



LIFE AFTER CONFLICT: SURVEY ON THE SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VETERANS OF THE CONFLICT IN EASTERN UKRAINE AND THEIR FAMILIES

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Ministry of Veterans Affairs,
Temporarily Occupied Territories and
Internally Displaced Persons of Ukraine



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INTRODUCTION

Veterans of the conflict in eastern Ukraine have encountered challenges in reintegrating to civilian life following their return from military service. These challenges, unique in their nature, derive from the veterans' experience in the conflict, which has often had a lasting impact. Moreover, the lack of comprehensive and up-to-date data on the socioeconomic needs and reintegration experience of the veterans has been a barrier to the provision of tailored support. In cooperation with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission in Ukraine, funded by the European Union (EU), has commissioned a comprehensive household survey of veterans of the conflict in eastern Ukraine and their families to fill this gap. The survey seeks to collect and analyze the information on the sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the veterans and their families, as well as the challenges they face in reintegrating into their communities.

According to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons, there were approximately 370,000 veterans in July–October 2019 when the survey was conducted. This study, a key component of the “Community-based reintegration support for veterans of the conflict in eastern Ukraine and their families” project, implemented by IOM Ukraine with EU funding, aims to provide the Government of Ukraine, local authorities, and relevant civil society organizations with a solid knowledge basis to address the challenges veterans face in reintegration. The project also includes other important components, such as workshops on civil employment, training on business development, vocational training and self-employment grants, social cohesion activities, psychosocial support, and several information and outreach campaigns. The report is divided into seven parts, each focusing on a specific section of the survey. The following section provides a detailed overview of the methodology adopted for the survey.

METHODOLOGY

The study includes quantitative and qualitative components. From July to October 2019, 2,530 respondents were surveyed, including veterans and their family members in Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast, as well as Dnipropetrovsk and Lviv oblasts, where the concentration of registered veterans is the largest:

- 1,780 interviews were conducted with veterans who had been directly involved in the execution of military operations in the east of Ukraine (Donetsk/Luhansk oblasts) since April 2014;
- 750 interviews were conducted with family members of veterans (wives, husbands, or partners with whom veterans shared a household).

A snowball sampling technique was applied for the selection of respondents for the survey. Respondents were randomly selected via a veterans' telephone database maintained by Info Sapiens, a Ukrainian research company which conducted previous surveys on veterans. Info Sapiens also contacted local governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with veterans to identify further respondents. Each person contacted to participate in the survey was then asked to recommend contacts of people whose characteristics corresponded to the characteristics of the survey target groups. The criteria for inclusion of the veterans was residency in three target oblasts (Kyiv, Lviv, or Dnipropetrovsk) and confirmation of the surveyed individuals' direct involvement in the execution of military tasks in Donetsk or Luhansk oblasts since April 2014. For the veterans' spouses and partners, the criteria for inclusion was residency in three target oblasts (Kyiv, Lviv, or Dnipropetrovsk), confirmation of cohabitation with a veteran directly involved in the execution of military tasks in Donetsk or Luhansk oblasts since April 2014 or being a widow/widower of such a veteran.

The respondents represented different households (i.e. one interview were conducted per household). An equal number of interviews was conducted across the three target oblasts. The data were weighed according to the regional distribution of those who have veteran status in the three target oblasts.

The survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews via tablets (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews or CAPI). On average, the interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes.

The survey collected information on the veterans' military background, well-being, employment situation, accessibility of benefits, discrimination, social integration, need for psychosocial support, and attitudes towards starting a business.

Within the qualitative component, six focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with the veterans, their friends/acquaintances, and key informants in both rural and urban settlements. Most of the key informants were specialists from social protection institutions, representatives of non-governmental organizations working with veterans, local authorities, and health-care institutions.

In addition to the data collected from sample surveys of the veterans' via face-to-face interviews, the data collected from sample surveys of the veterans' family members (spouses/partners) via face-to-face interviews, and the data collected from focus group discussions, this survey draws on administrative data and relevant data available from other sources, as well as data from Info Sapiens National Omnibus. The Omnibus is a survey conducted on a monthly basis by Info Sapiens in 24 oblasts of Ukraine. For the purpose of this survey, data from the January to September 2019 omnibuses were used. The Info Sapiens data were used to compare the sociodemographic and socioeconomic profiles of the surveyed veterans with the respective characteristics of the general population in the three oblasts.

Study limitations

The study is based on the results of the interviews conducted with the veterans and their family members. It is exclusively comprised of self-assessments of their reintegration and life situations. It is supplemented by the results of the analysis of the focus group discussions.

The study results reflect the specificity of the life situations and socioeconomic characteristics of veterans and their families residing in Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, Kyiv oblasts and Kyiv city. According to the results of the socioeconomic development monitoring

conducted by the Government of Ukraine in 2018, Kyiv Oblast and Kyiv city, Dnipropetrovsk and Lviv oblasts are among the top ten regions in terms of labour market efficiency and economic and social cohesion¹. Thus, the respondents surveyed as part of this study might have a more favourable socioeconomic situation and improved life chances compared to those who reside in other oblasts.

The sample was not random, and the quantitative survey was conducted through the snowball sampling recruitment technique using the telephone database and contacts of the veterans who interact with the Ukrainian NGOs in this sphere. Considering the latter recruitment channel, a potential bias could emerge related to the selection of primary respondents who have wide social networks. In view of the respondent selection method, the number of contacts recruited through one respondent was limited to five to limit this bias.

Veterans and their household members interviewed for this study predominantly resided in large cities. In particular, seventy-three per cent (73%) of the respondents lived in cities with over 500,000 inhabitants (Kyiv, Dnipro, Lviv, Kryvyi Rih); 10 per cent of the respondents were interviewed in cities with 50,000 to 500,000 inhabitants; 11 per cent lived in towns with up to 50,000 inhabitants, and only 6 per cent of veterans lived in villages. At the time of the survey, there were no statistics on the distribution of the veteran population by the type of settlement. A lack of reliable data on the distribution of veterans by settlement types has limited the use of this parameter in the design of this survey. However, the sample distribution obtained is similar to the distribution of another veteran study conducted by the World Bank, where only 7 per cent of the surveyed veterans lived in villages, and 69 per cent of interviews were conducted in oblast centres².

¹ Monitoring of Socioeconomic Development of the Regions for 2018. <http://www.minregion.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Reytingova-otsinka-za-2018-rik-prezentatsiyini-materiali.pdf>

² World Bank. 2017. Conflict in Ukraine: socio-economic impacts of internal displacement and veteran return – summary report May 2017 (English). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/571011497962214803/Conflict-in-Ukraine-socio-economic-impacts-of-internal-displacement-and-veteran-return-summary-report-May-2017>

SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

Military background. Most of the respondents (91%) reported having a veteran's certificate and only 6 per cent of respondents confirmed having a disability certificate as a result of an injury during the armed conflict, in part due to the bureaucratic hurdles to have a disability confirmed. Among the respondents who had no disability certificate, a quarter confirmed sustaining injuries or falling ill during military service.

Access to assistance and services. The respondents were asked if they attempted to obtain state-provided services or assistance for themselves and their families when needing the same. Although many veterans obtained a discount on payments for housing and utility services or free public transport, almost half of the respondents reported a failure in obtaining long-term educational loans for children (45%), and a large share encountered difficulties in receiving priority housing (86%).

Veterans' employment. Over one fourth of the veterans (29%) stated that their places of work and positions were not secured for them. Sixty-eight per cent (68%) of those who were employed before military service managed to preserve their job and position: 70 per cent of men and only 45 per cent of women. Veterans reported underemployment or unemployment linked to (sometimes officially unconfirmed) injuries or illnesses sustained during military service, and a desire for retraining or linkages to job and networking opportunities.

Veterans' well-being. The most frequently mentioned source of veterans' income was salary. One fifth of the surveyed veterans reported having money to buy food only. Veterans and their households only track slightly below the comparable subsample of the general population in

well-being. Nineteen per cent (19%) of veterans' households belong to the "low level of material well-being" category compared to 15 per cent for the subsample of the general population, whereas 78 per cent of the subsample of the general population was classified under the "medium level of material well-being" category compared to 73 per cent of veterans' households.

Discrimination, social integration, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).

Almost half of the surveyed respondents reported biased attitudes or unfair treatment of veterans by different community members, particularly when exercising the right to free public transport or accessing medical or administrative services.

The veterans survey highlighted that veterans feel excluded from society and have a strong sense of self-identification with their reference group. A high share of respondents supported the idea that the veterans' experience can be understood only by those who are at least somehow connected to individuals with a military background.

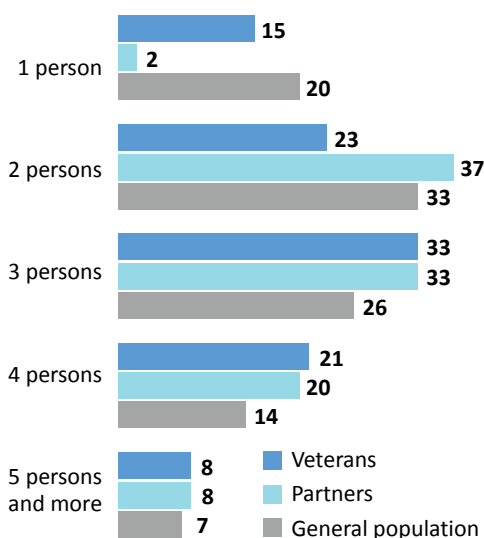
It was found that the veterans were more reluctant to consider themselves in need of psychosocial support. However, one third of the respondents indicated that they would like to receive at least one of the suggested types of psychosocial support, such as individual counselling with a psychologist or consultation with a psychologist who has experience in military service. Almost a third (29%) of the veterans would like to receive individual consultations with a psychologist, and half of the respondents indicated this type of support as desirable for other veterans in general (51%).

Attitude towards starting own business. Over one third (35%) of the veterans expressed their interest in starting their own business. Most respondents reported problems connected to the lack of state support, in addition to gaps in local market knowledge and business skills.

1. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF VETERANS AND VETERANS' PARTNERS

The findings of the analysis showed that single-person households among veterans comprised 15 per cent, a figure lower than that of the general population of Ukraine, where 20 per cent of households consist of one person³. Among the veterans' partners ninety per cent of the respondents had a veteran as a spouse or partner, and ten per cent were widowed. Only two per cent of the veterans' spouses or partners who were widowers lived in a one-person household.

Figure 1.1. Distribution households in Ukraine by number of members, % of veterans and veterans' partners



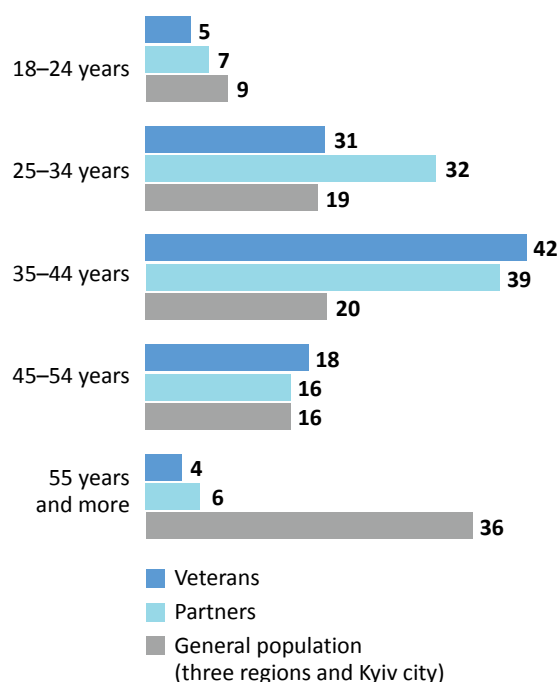
Source: Interviews with veterans
 Source: Interviews with veterans' family members
 Source: The State Statistics Service of Ukraine "Social and Demographic Characteristics of Households of Ukraine" 2019

³ The State Statistics Service of Ukraine "Social and Demographic Characteristics of Households of Ukraine" 2019. http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2019/zb/07/zb_sdhdu2019.rar

The average size of a veteran's household was 2.87 persons, whereas among the veterans' partners it was 2.98. The average size of the households of the veterans and their family members is slightly larger compared to the size of the average household in Ukraine (2.58)⁴.

The groups aged 25–34 and 35–44 years prevailed among the veterans and their family members, and their number was higher compared to the general population in three oblasts where the survey was conducted. Persons aged 18 to 24 accounted for only five per cent of the veterans, while their share in the general population was twice as large (9%). Only four per cent of the surveyed veterans were aged 55 and older compared to 36 per cent among the general population.

Figure 1.2. Age distribution, % of veterans, veterans' partners and general populations from the three oblasts where the survey was conducted



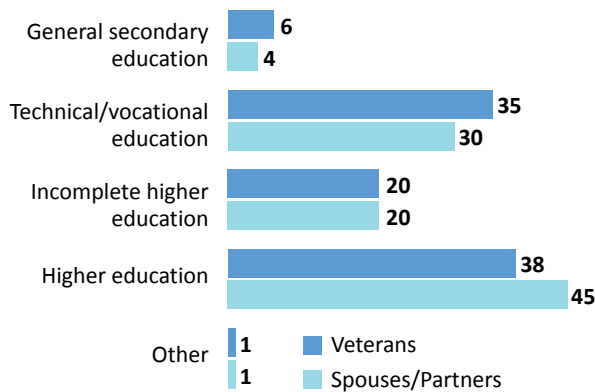
Source: Interviews with veterans
 Source: Interviews with veterans' family members
 Source: The State Statistics Service of Ukraine, "Databank of State Statistics Service of Ukraine" 2019

⁴ The State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 1998–2019. Characteristics of households. http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2007/gdvdg_rik/dvdg_u/hart2010_u.htm

Women accounted for five per cent of the surveyed veterans. The proportion of women among the interviewed partners was 98 per cent.

Over one third of the surveyed veterans (38%) achieved higher education. Another third (35%) had obtained vocational education. Almost half of the female veterans had a higher education (42%), which was slightly higher compared to the male veterans (37%). Most of the veterans' partners, among whom women prevailed, reported having a higher or incomplete higher education (65%) and 30 per cent having a vocational education. The observed differences can be mostly attributed to the fact that the level of education of women in Ukraine is higher than that of men⁵.

Figure 1.3. Distribution by educational attainment, % of veterans and veterans' partners

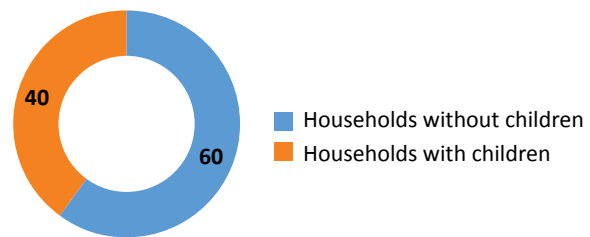


Source: Interviews with veterans
Source: Interviews with veterans' family members

As many as 94 per cent of the respondents, both veterans and their partners, lived in cities and towns, and only six per cent lived in villages. Among the population in the three survey oblasts and Kyiv city, the share of the persons residing in cities is 79%.⁶

Forty per cent of veteran respondents reported to have children in their household, which is almost the same as an average Ukrainian household (38%)⁷ (Figure 1.4).

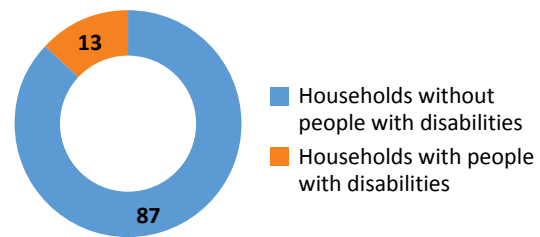
Figure 1.4. Distribution of households with or without children, % of veterans



Source: Interviews with veterans
Source: Interviews with veterans' family members

Thirteen per cent (13%) of the veterans reported having a household member with a disability (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5. Distribution of veterans' households with people with disabilities (I-III disability groups, children with disabilities), % of veterans



Source: Interviews with veterans
Source: Interviews with veterans' family members

⁵ Economic activity of the population of Ukraine. 2018. Statistical Publication. Kyiv 2019. http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2019/zb/07/zb_EAN_2018.pdf

⁶ The State Statistics Service of Ukraine, "Databank of State Statistics Service of Ukraine" 2019. <http://database.ukrcensus.gov.ua/Mult/Dialog/Saveshow.asp>

⁷ Social and Demographic Characteristics of Households of Ukraine. Statistical Bulletin. State Statistics Service of Ukraine. – K., 2019

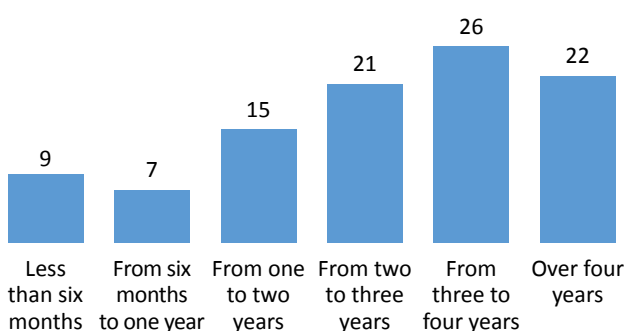
2. MILITARY BACKGROUND

Ninety-one per cent of the surveyed veterans reported having a veteran's certificate. Among them, 87 per cent served in the Armed Forces of Ukraine⁸, and four per cent said they were members of the volunteer battalions. Six per cent of the respondents confirmed having a disability certificate as a result of an injury during the armed conflict. One per cent of respondents were in the process of obtaining the certificate at the time of the survey. Two per cent of the respondents were part of volunteer battalions but had not received a veteran's certificate.

Duration of military service and returning period

At the time of the survey, 16 per cent of the respondents reported that they had returned from the conflict area from one month to one year before. Fifteen per cent (15%) of the respondents had returned from the east one year to two years before the survey was conducted. Sixty-nine per cent of the veterans reported that they had been back for two years or more.

Figure 2.1. Time period after returning, %

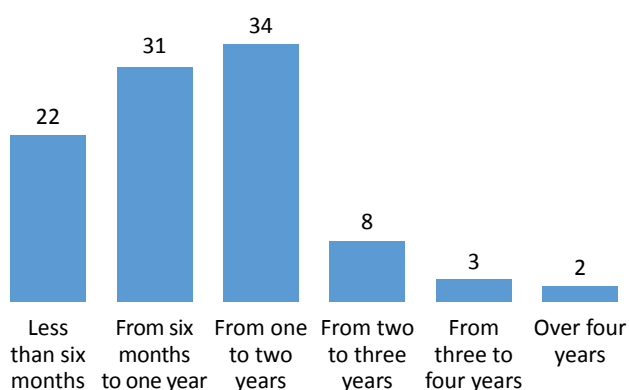


Source: Interviews with veterans

⁸ Source: Veterans Survey. Note: Respondents could choose several options

Twenty-two per cent of the respondents had been engaged in military service for up to six months. Nearly one third (31%) had been deployed to the conflict area from six months to one year. Over one third (34%) served from one year to two years. Thirteen per cent served for a period of two years or more.

Figure 2.2. Duration of military service in area of combat operations, %

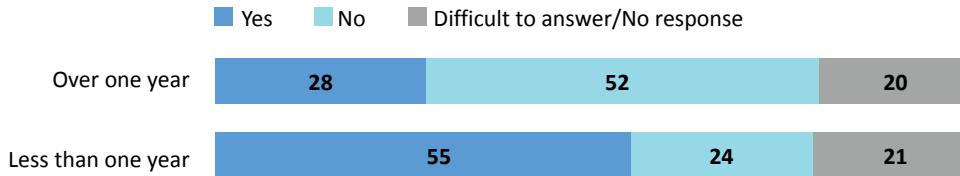


Source: Interviews with veterans

Willingness to return to service

The survey findings showed that a third of veterans (33%) were ready to return to active service. However, almost a half of the respondents (47%) did not consider the possibility of returning to the east. The results of the analysis of readiness to return to the east showed no meaningful differences by gender: 32 per cent of men and 36 per cent of women responded that they were ready to go back to active military duty. At the same time, 47 per cent of women and 48 per cent of men responded that they do not consider the opportunity of going back to active duty in the east. The survey found that there is a tendency for veterans to be less willing to return to active service the longer they are away from their mission. Most of those who expressed a willingness to return to military service had been at home less than one year (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3. Intention to return to military service depending on the time period after returning, %



Source: Interviews with veterans

The intention to return to active service differed slightly depending on the veterans' age. Respondents aged 35 years and older more frequently mentioned that they had no intention to return to military service in the east of Ukraine. Veterans aged 18–34 years were the highest share of those who reported that they do not know if they would like to return to military service.

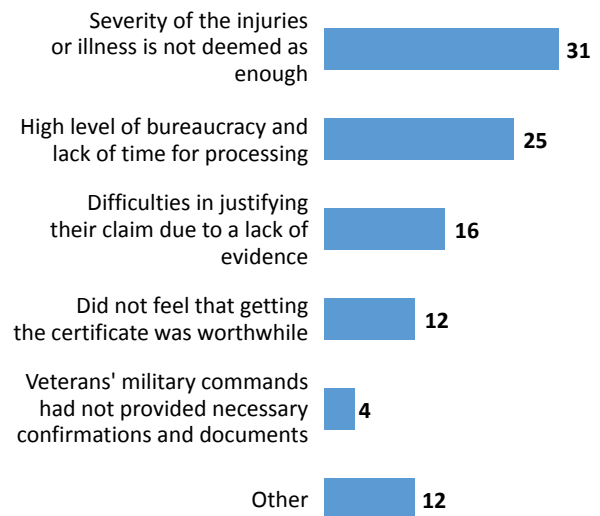
Obtaining a disability certificate

Only six per cent of the respondents confirmed having a disability certificate as a result of an injury during the armed conflict. At the same time, among the respondents who had no disability certificate, 26 per cent confirmed sustaining injuries or falling ill during military service.

One third (31%) of the respondents had not obtained a disability certificate because the injuries or illnesses had been deemed insufficiently severe. One fourth of the veterans (25%) mentioned that they were unable to get a disability certificate due to the high level of bureaucracy and a lack of time on their side; 16 per cent of the respondents reported difficulties

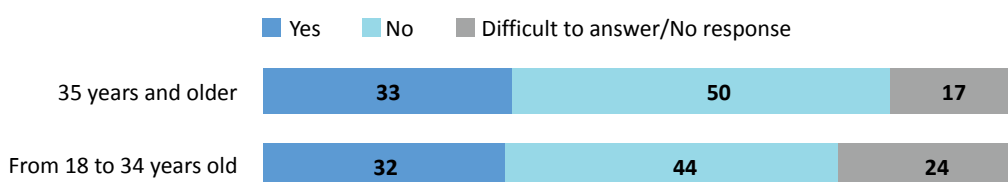
in justifying their claim due to the lack of evidence. Twelve per cent (12%) of the respondents did not feel that getting the certificate was worthwhile. Four per cent (4%) of the veterans answered that their military unit had not provided them with the necessary confirmations and documents (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. Reasons for not obtaining a disability certificate, % of those sustaining injuries or falling ill during military service



Source: Interviews with veterans

Figure 2.4. Intention to return to military service depending on age, %



Source: Interviews with veterans

During the FGDs, the respondents also mentioned difficulties in processing the necessary documents to receive disability certificates from health-care institutions.

Dnipro, key informant, woman, 35 y.o.

“Documents are often filled in incorrectly, there is no standardization in the medical histories – they may downgrade a veteran’s diagnosis because of incorrect wording.”

Source: FGDs with key informants

Key informants note that there are issues with the preparation of documents that are required for obtaining a disability certificate. Veterans reported that the collection of documents usually involves long queues, the need to visit various institutions and sometimes the need to go to other settlements. During the focus group discussions, veterans reported some cases when they and their comrades-in-arms were unable to get documents or references they had to submit to different state medical institutions. Key informants noted that the process of document preparation is lengthy and complicated and may result in some veterans giving up on trying to get a disability certificate. The FGD participants also reported that the loss of documents caused difficulties in confirming their status. In some cases, there are no living witnesses who could confirm that injuries were suffered during combat operations. In addition, key informants reported that after veterans return, they often focus on employment and ignore their health issues. During the FGDs, veterans reported that illnesses may only appear or become aggravated some time after the completion of military. Therefore, the procedure for establishing a connection between injuries/illnesses and their causes becomes much more complicated for veterans who have not documented them in a timely manner.

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 40 y.o.

“Red tape. There are no certificates of investigation and injuries. There was no concept of battle traumas at that time. It was introduced later. Since there are no witnesses, I will get nothing.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

Kyiv, veteran, woman, 50 y.o.

“My comrade-in-arms came under mortar fire in the car and was wounded. When he came back to Kyiv and started dealing with documents, they told him that he had to submit a certificate that he had not been under the influence of alcohol. It means that a person who was wounded would have thought through all those aspects...”

Source: FGDs with veterans

Lviv, veteran, man, 48 y.o.

“My comrade-in-arms was seriously injured and he has been visiting them [medical institutions] for three years and begging for the status of a person with a disability. Like a beggar. He has been collecting all documents, but he has got his arms and legs in place...”

Source: FGDs with veterans

Obtaining veterans’ certificates

Seven per cent of those who have obtained a veteran’s certificate reported encountering problems during the process. The FGD participants reported that the procedure for obtaining a veteran’s certificate was improved recently compared to the first years of the conflict. Starting in 2015, the Verkhovna Rada amended the existing legislation by expanding the number of persons entitled to receive a veteran status, including those who were members of volunteer battalions provided the battalions have joined Military and Law Enforcement Agencies of Ukraine⁹. However, at the time of the survey, it was still a problem to get a veteran’s certificate for those who were volunteers. Veterans of this category have to prove that they took part in combat operations. In some cases, veterans have to go back to the combat zone to find evidence.

⁹ Provision of Status and Social Guarantees to Certain Individuals Among the Participants in the Anti-Terrorist Operation 413-2014-n, valid, current version – Revision on October 29, 2019, on the basis – 887-2019-n

3. ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

Ukrainian legislation includes several acts related to the provision of various benefits and guarantees of social protection for veterans. In particular, the Law of Ukraine “On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection” is considered to be the most comprehensive Law in this field¹⁰. According to the Law, veterans are entitled to different social benefits covering, inter alia, priority provision of housing land plots, loans for housing construction, discounts on payments for housing and utility services, free public transport, and provision of various health-care services. According to the No. 975 Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 23 November 2016, children of the veterans who have not reached the age of 23 are entitled to long-term education loans, free accommodation in a dormitory, full or partial coverage of tuition fees, social scholarships and provision of free textbooks, etc¹¹. For the purposes of this survey, the above legal documents were used to elaborate a list of the most common benefits provided to veterans in order to assess their accessibility.

Accessibility of receiving state-provided benefits and guarantees of social protection

The respondents were asked if they attempted to obtain state-provided services or assistance for themselves and their families when they had a need for that. In general, 71 per cent of the respondents reported failing to receive at least one of the services or types of assistance.

Housing benefits. Accessibility of services and assistance in the housing sector appeared to be the lowest. The share of those who have failed to receive priority housing amounted to 86 per cent. Eighty per cent of respondents have not received loans for housing construction, reconstruction or capital repairs. Almost three fourths (74%) of respondents have not obtained assistance to repair their houses and apartments free of charge. Almost two thirds of the surveyed veterans (60%) reported that they had not received land plots for construction, gardening and horticulture. Eight per cent of the respondents have not obtained any discount on payments for housing, and six per cent have not received a discount on their utility bills (Figure 3.1). The highest number of respondents who could not obtain various housing benefits when they needed them was observed in Kyiv Oblast and the city of Kyiv. The number of veterans who did not obtain the priority provision of housing amounted to 97 per cent in Kyiv Oblast and the city of Kyiv (90%); 84 per cent confirmed not obtaining this benefit in Lviv Oblast, and 72 per cent of the respondents in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. Seventy-nine per cent (79%) of the surveyed veterans residing in the city of Kyiv and 66 per cent living in Kyiv Oblast reported that they had not received any land plots for construction, gardening and horticulture; 55 per cent of the respondents residing in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, and 44 per cent in Lviv Oblast had not got the mentioned benefit.

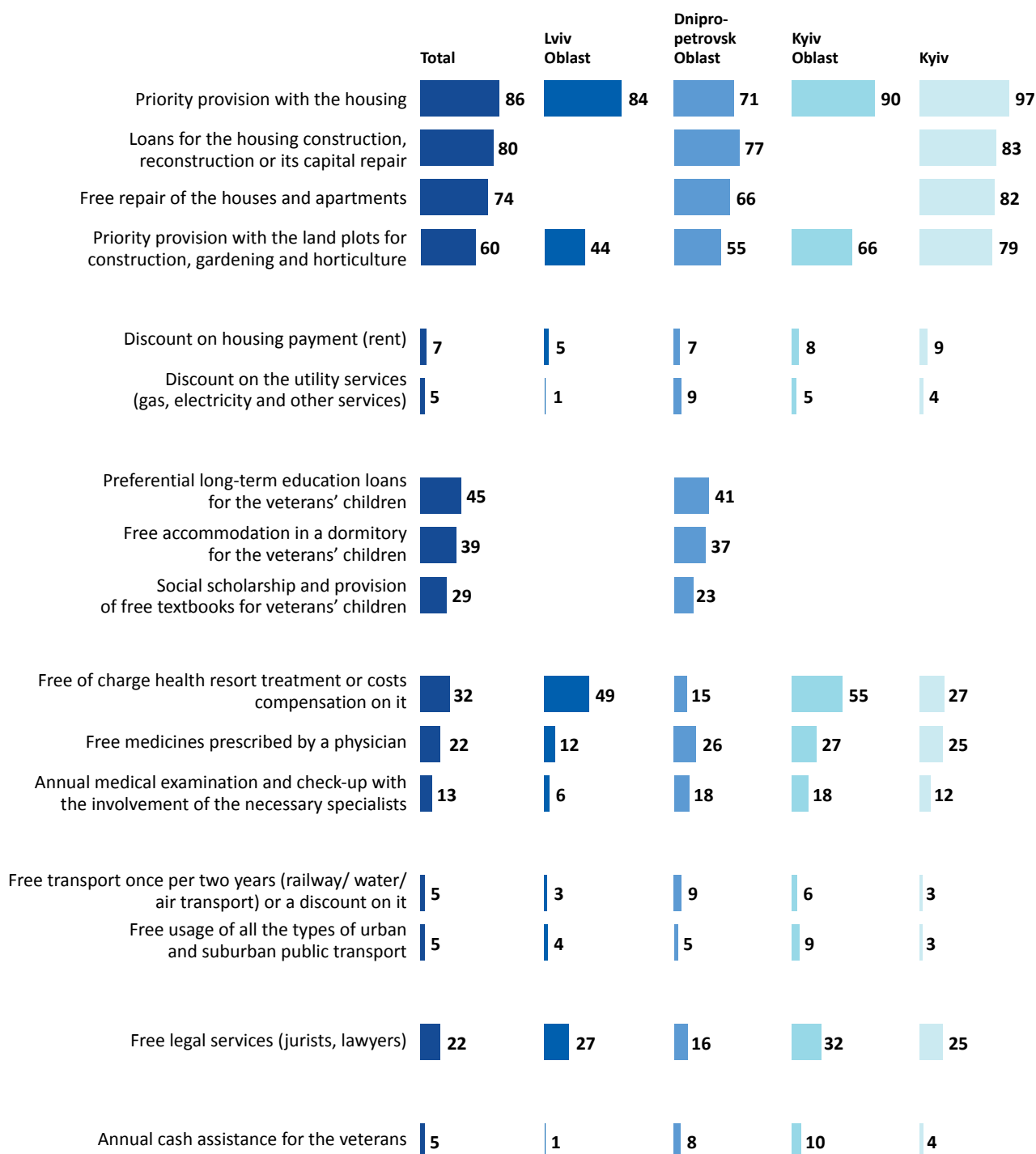
Education benefits. Among the veterans who tried to obtain educational services or assistance for children under the age of 23, almost half (45%) did not receive long-term educational loans. Thirty-nine per cent (39%) of the respondents were not provided with free dormitory accommodation for their children. Almost one in three (34%) failed to obtain social grants and free provision of textbooks for their children (Figure 3.1).

Health-care benefits. In the health-care sector, one in five (22%) veterans reported they were unable to receive free prescribed medication. One in three (32%) said they had not received free health resort treatment (rehabilitation) (Figure 3.1). The share of those who could not get free health resort treatment (rehabilitation) was the highest in Kyiv Oblast (55%) and Lviv Oblast

¹⁰ The Law of Ukraine “On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection” dated 10/22/1993 (last revision 09/25/2019). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3551-12>

¹¹ Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 975 dated 23/11/2016. Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/686-2019-%D0%BF/sp:wide->

Figure 3.1. Share of those who failed to receive services or assistance, % of those who tried



Notes: Respondents could choose more than one option
 Notes: Results containing less than 50 cases are not shown due to low reliability
 Notes: Calculated among veterans who confirmed availability of veterans' certificate or disability certificate

(49%). The share of those who confirmed not receiving this benefit in Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk Oblast comprised 27 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively. However, only 12 per cent of the surveyed veterans in Lviv Oblast reported that they could not receive free prescribed medicine compared to 25 per cent in Kyiv, 27 per cent in Kyiv Oblast, and 26 per cent in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. Only 6 per cent of respondents failed to obtain their annual medical examinations in Lviv Oblast, while this number was almost three times higher in Dnipropetrovsk and Kyiv oblasts (18% and 18%, respectively) and two times higher in Kyiv (12%).

Legal benefits. The share of veterans who reported a failure to obtain free legal services comprised 22 per cent (Figure 3.1). The lowest number of veterans who reported a failure to use free legal services was observed in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast (16%), while the highest shares were found in Lviv and Kyiv oblasts (27% and 32%, respectively).

Transport benefits. According to the data, travel privileges were mostly available for those who tried to use them. Only 5 per cent of the respondents reported being unsuccessful in obtaining free transport once over a period of two years (railway/water/air transport) or discounted transport. The same share (5%) confirmed not receiving free usage of all the types of urban and suburban public transport. Nine per cent (9%) did not obtain free transport benefits in commuter transport in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, which was three times higher than Lviv Oblast and Kyiv (3% and 3% respectively).

Satisfaction with receiving the services and benefits of social protection

The respondents were asked to evaluate general accessibility of services and benefits for veterans and their families across the target oblasts. Only six per cent of the surveyed veterans and seven per cent of their partners answered that the services and benefits were not at all available. The share of those who reported that the services and benefits were rather unavailable comprised 31 per cent among the veterans and their partners (Figure 3.2).

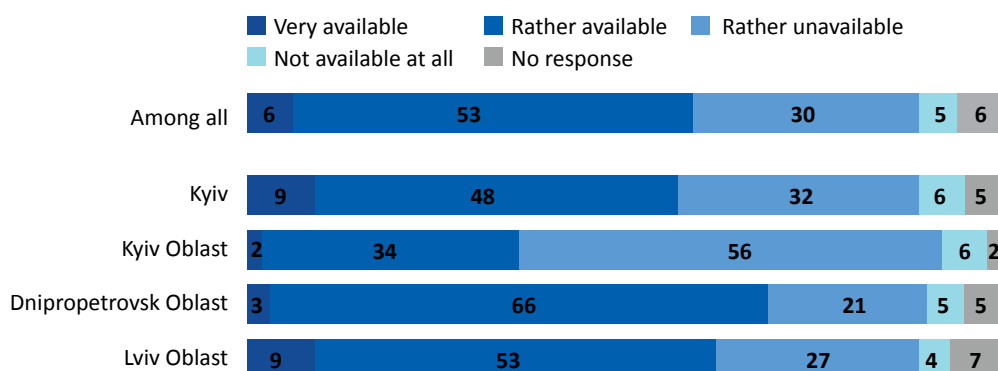
However, the veterans' assessment of the accessibility of the services and benefits for the veterans and their families declared by the state varied across the oblasts. The lowest level of access was reported by the veterans from Kyiv Oblast. Sixty-two per cent (62%) of the veterans and fifty-six per cent (56%) of veterans' family members residing in Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast reported that the services, benefits, and guarantees were rather unavailable or not available at all (Figure 3.3).

Chervonohrad, veterans' acquaintance, man, 50 y.o.

"In my view, a lot of privileges have been introduced, but as I have already said, they depend on local budgets, therefore they are not provided. Since local budgets can make it only if they have money – that is the problem. However, they seem to cover everything: treatment, prosthetic care and medicine."

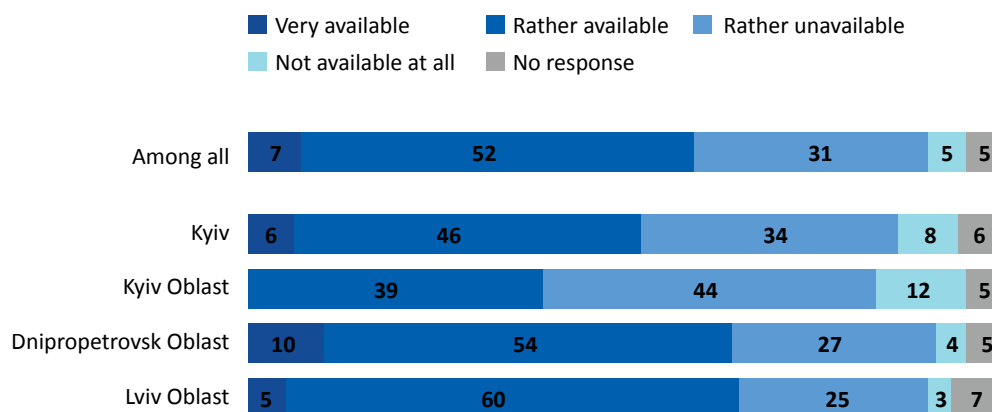
Source: FGDs with veterans' friends and acquaintances

Figure 3.2. Accessibility of the state-provided services and benefits, by oblasts, % of veterans



Source: Interviews with veterans

Figure 3.3. Accessibility of the state-provided services and benefits, by oblasts, % of veterans' partners



Source: Interviews with veterans' family members

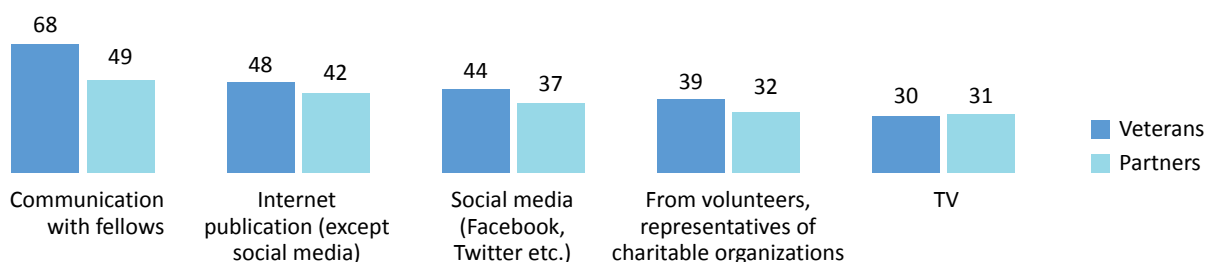
Information channels for searching information on services or benefits

Sixty-eight per cent (68%) of the veterans and forty-nine per cent of their family members reported receiving information about benefits and services from fellow veterans. Almost half of the veterans (48% and 44%, respectively) and approximately two fifths of their family members (42% and 37%, respectively) indicated the Internet and social networks as a key source of information. Thirty-nine per cent (39%) of the veterans and thirty-two per cent of their partners received information from the volunteers and the personnel of non-governmental organizations.

Some differences were observed in terms of age groups and habitual use of certain channels to receive information about benefits and entitlements for veterans declared by the State. Veterans aged 45 to 54 years and 55 to 64 years most often reported that they used national press and television as information channels (17% and 19%, 35% and 43%, respectively).

According to the key informants, veterans should receive information about all privileges and rights they are eligible to immediately after their demobilization. Relevant ministries at the national level and military commissariats and social protection bodies whom veterans first interact with at the local level should play the primary role in informing veterans of the same.

Figure 3.4. Information channels for veterans, % of veterans and veterans' partners

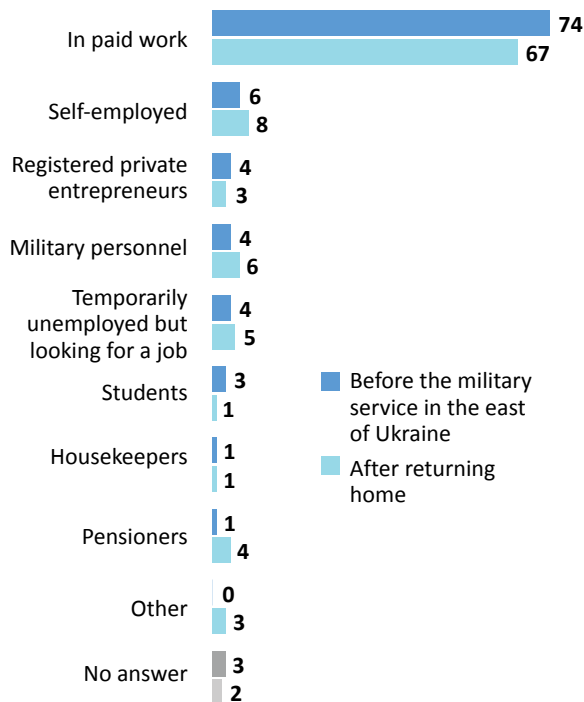


Note: Five most frequently mentioned types
Notes: Respondents could choose more than one option
Source: Interviews with veterans
Source: Interviews with veterans' family members

4. VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT

Before their military service in the east, most of the veterans were engaged in paid work (74%). Six per cent of the respondents were self-employed and four per cent were private entrepreneurs. The share of the professional military was four per cent. Another four per cent stated that before mobilization they were temporarily unemployed but actively looking for a job (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. Employment status of the veterans before and after military service, % of veterans



Source: Interviews with veterans

The employment status of the veterans only slightly changed upon returning: the number of respondents who were in paid work dropped to 67 per cent, and the share of the registered private entrepreneurs decreased to three per cent. At the same time, the number of self-employed and military personnel increased to eight and six per cent, respectively. The share of unemployed veterans slightly increased: five per cent were unemployed but looking

for a job, and one per cent were doing housework. The number of pensioners increased from one to four per cent (Figure 4.1).

The obtained findings reflect more favourable conditions and employment opportunities of the survey oblasts, which are characterized by higher labour market efficiency¹². At the same time, the surveyed veterans represented age groups, which are usually characterized by higher employment rates¹³. Furthermore, the highest share of surveyed veterans lived in big cities. According to the data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, urban settlements typically have a higher level of employment compared to the rural areas¹⁴. Besides, the results of the FGDs showed that veterans were active in searching for a job after completion of service.

The data showed that female veterans more frequently reported being in paid work after returning compared to male veterans (75% vs. 67%)¹⁵.

Over half (54%) of the veterans returned to the institutions and organizations where they worked before their military service. A higher share of male veterans (55%) more often returned to their previous job than female veterans (41%) (Figure 4.2).

There were differences in the shares of those who returned to their previous work after military service across the oblasts. Sixty-five per cent (64%) of veterans residing in Lviv Oblast returned to their previous place of work. Less than half of veterans living in the city of Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast (49% and 41%, respectively) returned to their previous place of work.

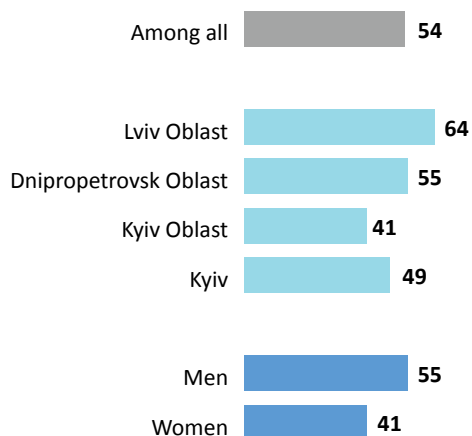
¹² Monitoring of Socio-Economic Development of the Regions for 2018. <http://www.minregion.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Reytingova-otsinka-za-2018-rik-prezentatsiyini-materiali.pdf>

¹³ http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2019/zb/07/zb_EAN_2018.pdf. Economic Activity of the Population of Ukraine 2018 STATE STATISTICS SERVICE OF UKRAINE

¹⁴ State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Employment of the population by sex, type of locality and age group, 2019. http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2017/rp/eans/eans_u/arch_znsmv_u.htm

¹⁵ The interpretation of the results of the analysis was done taking into account the limitations related to the small size the women subsample.

Figure 4.2. Share of those who returned to previous workplace after military service, by oblast, by gender



Source: Interviews with veterans

During the FGDs, some veterans stated that they were unlikely to return to their previous places of work due to a change in their mindset after serving. They stated that it was difficult for them to perform tasks related to communication with others because of a perceived deterioration in relationships with colleagues.

Kyiv, veteran, woman, 50 y.o.

"...I would like to start my own business to avoid communication with people, not to be in situations I am not ready to be in and just do not want to be in. So, I have chosen this way, I have decided to develop my own business."

Source: FGDs with veterans

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 53 y.o.

"I can work again, but I cannot work with those people again."

Source: FGDs with veterans

Even though some respondents mentioned that it was difficult for them to return to their previous working environment, in the opinion of partners and veterans' acquaintances, the return to the previous place of work can have a positive effect on veterans'

reintegration into civilian life, as they return to conditions that preceded their military service.

Chervonohrad, veteran's friend, woman, 49 y.o.

"He came back to his job. He continues working there. I think it's very good, because it is a habitual environment. It is also a method of adaptation."

Source: FGDs with veterans' friends and acquaintances

According to Article 119¹⁶ of the Labour Code of Ukraine, for employees who are employed before military service, their places of work and positions are secured until they return. However, over one fourth of the veterans (29%) stated that their places of work and positions were not secured for them. Sixty-eight per cent of those who were employed before military service reported that their job and position were preserved: 70 per cent of men and 45 per cent of women¹⁷.

The key informants reported that in spite of the legal requirement to hold veterans' jobs until the completion of military service, private companies may ignore the same. Veterans also reported cases when individuals who were demobilized could be fired without preliminary notification.

Kyiv, veteran, man, 48 y.o.

"I was retrospectively fired... for them not to pay me a dime."

Source: FGDs with veterans

Dnipro, key informant, man, 42 y.o.

"This is a legal requirement, but not everyone complies with it, especially private companies."

Source: FGDs with key informants

¹⁶ The Labour Code of Ukraine: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/322-08>

¹⁷ The interpretation of the results of the analysis was done taking into account the limitations related to the small size of the women subsample.

During the focus group discussions, veterans highlighted that prior to their service they could easily secure employment, but their job search had become much more complicated after returning. Veterans reported that it was difficult to get a desired job in line with their career progression, or which enabled them to self-develop, or with a decent salary. Veterans often have limited employment opportunities due to poor health and chronic diseases.

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 42 y.o.

“No, I have found another job, that of a watchman. Because my health will not let me do a good job. If you are constantly going to hospitals with a bad back, you will not get a well-paid job.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 40 y.o.

“I am a driver, metal worker, underground installation operator, construction metal worker by profession. Currently, I am unemployed. I am signing a contract. I could get hired at any enterprise before the service. Now I am going to sign a contract... What can I say? There are plenty of jobs. But who will work for two grand spading and mixing concrete?”

Source: FGDs with veterans

The unemployed respondents reported that the main difficulties to find a job were low pay for available vacancies (79%), lack of vacancies that corresponded to veterans’ qualification (44%), lack of vacancies in general (33%), unsuitable location of the workplace (28%), and discrimination due to their veteran’s status (24%).

The key informants believe that participation in combat operations changed the veterans’ world view, self-perception, and understanding of their role in life. Consequently, this has changed previous professional requirements they had, and it hinders their return to their previous job.

Dnipro, key informant, man, 42 y.o.

“I think that they re-evaluate their life, their sense of worth, and they develop new expectations. In most cases, they want more money due to their status.”

Source: FGDs with KI

The qualitative analysis showed that injuries and diseases suffered as a result of military service hinder employment, as employers do not want to grant additional sick leave or leave for rehab. In addition, medical boards decisions on occupational aptitude and confirmation of partial disability without the granting of the status of a person with disability can seriously encumber veterans’ employment and their return to previously occupied jobs.

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 40 y.o.

“They did not hire me, and the board did not confirm disability. Where should I work? I have not got any [disability] group.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 29 y.o.

“They demand a lot of documents regarding my health. That is the problem, that is why fewer want to give veterans a job, a good job.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

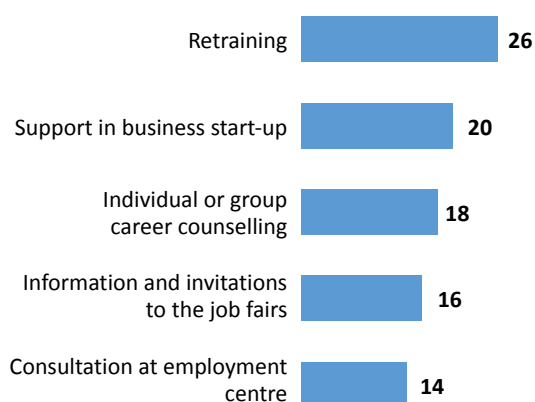
Kyiv, veteran, man, 30 y.o.

“There’s a lot of trouble with us. There will be a lot of trouble with me, because I need to go to hospital for infusions twice a year, because I’ve got a concussion. These are two sick leaves plus an annual leave plus a leave due to my veteran status. It means that I simply cannot work for half a year. Plus, I can fall ill. Few employers will want to deal with it.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

The unemployed veterans who were surveyed indicated that they need support in finding a job. Twenty-six per cent of these mentioned that they need retraining, 20 per cent would like to receive support in starting their own business, and 16 per cent would like to receive information and invitations to job fairs (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3. Types of preferred support in job search, % of unemployed veterans



Note: Respondents could choose more than one option
Source: Interviews with veterans

The unemployed veterans were asked what type of courses or training sessions they would like to take. The respondents reported that they were interested in taking foreign language courses (29%), courses on IT technology (21%), and driving courses (18%).

Veterans consider it important to launch state programmes facilitating veterans' employment. The participants in the FGDs were interested in employment programmes that did not require registration with the employment services. Veterans in the focus groups reported that they knew about potential retraining and conversion (this possibility is provided by employment centres). However, the participants in the discussions highlighted that the offers by the State Employment Centre often do not correspond to veterans' qualification and education. Retraining courses, which are offered by public institutions and could be interesting for veterans, are not held regularly or are in the blueprint stage with no indicative start date.

Kyiv, veteran, woman, 25 y.o.

"The options they offered me were, well... or they did not correspond to my education. A nurse... I cannot get this job as I have no medical education."

Source: FGDs with veterans

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 49 y.o.

"I am a welder. They offer me retraining for a shoemaker. What would I do as a shoemaker?"

Source: FGDs with veterans

Kyiv, veteran, man, 44 y.o.

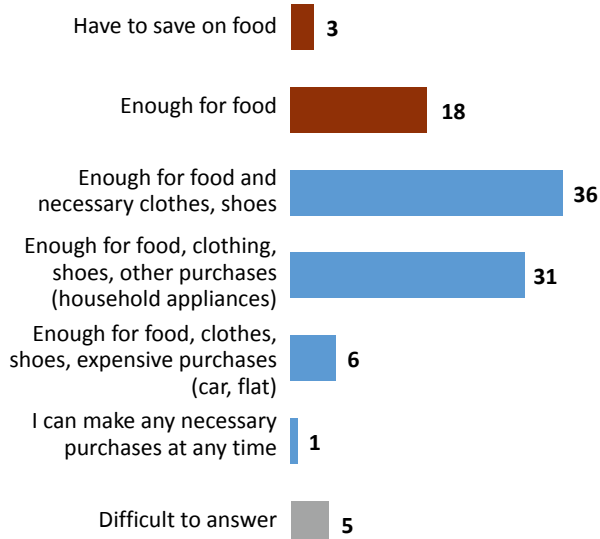
"There are retraining courses at social protection centres, but... they say that they plan such and such courses, but they do not know when they will start."

Source: FGDs with veterans

5. VETERANS' WELL-BEING

During the interviews, 18 per cent of the veterans reported having money to buy only food, and 3 per cent stated they had to save on food. Over one third (36%) reported that they had enough income to buy food and clothing, 31 per cent stated that they could afford food, clothing, shoes and other purchases, but they had to save or borrow money to buy household appliances (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Financial situation of veterans' households, % veterans

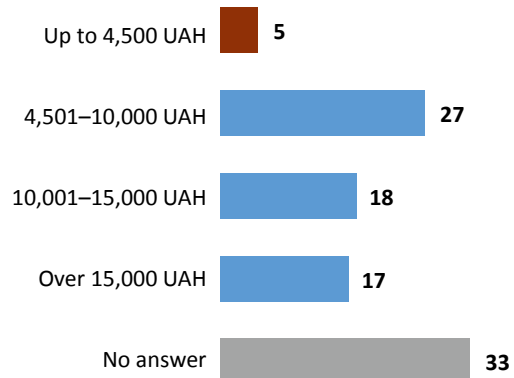


Source: Interviews with veterans

The most frequently mentioned source of veterans' income is salary (86%) which is in line with the age of the surveyed group. Positively, only five per cent (5%) of the respondents reported having a monthly household income at the level of the minimum wage per person in Ukraine (Figure 5.2).

The below section presents the comparison of self-assessments of material well-being of veterans' households and the general population in the three target oblasts. The comparison was made based on

Figure 5.2. Average monthly household income, % veterans

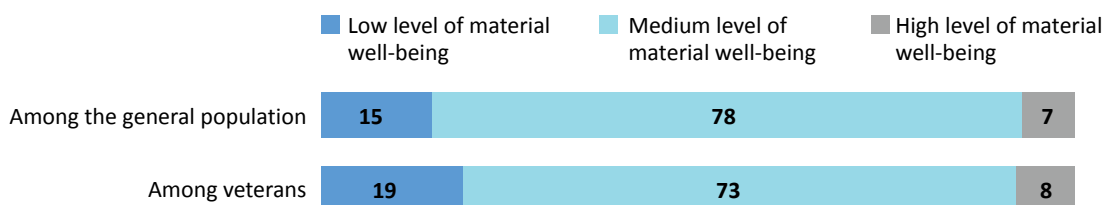


Source: Interviews with veterans

subsamples representing people aged 18 to 54 who lived in big cities with 500,000 and more inhabitants. The selection of subsampling parameters was based on the specifics of the sociodemographic profile of the surveyed veterans.

The aforementioned categories of responses were grouped in three categories: *low level of material well-being* ("Have to save on food" and "Enough for food"), *medium level of material well-being* ("Enough for food and necessary clothes, shoes" and "Enough for food, clothing, shoes, other purchases") and *high level of material well-being* ("Enough for food, clothes, shoes, expensive purchases" and "Can make any necessary purchases at any time").

Figure 5.3. Comparison of self-assessment of the financial situation of veterans' households and the general population, %



Source: The Omnibus, Info Sapiens, 2019.

Note: The analysis was done on the subsamples of respondents aged from 18 to 54 and living in Lviv, Dnipropetrovsk and Kyiv oblasts and Kyiv

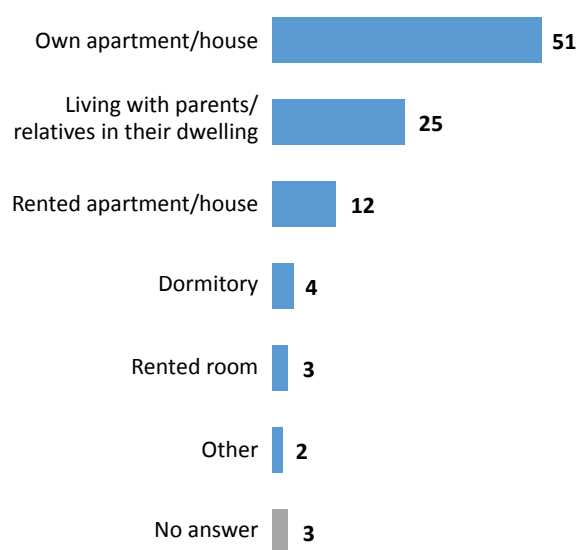
Source: Interviews with veterans. Note: The analysis was done on the subsamples of respondents aged from 18 to 54
Note: The option 'difficult to answer' was excluded

Nineteen (19%) per cent of veterans' households belong to the "low level of material well-being" category compared to 15 per cent for the subsample of the general population, whereas 78 per cent of the subsample of the general population was classified under the "medium level of material well-being" category compared to 73 per cent for veterans' households. There were no difference with regard to the percentage of households that were classified under the "high level of material well-being" category (7% for the subset of the general population and 8% for veterans' households) (Figure 5.3).

The comparison of the average income of veterans' households and the general population's households demonstrated the slightly lower level of income of veterans' households. In the subsample of veterans, nine per cent of the respondents reported that the average monthly income of their household was around UAH 4,500. In comparison, according to the findings of the analysis in the relevant general population subsample, 3 per cent of the respondents reported that their average income was UAH 4,500 and lower. In big cities, 27 per cent of veterans reported that the average monthly income of their households was UAH 15,000, as compared to 45 per cent of the general population's households.

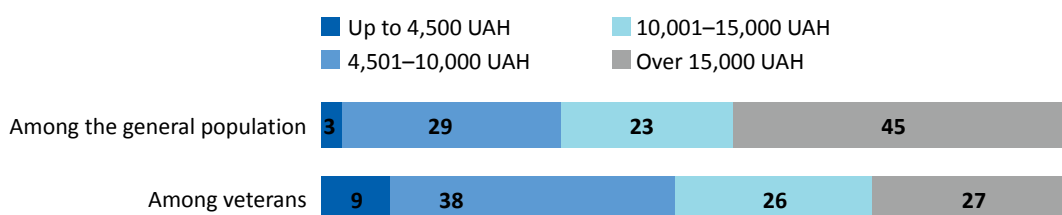
Up to a half (44%) of the respondents lived with parents or friends in their dwellings, rented apartments, house or rented rooms, as well as in the dormitories at the time of the survey (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5. Type of accommodation, % veterans



Source: Interviews with veterans

Figure 5.4. Comparison of veterans' self-assessment of their household's average income per month, %



Source: The Omnibus, Info Sapiens, 2019.

Note: The analysis was done on the subsamples of respondents aged from 18 to 54 and living in Lviv, Dnipropetrovsk and Kyiv oblasts and Kyiv

Source: Interviews with veterans. Note: The analysis was done on the subsamples of respondents aged from 18 to 54

Note: The option 'difficult to answer' was excluded

6. DISCRIMINATION, SOCIAL INTEGRATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

Discrimination

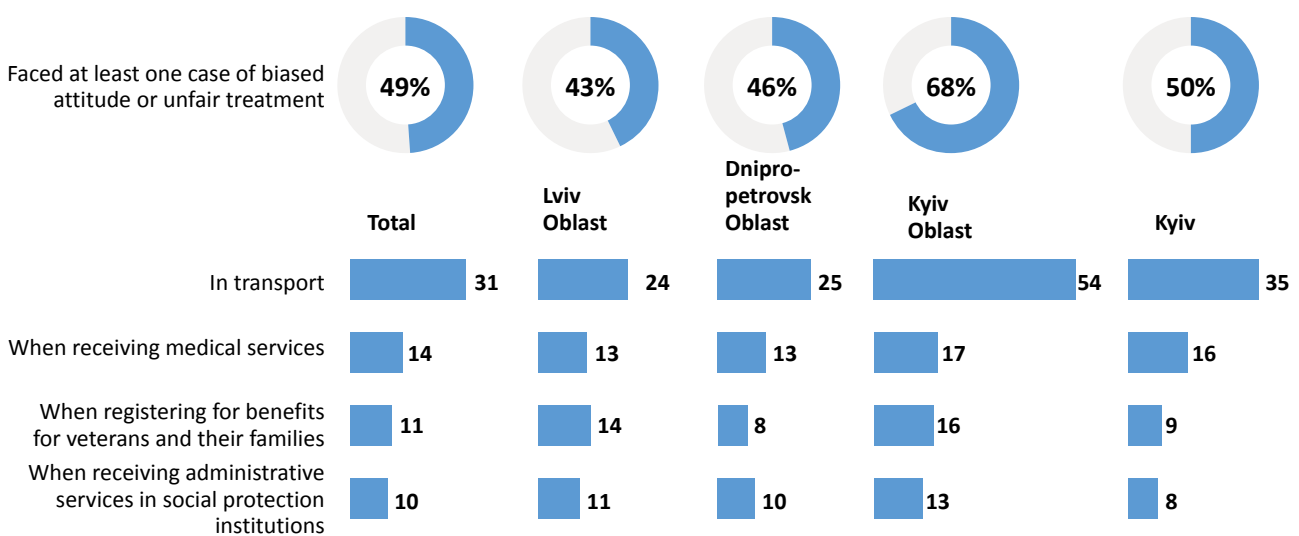
The respondents were asked if they had faced any bias or unfair treatment (discrimination) directed at veterans in the last six months in different spheres. In general, almost a half of the surveyed respondents (49%) indicated that they had encountered at least one such case. According to the survey results, the most frequent situation of discrimination occurred in public transport when veterans requested their right to ride for free, according to the state-provided benefit (Figure 6.1). Additionally, the respondents reported facing situations of bias or un-

fair treatment in the process of receiving medical services (14%), as well as when applying for benefits for veterans and their families and for social protection institutions' services (10%). The sample survey conducted with the veterans showed that the self-assessment of discrimination varied significantly depending on the geographical area (Figure 6.1).

The highest share of respondents who reported perceiving biased or unfair treatment (discrimination) of veterans in transport in the last six months was identified in the city of Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast (Figure 6.1). Transportation benefits were mostly available for those who tried to use them (Section 3, Figure 3.1). However, the situations of discrimination which occurred in transport were confirmed by the results of the FGDs. The results of the FGDs showed that some veterans even did not try to use their right to free transportation as it was easier for them to pay fares than face refusal. During the FGD in Kyiv, the respondents mentioned facing remarks on their eligibility to avail themselves of free public transport.

During the FGDs, the veterans reported cases when public transport employees refused the veterans free

Figure 6.1. Share of the veterans who confirmed facing biased attitudes or unfair treatment, by spheres of discrimination and oblasts, % of veterans



Note: Respondents could choose more than one option. Four most frequently mentioned spheres
Source: Interviews with veterans

transportation benefits or suggested using the service provided under the condition that the veteran would stand for the duration of the trip. The veterans emphasized that transport workers may refuse entry on the ground of lack of compensation for the free rides from the State. Respondents suggested that such compensation should be provided by the State.

Kyiv, veteran, woman, 50 y.o.

"If I need it right now, why can't I exercise this right without hearing and watching how passengers and the driver look at me? That's because the State cannot compensate drivers and transport operators."

Source: FGDs with veterans

Kyiv, veteran, woman, 50 y.o.

"Minibus drivers constantly ask me: 'How many of you are there with veterans' certificates? We didn't send you there...'"

Source: FGDs with veterans

Social integration

Veterans tend to divide their surroundings into "we" and "them", as well as to divide their life into "before" and "after" military service. The FGDs participants reported that they felt uneasy and out of place. They emphasized the feeling that people around them tried to disconnect from them, avoided noticing veterans or even disrespected them as the latter remind of the reality of the armed conflict in the country.

Kyiv, man, 31 y.o.

"I saw people averting their gazes. They felt uncomfortable about seeing us. We just did not fit in their comfortable way of living."

Source: FGDs with veterans

Kyiv, veteran, man, 31 y.o.

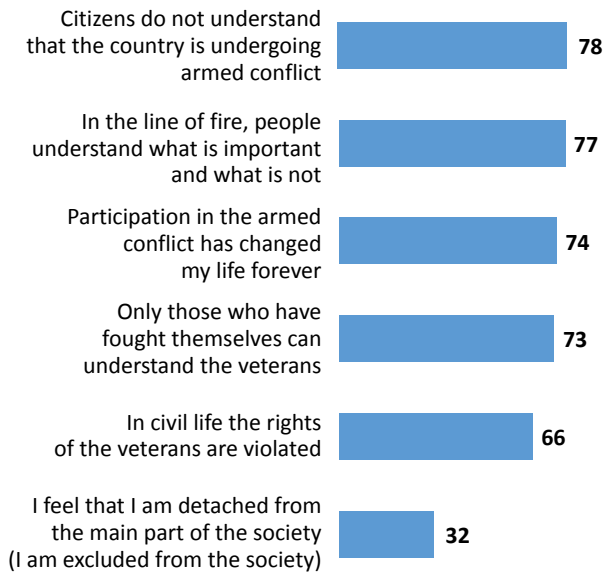
"Society is not ready to notice the veterans; it is not ready to integrate us. It is good [for society] when we are fighting somewhere. But when we come back, firstly, we remind people that there is the conflict in Ukraine."

Source: FGDs with veterans

The respondents were offered to assess several statements on the impact of their military experience and on reintegration issues to assess the intensity of their self-identification with the reference group (veterans) and with those who do not have military experience. The proposed statements were elaborated to measure veterans' perception of the citizens' attitudes towards them and veterans' feelings of closeness to their group.

The sample survey of the veterans showed that they felt excluded from society and strongly identified themselves with their reference group. Most of the veterans supported the statement that citizens do not understand that the country is going through an armed conflict (78% agreed); 77 per cent also agreed with the statement that "in the line of fire, people understand what is important and what is not"; "participation in the armed conflict has changed my life forever" (74%), "only those who have fought themselves can understand the veterans" (73%). Sixty-six per cent of the interviewed veterans shared the opinion that in civil life, the rights of the veterans are violated. Thirty-two per cent (32%) of the respondents confirmed this with the statement that "I feel that I am detached from the main part of the society (I am excluded from the society)" (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2. Assessment on military experience impact and reintegration, % of the veterans who agreed with the statements



Note: Respondents could choose more than one option
Source: Interviews with veterans

The results of the survey of veterans' partners confirmed the conclusion about veterans' sense of exclusion. Most of the veterans' partners confirmed the statement that citizens do not understand that the country is going through an armed conflict (72%); Thirty-one per cent (31%) of the respondents confirmed this with the statement that "I feel that my partner is detached from society (excluded from society)".

During the FGDs, acquaintances and friends of veterans reported that after the veterans' return, they could be socially disoriented and could lose their sense of self-identification; they did not identify themselves with people who have no military experience.

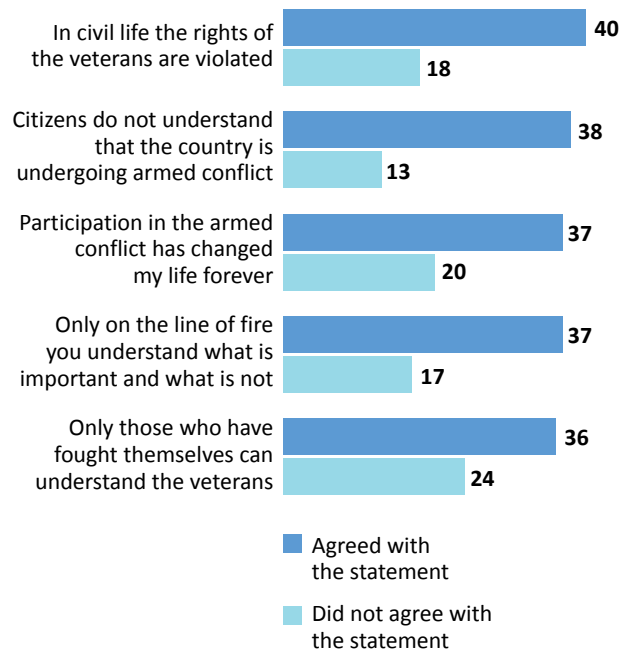
Kyiv, veteran, woman, 50 y.o.

"How my life was five years ago, and how my life is now is totally different. In the past, I did not react so strongly to everything. Now I do in every situation."

Source: FGDs with veterans

The shares of those who expressed a willingness to return to military service were higher among those who agreed with the different statements on the impact of veterans' military experience and on reintegration issues. The number of veterans who confirmed a willingness to return to military service in the east of Ukraine was significantly higher among the respondents who agreed with the statement "citizens do not understand that the country is undergoing an armed conflict," compared to those who expressed disagreement (38% vs. 13%). The second and third largest differences were found between those who agreed or disagreed with the statements that "In civil life, the rights of the veterans are violated" (40% vs. 18%) and "Only in the line of fire do you understand what is important and what is not" (37% vs. 17%) (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3. Share of those who expressed intention to return to the military, % of those who agreed with the different statements



Note: Respondents could choose more than one option
Source: Interviews with veterans

The results of the FGDs confirmed the finding obtained within the sample survey with veterans. Those who cannot find their own place are most likely to return to military service. The FGD participants suggested that veterans could see no sense in the integration into civilian life. Having lost their purpose in life, veterans go back to the east of Ukraine, as they believe that they can be of service there.

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 53 y.o.

“A man got used to something. Then he comes back and misses something. Something is wrong, something is missing. So, a veteran wants to go back to where he is wanted.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

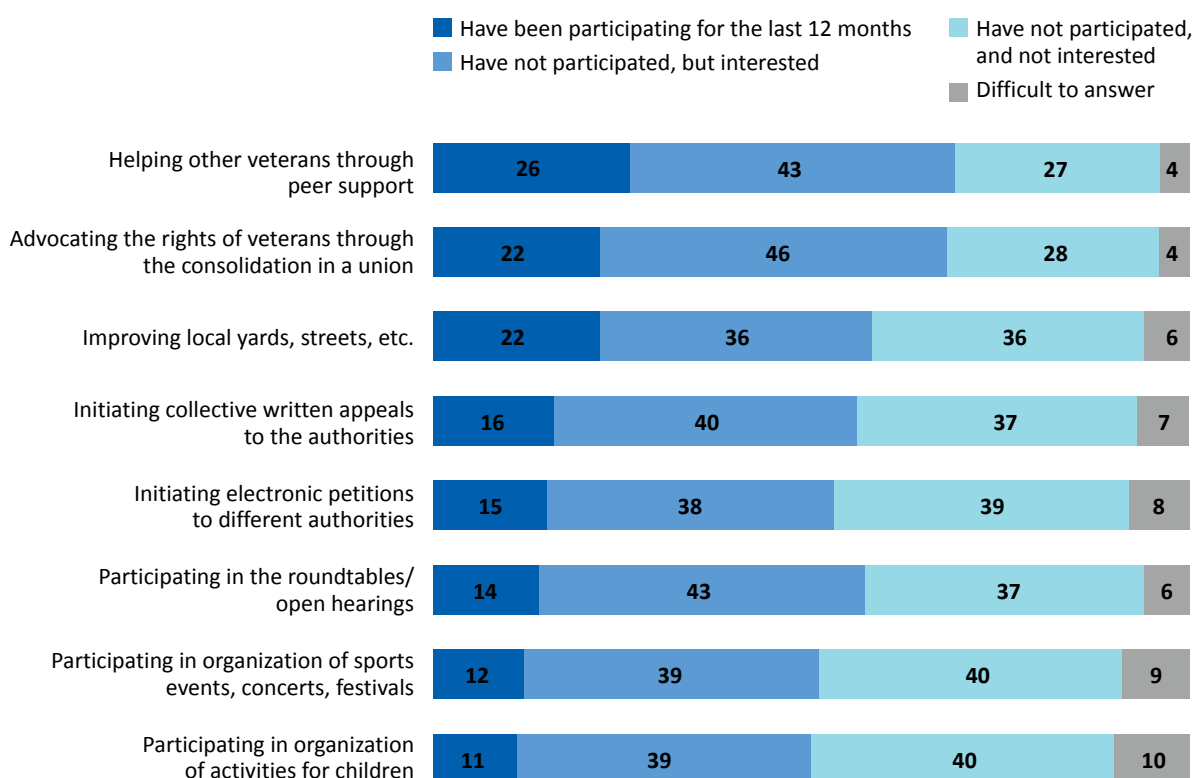
Chervonohrad, man, 23 y.o.

“A month ago, a friend of mine stopped by for a few days. He said he did not know what to do. He sees no sense in staying here, and he might be of service there.”

Source: FGDs with veterans' friends and acquaintances

The veterans from the target oblasts appear to be active in terms of participation in different social cohesion activities. In the last 12 months, approximately a quarter of the respondents have been involved in different community-based activities. The share of the veterans who assisted other veterans through collective support groups amounted to 26 per cent; 22 per cent advocated for veterans' rights by joining different associations (Figure 6.4). However, it should be noted that the results of the analysis again showed strong identification with the reference group.

Figure 6.4. Experience of participating in various social cohesion events and willingness to join them, %



Source: Interviews with veterans

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

During the FGDs, the veterans spoke of the complexity of returning to civilian life. Most of the respondents reported changes in their attitudes towards life and the people around them. The respondents stressed that they feel a lack of future prospects and have a strong sense of justice. Over a half of the surveyed veterans' partners (55%) reported that they never or almost never discuss the events that occurred during the veterans' service. The problem most frequently mentioned by veterans themselves is alcohol abuse (26%). This issue was also reported by 27 per cent of the veterans' family members. The participants of the FGDs emphasized that veterans tended to seek relief in alcohol instead of psychosocial support. Alcohol becomes the main way to manage stress instead of psychosocial aid.

Lviv, veteran, man, 49 y.o.

"That's it, after that you come back to the unit, that is the way to cope with stress. You just drink 200 grams of vodka and feel better."

Source: FGDs with veterans

During the FGDs, respondents mentioned veterans' need for psychosocial support. According to the respondents, all the veterans should undergo mandatory consultations with a psychologist.

Kyiv, veteran, man, 38 y.o.

"You do not want to see people at all, and you want to do nothing."

Source: FGDs with veterans

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 49 y.o.

"Everyone who has ever been under fire at least once needs psychological support."

Source: FGDs with veterans

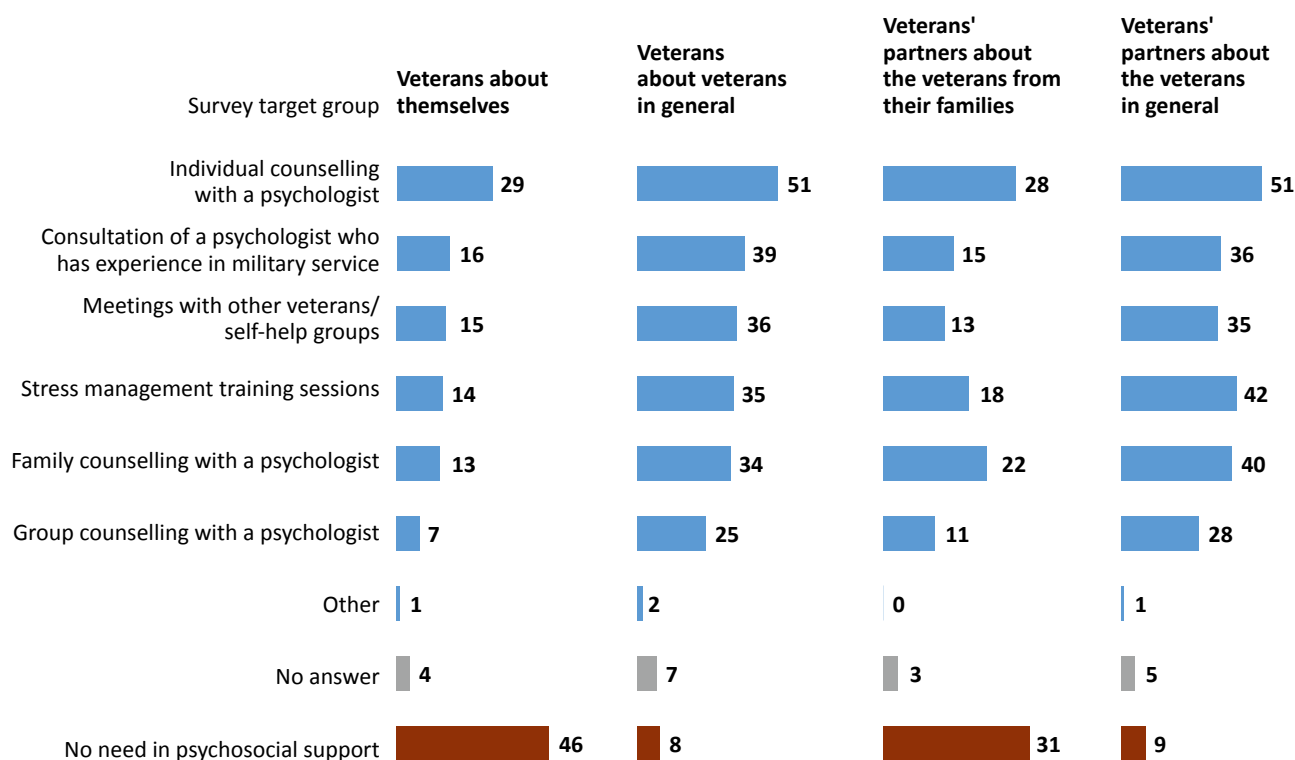
During the survey, the respondents were asked about the types of psychological support desirable for them and the types of psychological support necessary for veterans in general.

A third of the veterans indicated that they would like to receive at least one of the suggested types of psychosocial support. More than a half also indicated that the veterans generally need this support, with individual consultations with a psychologist ranking highest among the types of preferred support. Sixteen (16%) per cent of the veterans wanted consultations with a psychologist who has experience of military service, for example with a military chaplain. Thirty-nine (39%) per cent of the respondents reported this type of support as preferable for veterans in general. Similar to the veterans, family members indicated that individual consultations with a psychologist would be the most desirable type of psychological support for both the veterans from their households and for veterans in general (28% and 51%) (Figure 6.5).

Almost a half of the respondents (46%) reported that they do not want to receive any type of psychosocial support for themselves. Only eight per cent (8%) of the veterans stated that the veterans, in general, do not need psychosocial support. The data showed that the veterans' partners less frequently answered that the veterans from their households (31%) do not have a need to receive psychosocial support. Only nine per cent of the veterans' partners reported there was no need for psychosocial support for the veterans in general (Figure 6.5).

The qualitative component of the study showed that it is important for veterans to receive support from professionals who deeply understand veterans' experience and problems they face after they come back home. Conversely, veterans hold prejudices against psychologists who have no such experience. Key informants also emphasize that civilian psychologists lack experience counselling veterans. They say that, prior to working with veterans, psychologists need to undergo additional training that will enable them to understand the specifics of their life situation, world view, and experience in combat operations.

Figure 6.5. Type of preferred psychological support, % of veterans and veterans' partners who indicated a particular type of support



Note: Respondents could choose more than one option
Source: Interviews with veterans and with veterans' family members

Dnipro, key informant, woman, 35 y.o.

"Persons who provide psychological aid should have trauma-focused education."

Source: FGDs with key informants

Kyiv, veteran, woman, 50 y.o.

"I would say that both servicepeople and psychologists are needed here. As far as I understand, now if psychologists work, they work as civilian psychologists who do not understand military potential."

Source: FGDs with key informants

tations and trainings for veterans' family members. Such measures are important to help veterans' family members understand the mindset of a person who engaged in combat operations and build relations with him/her.

Dnipro, key informant, woman, 35 y.o.

"Why is the system built in such way that they do not get the aid they should get? Why is there no work with family members performed to influence the whole system? Why isn't such a patient supervised?"

Source: FGDs with key informants

The FGD participants held mixed views on meeting with other veterans as a kind of psychological aid. Some respondents consider that meetings with other veterans are a way to spend their spare time

In the opinion of friends and acquaintances of veterans, it would be good to provide individual consul-

rather than an opportunity to get psychological aid. However, other FGD participants considered meeting with other veterans to be a successful mechanism for reintegration and to discuss their problems. In the opinion of the key informants, interaction with comrades-in-arms who share common experience and interests could make reintegration easier. They believe that cooperation with comrades-in-arms helps veterans feel supported and strengthens their self-confidence. Veterans also deem it useful to participate in sports and creative activities organized jointly with other veterans. Such measures facilitate the intensification of communication and encourage participation in different types of activities.

Dnipro, key informant, woman, 55 y.o.

“These people were in the same conditions; they understand each other better than others. It is natural, it has always been this way that people who have been through the same events tend to unite based on similarity.”

Source: FGDs with key informants

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 38 y.o.

“If we just get together, it all ends with a tea party, at the very best... If we just get together, let me say it again, we do not have a culture of communication so that we can gather and help each other.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

Kyiv, veteran, woman, 25 y.o.

“The best psychologist is communicating with people. I started communicating with people, I belong to the Sviatoshyn Union of Veterans. The more you are in touch with people, the more you communicate with them, the better you feel.”

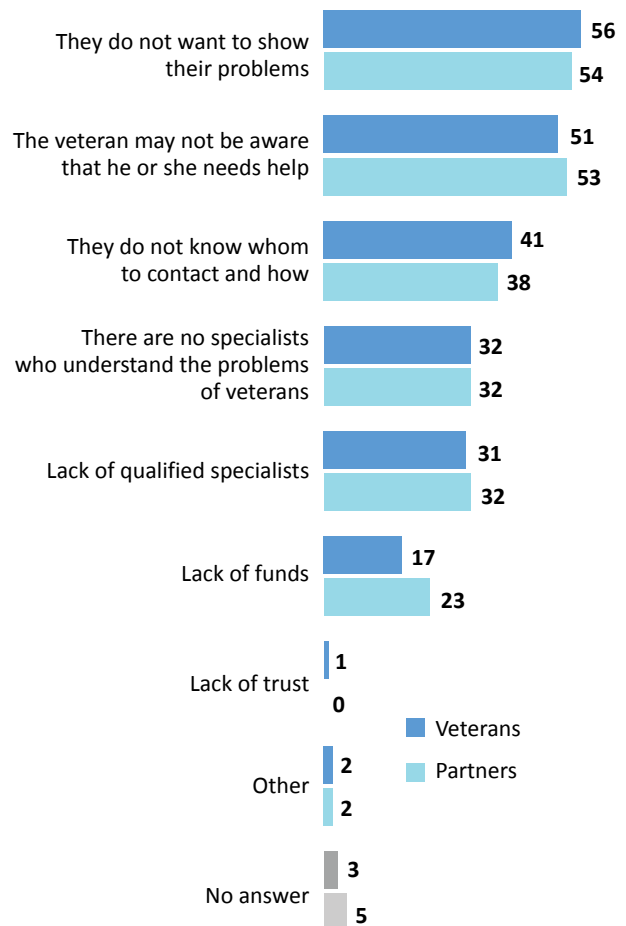
Source: FGDs with veterans

It was found that the veterans were more restrained in assessing themselves as people in need of psychosocial support. The respondents and their part-

ners were asked to assess the reasons that could impact veterans’ unwillingness to receive psychological support.

Fifty-six (56%) per cent of the veterans mentioned that the veterans might neglect psychological support because they do not want to show their problems. This view was supported when surveying veterans’ family members, who stressed that a veteran may not be aware that he or she needs help (53%), or they do not want to show their problems (54%).

Figure 6.6. Reasons for not requesting psychosocial support, %



*Note: Respondents could choose more than one option
Source: Interviews with veterans and with veterans’ family members*

Some veterans during the FGDs emphasized that it was hard for them to tell others about their problems despite feeling constant emotional discomfort. The respondents reported that they were ashamed

to tell other people about their need for psychosocial support as they worried that they would be perceived as “sick” or “deficient”.

Kyiv, veteran, woman, 25 y.o.

“I do not know whom I can politely address, it’s hard to tell, it’s hard for me to share with my acquaintances that I am looking for a good psychotherapist, it’s too hard for me, and I do not want anybody to know about it.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

One of the reasons for not seeking psychological aid is the reluctance to recall the experience related to the armed conflict. In the opinion of veterans who participated in the FGDs, participants in combat operations need to be provided an individualized type of psychological aid. Veterans indicated that at first it might be hard to seek psychological aid, so it would be more comfortable to receive individual consultations to engage with people around and be ready to share information about the events that took place during the military service.

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 40 y.o.

“You know, there’s not much desire to come and talk about it [military experience] to a person, recall it and go through it again.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

Pavlohrad, veteran, man, 38 y.o.

“Look, it would be better and easier to start with individual consultations. Individual consultations are more anonymous.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

The key informants reported that some veterans have an alcohol addiction. The FGD participants mentioned the lack of comprehensive approaches that might solve the problem of alcohol addiction. In the respondents’ opinion, this problem should be solved through both psychosocial aid and engaging veterans’ family and relatives.

In opinion of the FGDs participants, an additional reason for not seeking psychological aid is the lack of qualified professionals who have experience in working with veterans, understand their problems, and employ counselling strategies.

Lviv, veteran, man, 48 y.o.

“She was a psychologist, and she asked how I was doing; I told that I felt bad. She said: “That’s bad”. That’s all, I haven’t seen her since then; she was a public psychologist.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

In order to improve the level of aid provided by psychologists, veterans advise looking at other countries with similar experience in reintegrating veterans into civilian life and implementing proven models in Ukraine.

Kyiv, veteran, man, 50 y.o.

“We should use practices of other countries that have got a solid experience in military missions and adopt those practices.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

7. ATTITUDE TOWARDS STARTING OWN BUSINESS

The results of the FGDs showed that the establishing of their own business was considered by the veterans not only as a possibility to earn money and to be independent, but also as a chance to apply their skills and interact with a larger group of people. The FGD participants expressed the opinion that starting a business is an opportunity for veterans to cooperate with other veterans to implement business ideas and do it effectively.

Kyiv, veteran, woman, 50 y.o.

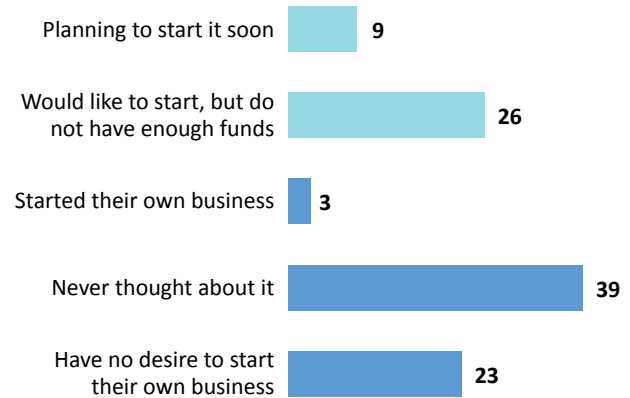
“The marketing component is very complicated. I present most of my products. But another person (veteran) could do this, if there were any possibilities for the veterans to collaborate.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

In general, 35 per cent of surveyed veterans confirmed that they would like to start their own business. Among them, 9 per cent were planning to do it soon, and the remaining 26 per cent would like to start but did not have enough funds do so. The share of those who reported interest in establishing a business was nearly the same (38%) among the general population¹⁸. Three per cent of the respondents reported that they had already started their own business. Among the general population, the share of those who reported having their own business was three times higher (10%)¹⁹. The rest of the survey participants never thought about it (39%) or had no desire to start their own business (Figure 7.1).

Respondents were asked to rate statements describing the modalities or barriers which can impact the process of starting a business. The shortage of

Figure 7.1. Attitudes towards business start-up, %



Source: Interviews with veterans

start-up capital was considered as the main obstacle to creating ones' own business in the opinion of the surveyed veterans (89%). Respondents emphasized the need for support to identify market demands with 86 per cent agreeing with the statement that “it would be good to get help in determining what type of business to open in my settlement”. Seventy-eight (78%) per cent reported the lack of support to start small and medium-sized businesses. Almost half of the respondents (47%) agreed that they are unable to obtain sufficient information on how to start a business (Figure 7.2).

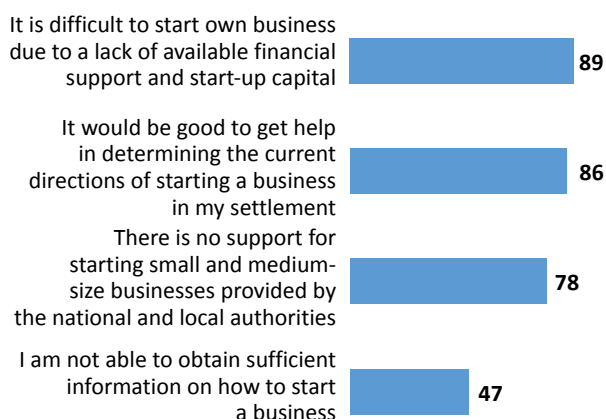
Veterans reported a lack of knowledge and skills for the preparation of realistic and thoughtful business plans. During the FGDs, participants mentioned that they would be interested in retraining or in education programmes on how to run a business, to pay taxes, to promote services or goods, and to be competitive in the market. One of the important prerequisites for starting a business noted by many respondents is the preparation of relevant market research and the identification of business areas with the highest potential for development. Legal assistance and protection, courses on financial literacy, and the basics of accounting and marketing were considered by the veterans as necessary skills to start a business.

Most veterans expected assistance from the state in starting their businesses, including the provision of grants and other funding opportunities, education for business start-ups, and legal assistance.

¹⁸ Taxes and Entrepreneurship: Estimates and Expectations. http://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/nalogi_i_predprinimatelstvo_ocenki_i_ozhidaniya.html

¹⁹ Ibid.

Figure 7.2. Share of those who agreed with the statements regarding the conditions to start a business, % of the veterans who would like to start a business or confirmed having a business



Source: Interviews with veterans

Kyiv, veteran, man, 38 y.o.

“Many veterans would like to start their own business. I know there are no governmental programmes for business support. The state does not prioritize such support.”

Source: FGDs with veterans

Kyiv, veteran, man, 39 y.o.

“State support is needed to develop a business, at least initial funding. Then I would earn this money and return it.”

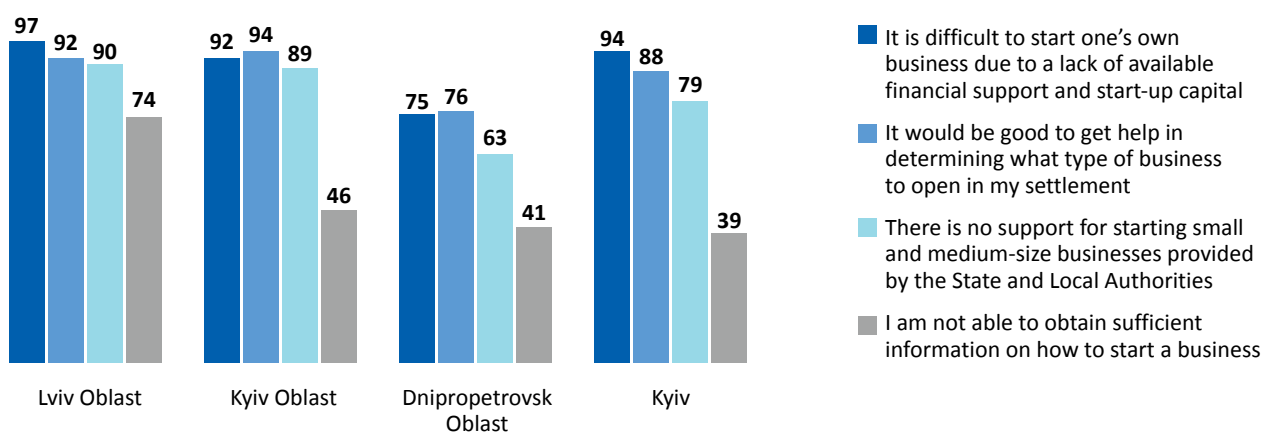
Source: FGDs with veterans

The results of the analysis showed a difference by oblast in the number of veterans who agreed with the statements on the challenges for starting a business.

The highest number of respondents who agreed with all the statements were found in Lviv Oblast, while the lowest being in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. Most of the surveyed veterans (89%) considered the shortage of start-up capital to be the main obstacle to creating one’s own business.

Most of the veterans from Lviv Oblast would like to receive help in determining the relevant types of businesses to develop (92%). Ninety per cent (90%) of the respondents surveyed in Lviv oblasts indicated a lack of state support to start small and medium-sized businesses. Seventy-four per cent (74%) of the interviewed veterans from Lviv Oblast confirmed that they did not have sufficient information on how to start a business, while the number of such in Dnipropetrovsk and Kyiv oblasts and Kyiv was considerably lower (41%, 46% and 39%, respectively).

Figure 7.3. Share of those who agreed with the statements regarding the conditions to start a business, by oblasts, % of the veterans who would like to start a business or confirmed having a business



Source: Interviews with veterans

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