858 settlements according to five sets of indicators: livelihoods, destroyed housing, access to utilities and public services, security, and public life), in 40 % of the surveyed locations, a difficult situation for life has developed, primarily due to the slow recovery of the labor market and the closure of enterprises, which has severely limited employment opportunities; in 5 % of the surveyed settlements, the situation was assessed as extremely difficult. 75 % of returnees lived in settlements where about 40 % of the housing stock was damaged or destroyed as a result of the war, 59 % — where schools were affected, 43 % — medical institutions (IOM, 2024b). Thus, despite being at home, a significant number of returnees remain in a rather vulnerable situation. The challenge to their personal resilience and the resilience of the communities to which they return is not only the destruction and continued shelling, but also the fact of their prolonged absence (on average, returnees were in an IDP situation for 750 days), which affected the reliability of social ties, employment and sources of income, continuation of education etc.

The issue of integration is becoming more and more important with the passage of time, since in the conditions of a protracted war, the length of stay of people in the situation of IDPs is increasing, and at the same time, the share of IDPs who do not plan to return to their previous places of residence and will build their lives in a new place is increasing. Thus, according to the IOM survey, although the majority of IDPs plan to eventually return home, the share of such persons is gradually decreasing. It was 77 % in August 2022 and 62 % in September 2023. On the other hand, the share of those who plan to integrate in their current place of stay almost doubled during the year. It was 10 % in August 2022 and 18 % in September 2023 (IOM, 2023c). In August 2024 there were 32 % IDPs who plan to integrate in their current place of settlement, majority of them in the city of Kyiv, Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions (IOM, 2024a).

One of the most obvious and dangerous consequences of forced displacement for social sustainability is the sudden poverty of many IDPs, not only those with the lowest incomes but also the middle class, and the deepening of wealth inequality. The World Bank estimates that the level of extreme poverty (consumption of less than \$6.85 per day) in Ukraine increased from 5.5 % in 2021 to 24.1 % in 2022, adding 7.1 million poor people (World Bank, 2023). In the context of the war, due to the loss of property and jobs, inflation and rising prices, 65 % of Ukrainian households have seen their incomes decline, but among internally displaced persons and IDPs who have returned to their places of residence, the share of households whose incomes have declined is even higher — 74 % and 73 %, respectively (REACH, 2023a).

According to a survey of IDPs living in Kyiv, Dnipro and Lviv, the largest cities in Ukraine that have received significant numbers of IDPs, the majority of IDPs (46 %) live in poverty, with enough money only to buy food and other essential goods. Almost a quarter (23 %) are below the poverty line and do not always have enough money even for food. Despite the poor financial situation of many Ukrainians who have not been displaced, their situation is still better: 8 % are below the poverty line and 38 % have enough money to

buy only food (Bondarenko, P., 2023). Other studies confirm this situation. The World Bank estimates that one in four non-displaced Ukrainian households and one in three displaced households face the problem of malnutrition (World Bank, 2023).

Loss of housing is a major factor of poverty. According to the IOM survey, almost half of IDPs (47 %) had their homes destroyed or damaged as a result of the war. At the same time, only 8 % of the non-displaced population reported losing their property (IOM, 2023c). The majority of IDPs are forced to live in temporary shelters provided by local authorities or volunteers, or are staying with relatives or friends. The aforementioned survey in Kyiv, Dnipro and Lviv showed that 27 % of IDPs rented housing, while 10 % of locals rented, and 1.5 % of IDPs and 81 % of locals owned their own housing. Only 45 % of IDP households could afford to rent without government assistance, while housing subsidies are much lower than rents in many regions (Bondarenko, P., 2023).

In a context of widespread poverty, the main source of income for a significant proportion of IDPs (22 %) is government assistance to IDPs (their share is significantly higher for households with children, a third (30 %) of whom are primarily dependent on IDP assistance, and for households consisting only of women (28 %)) (IOM, 2023b). Only 38 % of IDPs relied on wages as their main source of income, compared to 51 % of the non-displaced population.

Roughly the same results were found in a survey conducted by REACH, an organization whose mission is to provide adequate information for an appropriate response to humanitarian crises. According to the survey, about half of all IDP households surveyed relied on humanitarian aid (45 %) and government social assistance (44 %), while only 26 % relied on salaries (REACH, 2023b).

The difficult financial situation of IDPs is largely the result of job losses and difficulties in finding employment in new locations. IOM research shows that only 45 % of working-age IDPs reported being employed, compared to 74 % before the full-scale invasion. The unemployment rate among IDPs is higher than among the non-displaced population. Among IDPs who had a job before the invasion and were unemployed at the time of the survey, 91 % cited the current war as the reason for their unemployment (IOM, 2024c).

This situation is confirmed by other studies. According to the aforementioned survey in Ukraine's largest cities 45 % of IDPs are employed, while 64 % of local residents are employed. The employment gap between these two groups is smallest among young people aged 18–29, at just 6 percentage points, and largest among those over 50, at 41 percentage points — indicating that older IDPs face the most disadvantaged position in the labor market. (Bondarenko, P., 2023).

As of fall 2022, 22.5 thousand internally displaced persons (IDPs) were officially registered as unemployed. As of December 2023, amid some adjustment of the labor market to the war and a general decrease in the number of unemployed, it has more than halved. At the same time, the share of IDPs among the registered unemployed remains unchanged and stable at 8-9 percent. The number of unemployed IDPs increased in 2024 again. Their number in September 2024 reached 22.9 thousand. In the last period the share of IDPs among the registered unemployed increased to 22.3 percent (Fig. 2).

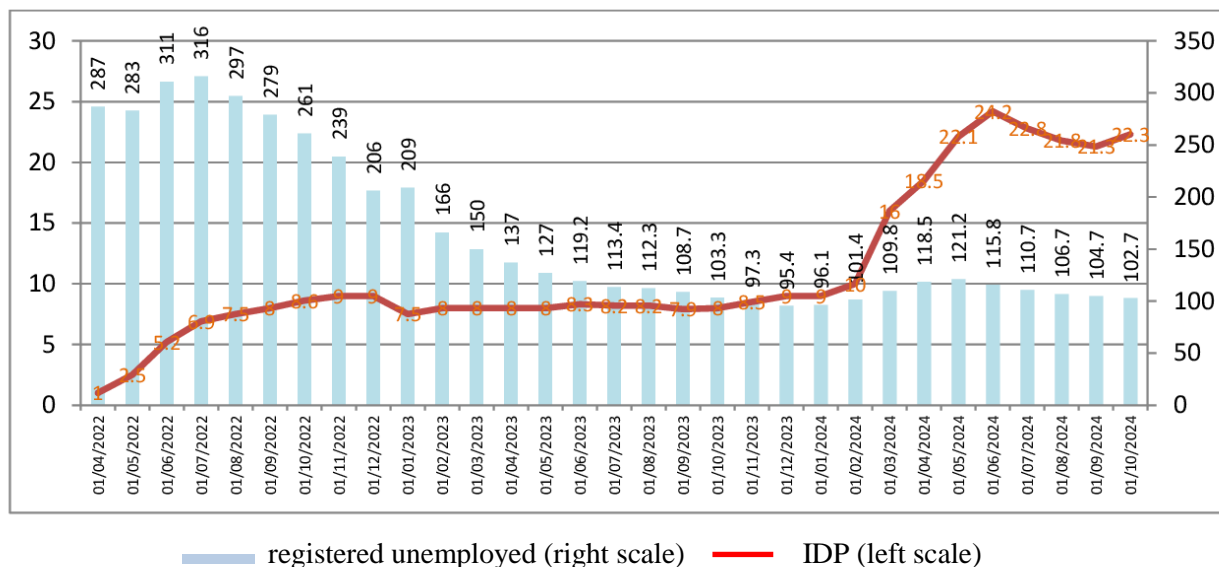


Figure 2. The number of officially registered unemployed, the people, and the share of IDPs among them, %.

*Note — compiled by the authors based on the source (State Employment Service).*

The level of employment of IDPs remains low. Only 50 percent of the officially registered unemployed will be employed in 2024.

Forced migrants are also prominently represented among those who had to change jobs after February 2022, switched to informal work, or had their salaries reduced (REACH, 2023a).

An analysis of IDPs' requests based on data from the job search portal "robota.ua" shows that the main obstacles to employment of IDPs are low salaries for the vacancies offered, employers' reluctance to hire IDPs for fear that the employee will soon return home, lack of vacancies, regardless of the level of education and experience, lack of professional skills or irrelevance of the profession (Judicial and legal newspaper in Ukraine, 2023).

Some informants reported that their IDP status prevented them from holding certain positions, such as those related to fiscal responsibilities (as such jobs require a permanent residence address). Another obstacle was the problem of confirming work experience due to the lack of necessary documents. In some cases, difficulties arose because employers feared that they would not be able to dismiss IDPs who, in their view, enjoyed certain benefits (REACH, 2023a). In 2024, among respondents who were unemployed and actively looking for a job, 76 per cent reported a scarcity of jobs in their region that matched their interests, experience or skills, 71 per cent indicated that the labor market in their region is not functioning because of the war. Moreover, more than 50 per cent of respondents reported receiving informal employment offers and 40 per cent reported discrimination based on age (IOM, 2024c).

Thus, the situation of IDPs in the labour market has a negative impact on the efficiency of the use of the country's labour potential, on the level of informal employment, exacerbates the problem of poverty and social exclusion, and thus poses a serious challenge to the sustainability of society. It also poses a serious challenge to resilience at the individual level, reducing self-esteem, increasing the risk of depression, and thereby worsening the prospects for overcoming difficulties. Studies of the long-term effects of forced displacement in Georgia, show that the labor market situation of IDPs is much worse than that of the local population, even twenty years after displacement. Georgian researchers have found that IDPs from Abkhazia and South Ossetia are 3.9 to 11.2 percentage points less likely to be employed, 11.6 percentage points more likely to be unemployed, and consistently receive lower wages than locals with similar qualifications (Torosyan, K., Pignatti, N., Obrizan, M., 2018).

At the same time, it should be emphasized that, according to the IOM survey, 16 % of IDPs are actively looking for work (IOM, 2024c). Thus, IDPs have a significant labor potential that they want to realize, but need support from society and the state.

As a result of the events that led to forced migration and the difficulties of living in new places of residence, forced migrants are exposed to negative consequences for their mental and physical health. Their condition is affected by poverty, unemployment, separation from their familiar environment, social isolation, etc. Constant stress leads to mental disorders. In the Human Impact Assessment of the war, 16 % of IDP households reported that at least one member of the household was too depressed or anxious to carry out normal daily activities (REACH, 2023a). Medical examinations at the IDP shelter in Lviv revealed that 31.5 % of patients suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, 31.5 % from depression, 11.1 % from anxiety disorder and 1.5 % from psychosis. The level of mental disorders among IDPs was significantly higher than among the non-displaced population (Rizzi, D. et al., 2022). Physical health also suffers from stress. IDPs reported sleep problems, poor and inadequate nutrition, and aggravation of chronic diseases.

Negative coping strategies, such as reduced consumption and total austerity, lead to the postponement of necessary treatment, with all the negative consequences for health and quality of life. At the same time, IDPs' access to health services is hampered not only by displacement, but also by the objective situation in the health sector, including the destruction of the sector's infrastructure and the lack of staff due to the departure of many workers abroad. It is estimated that the damage to medical facilities and the influx of IDPs have doubled the workload of medical facilities in some regions (Pandeya, A. et al., 2023). People with health problems are particularly vulnerable in this situation. According to ACAPS, a non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to providing evidence-based analysis of humanitarian crises, more than 920,000 IDPs suffered from cardiovascular disease, at least 200,000 from diabetes, more than 34,000 from cancer, about 30,000 from HIV, and about 4,500 from tuberculosis (Pandeya, A. et al., 2023). According to the third round of the World Health Organization survey, conducted in April 2023, although the situation had improved significantly compared to the first months of the war, IDPs still faced significant difficulties in accessing health

care. 16 % of IDPs did not have access to a family doctor, mostly because they did not register in their new place of residence, compared to only 4 % of the non-displaced population (World Health Organization, 2023). The deterioration of health and inadequate access to health services is a serious challenge to the resilience of the population in times of war, which will inevitably affect the resilience of society as a whole, its ability to cope with the hardships caused by war and to ensure post-war recovery. It will have long-term consequences, affecting the average life expectancy, the duration of labor activity, and the reproductive function of the population, thus exacerbating an already difficult demographic situation.

In addition to health issues, educational issues are extremely important for the future of IDP children. According to a REACH assessment of the education sector in the regions affected by war, 41–60 % of pupils and students and 77 % of teachers and lecturers were forced to leave the Donetsk and Kherson regions as a result of the hostilities (REACH, 2023b). According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, in the academic year 2022/2023, more than 167,000 internally displaced children continued their education in functioning secondary education institutions, but it is not certain that all displaced children continued their education (Educational Ombudsman of Ukraine, 2022). Children who have been displaced within Ukraine have experienced disruptions in their education and educational losses due to displacement, and as a result of the stress they have experienced, their motivation to learn has been reduced. Adapting to a new educational institution and establishing communication with teachers and peers is a serious challenge for them.

In the IOM survey (Round 12, January 2023), 17 % of IDP households reported a lack of access to education for children (IOM, 2023a). As schooling has largely moved online since the outbreak of the war, the most common problems were the absence or poor quality of the internet (45 %) and the lack of online devices necessary for learning, i.e., personal computers, laptops, smartphones (10 %), as well as the complete absence of learning opportunities due to evacuation, displacement, staying in a shelter, etc.

The educational problems of students in the context of forced migration are compounded by the problems of teachers who have also been displaced but continue to work. IDP teachers are more likely than their non-displaced counterparts to report that they are unable to teach the full curriculum (43 % vs. 25 %) and that they have to cancel classes due to lack of electricity and/or internet (64 %).

The lack of adequate conditions for IDP children to receive the education necessary for socialization and self-realization significantly impairs their ability to overcome difficulties and adapt to life in a new place, to become full members of the community and society as a whole.

Another challenge to social security as a result of massive forced displacement is the widening gender gap. Women with children, who make up the majority of IDPs, are a more vulnerable group of displaced persons. As a result of forced migration and mobilization of men to the army, many families have been divided, and many women have become the sole breadwinners. 52 % of IDP women reported a loss of income compared to 31 % of women who were not displaced, 48 % of IDP women and 36 % of women in general experienced physical and mental health problems (BBC, 2023). A study on the economic activity of IDP women and their strategies to restore their well-being, conducted in the spring of 2023, found that the financial situation of displaced women is often extremely unsatisfactory. 59 % of IDP women are forced to save money to meet basic needs such as food and clothing, while 51 % of local women, 40 % of IDP men, and 35 % of local men do so. The worst situation is in the east of the country, near the frontline, where 75 % of IDP women have to save on the most basic needs. IDP women are the most dependent on social benefits and humanitarian aid: on average, 59 % of their family budgets are social benefits and humanitarian aid, compared to 42 % for IDP men, 44 % for local women, and 36 % for local men (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2023).

The study also documented the increased vulnerability of IDP women in the labor market. Half of IDP women lost their jobs as a result of the Russian aggression, compared to 28 % of IDP men and 20 % of the local population. At the time of the survey, only 31 % of IDP women were employed, compared to 59 % of IDP men and 45 % of local women (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2023). The proportion of women employed part-time has increased significantly. This is because children's institutions and schools are not functioning as usual, or it is difficult to enroll a child in a kindergarten in the places of residence due to overcrowding, which does not allow mothers to work full time. One in ten unemployed IDP women reported that they could not find a job due to poor mental health, depression and apathy. About the same proportion of unemployed women reported discrimination, as employers sometimes fear that women with children will be absent frequently due to their children's illnesses.

During the war, Ukrainian society demonstrated an unprecedented level of cohesion, mutual trust, and cooperation. According to opinion polls, massive forced displacement has not had a significant impact on



social cohesion. According to the SHARP assessment conducted at the end of 2022, 80 % of Ukrainians rejected the statement that tensions exist between IDPs and host communities, confirming the high level of compassion and willingness to help fellow citizens who were forced to leave their homes against their will. However, there were some tensions in the regions receiving large numbers of IDPs. These were related to access to basic necessities, public services and housing, and were fueled by certain stereotypes about the specific characteristics and political preferences of the inhabitants of the east of the country, who make up the majority of IDPs (UNDP, 2023a).

The second wave of the Resilience Assessment of the Ukrainian Population (June 2023) confirmed that the level of tensions caused by forced migration between IDPs and host communities remains low (UNDP, 2023b). However, it is worth noting that IDPs, returnees and the non-displaced population assess the situation differently. For example, 18 % of IDPs perceived tensions, compared to 14 % of local residents, once again confirming the increased vulnerability of forced migrants. It is also alarming that 11 % of returnees reported feeling tension, which means that not only the arrival of large numbers of new people in communities, but also the return of IDPs to their homes is a challenge to social unity. According to the 14th round of the IOM survey (August 2023), 48 % of returnees lived in settlements where residents were somewhat or very concerned about the level of tension in their communities (IOM, 2023d).

Most often, tensions arise in relation to the distribution of humanitarian aid, social assistance or compensation schemes, and are based on the perception of non-displaced people, especially vulnerable groups, that IDPs are unfairly receiving financial assistance and certain benefits. For example, a survey aimed at identifying opportunities and obstacles to the integration of IDPs revealed that 70 % of local residents believe that the authorities are more concerned with the needs and problems of IDPs than with those of the local population (at the same time, IDPs believe that the authorities pay equal attention to all) (Public space, 2023). Other sources of tension include the real or perceived antisocial behavior of newcomers, accusations that male IDPs are evading military service, especially when many locals are at the front, and cultural or linguistic differences. Researchers who have studied the situation of IDPs in Kyiv, Dnipro and Lviv have found that locals expect IDPs to be more socially active, make greater efforts to settle down and take more responsibility for their lives (Bondarenko, P., 2023).

Confusion, apathy, which is a consequence of a traumatic experience, on the one hand, becomes an obstacle to the adaptation of the new arrivals and their transformation into full-fledged members of the host communities, and on the other hand, it prevents adequate perception of forced migrants by local residents. Thus, 13 % of IDPs interviewed in Kyiv, Dnipro and Lviv reported that they faced negative attitudes from the local population. 6 % of respondents felt prejudiced by representatives of state institutions or local authorities, and 10 % complained that they were denied employment due to the fact that they are internally displaced persons (Bondarenko, P., 2023). Although these indicators are insignificant, they should not be neglected. Cases of discrimination against IDPs do occur. At the same time some displaced persons rely on assistance but are slow to make efforts to find work, study or retrain if needed.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that during the above-mentioned survey of IDPs in the three largest cities of Ukraine, when asked whether they feel like full-fledged members of the community in which they live, 72 % answered “yes”, which is a rather encouraging indicator. After all, the main condition for preserving social unity in the situation of mass forced displacements caused by war is, of course, the integration of IDPs in new places of residence or reintegration in the case of returning home, that is, finding a long-term solution for the affected population.

It is important to note that despite the problems common to all IDPs, persons who decided to integrate in their places of stay, i.e., thus already took a step towards improving their lives, stated that their circumstances were more favorable than those of resettled people in general. Thus, 22 % of IDPs determined to integrate are unable to cover basic costs, compared to 26 % of all IDPs. A high level of lack of access to adequate housing was noted by 15 %, an average level — by 12 % of integration-oriented respondents, and 18 % and 14 % of the total. A high level of improper access to food was noted by 6 % and average level by 10 % of IDPs oriented to integration and 7 and 13 %, respectively, of the total (IOM, 2023b). At the same time, forced migrants focused on long-term residence in the places of settlement, as well as IDPs in general, noted a high risk of inability to participate in public life — 26 %, which indicates an insufficient level of integration of arrivals into local communities (IOM, 2023c).

Massive internal displacement is not only a humanitarian challenge, but also a systemic problem for Ukraine’s social sustainability. It requires not only protection policies, but also active investment in the adaptation, integration and human capital development of IDPs. A resilience-oriented approach should combine



institutional, economic, social and cultural interventions, with an emphasis on inclusiveness, mutual responsibility and a long-term vision of social resilience (Fig. 3).

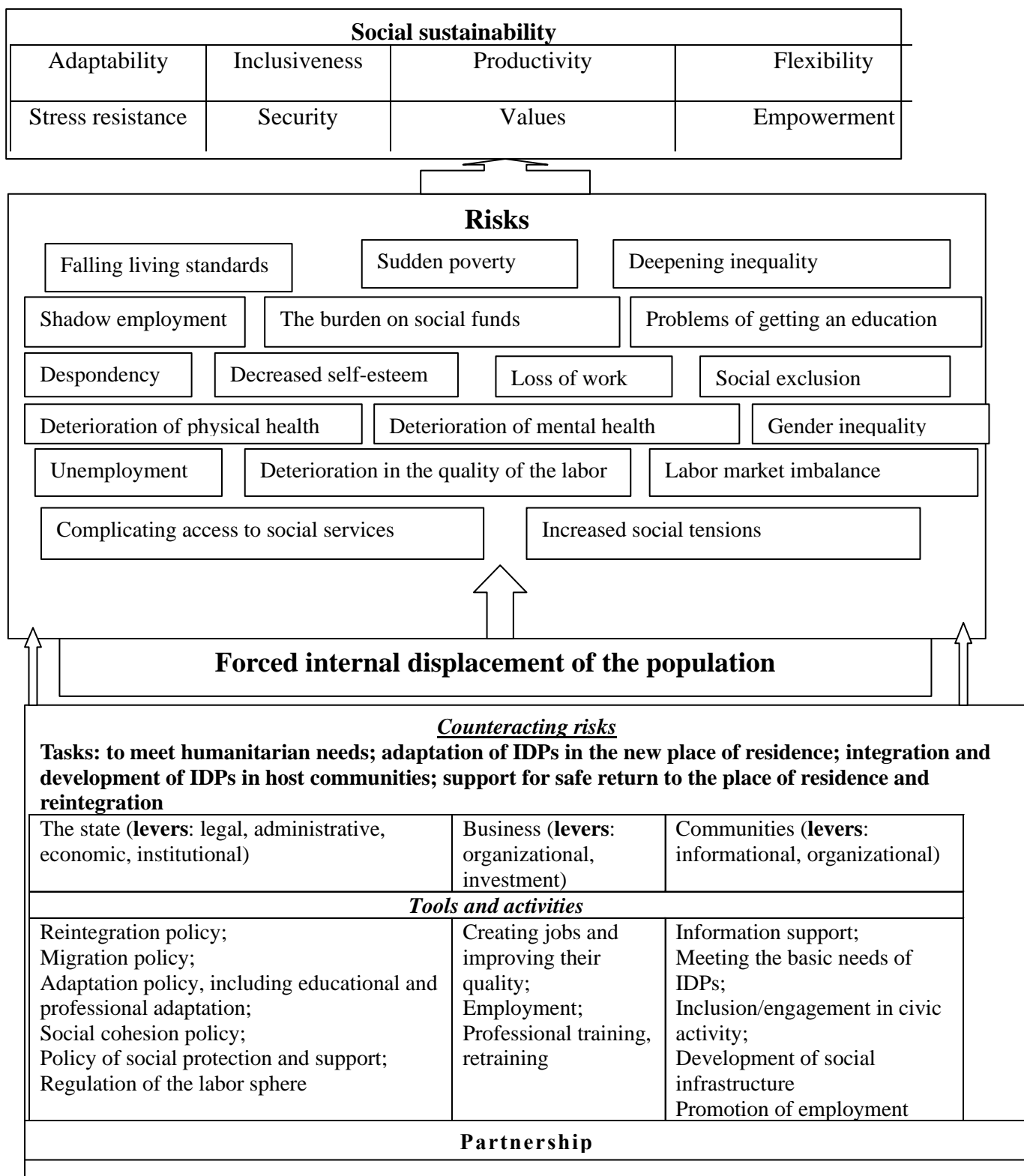


Figure 3. Cognitive scheme of the impact of the risks of forced internal displacement on the formation of social resilience

Note — compiled by the authors

An effective response to the risks of forced internal displacement and the use of IDPs' potential to strengthen social resilience requires coordinated work of various institutional actors. The architecture of the social resilience system includes the following structural elements:

- **economic socialization**, which will ensure IDPs' access to the labor market and economic opportunities. The state develops employment programs, local governments facilitate employment at the local level, international organizations support vocational training, and NGOs provide counseling;
- **flexibility of the labor market and labor relations**, which expands the opportunities for active involvement of IDPs in economic activities in host communities;
- **adaptability**, which will ensure the integration of IDPs and the readiness of host communities to change. The state supports educational programs, local governments develop flexible local initiatives, international organizations promote the development of life skills, and NGOs provide information support;
- **inclusiveness**, which should ensure the creation of an environment of equal opportunities and respect for the rights of IDPs. The state enforces anti-discrimination legislation, local governments implement inclusive local programs, international organizations monitor the observance of rights, and NGOs are engaged in advocacy and overcoming stereotypes;
- **psycho-emotional resilience**, which means ensuring access to psychological support and assistance in overcoming traumatic experiences. The state creates national programs, local governments open local centers, international organizations provide financial support, and NGOs provide free counseling and support groups;
- **productivity**, which encompasses not only economic efficiency but also quality of life, personal development, and general well-being, as productive employment, productive work, and decent remuneration for it are the basis for quality of life, while a person succeeds not only through external incentives but also through interest in activities and a sense of autonomy, where intrinsic motivation and all-round development are important aspects;
- **security**, namely: building a reliable system to protect people and the environment from the impact of hazards and prevent social risks;
- **empowerment**, which is one of the key principles of the Human Development Concept and means creating favorable conditions for IDPs to maximize their potential within their needs and interests, to acquire knowledge and have access to the necessary resources to ensure decent living conditions.

Social resilience in the context of internal displacement is a complex and multifaceted process that requires concerted efforts by all levels of government and civil society. An effective architecture of institutional response involves not only providing assistance, but also creating conditions for economic socialization, developing flexibility and adaptability, ensuring inclusiveness and supporting the psycho-emotional resilience of IDPs. Understanding the priorities and specific ways to minimize the risks associated with forced displacement and overcome their consequences is one of the most pressing and urgent tasks of modern Ukraine. Its solution is a prerequisite for ensuring social sustainability. The complexity and scale of this task requires a systematic approach, which primarily implies the coordination of actions of the state, business and communities. Formation of an effective risk management mechanism in these conditions will help to neutralize, prevent or reduce the impact of unforeseen or underestimated negative events on society.

Further research should be aimed at assessing the effectiveness of existing programs and developing new approaches to strengthen the social resilience of both IDPs and host communities in Ukraine.

### **Conclusion**

Finding an adequate response to the challenges posed by the forced internal displacement of the population is a prerequisite for the viability of the Ukrainian state, its ability to withstand the war and successfully recover after it ends. In the short term, the state's priorities should be to create legal, economic, institutional, investment and information conditions to meet the humanitarian needs of IDPs, their adaptation and integration in host communities, and their safe return to their places of origin. The realization of this task is directly related to the restoration and putting the economy on a sustainable growth path and ensuring productive employment, restoration of housing and civil infrastructure, job creation, and access to social services on this basis. The state plays a key role in its implementation. State policy should be aimed at developing and unlocking people's potential through technology; focusing on the human component of sustainable development; creating the work environment of the future; and ensuring inclusiveness, equality, justice and diversity. An important prerequisite for the successful implementation of these tasks is the effective development of

social partnership, as the partnership between the state, business and communities ensures social dialogue and intensifies social responsibility in solving problems.

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