

Research  
Paper

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# Why a ‘whole-of-society’ model is essential for Ukraine’s recovery

## Restoring the country’s human capital through state–civil society cooperation

Incorporating the 2026 Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs

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## Summary

- Russia’s full-scale invasion and the ongoing war have fundamentally altered Ukraine’s social landscape, affecting millions and placing unprecedented strain on the state’s ability to provide social protection. From psychological and rehabilitation support for veterans, to housing and employment for internally displaced people (IDPs), and educational and mental health support for children, the sheer scale of social needs exceeds the capacity of traditional government structures.
- The good news is that the government is not alone. Ukraine’s success in resisting Russian invasion lies in its ‘whole-of-society’ model of defence – involving a high level of mobilization among citizens, local community leaders, philanthropic organizations and the private sector. Civil society stands willing to apply this innovative and collaborative spirit to the post-war recovery.
- A ‘whole-of-society’ recovery can only happen if key stakeholders (from the state authorities and local government to civil society, the Ukrainian private sector and international donors) are all able to contribute and collaborate effectively. There has been some progress, but more needs to be done to ensure the recovery is fully inclusive. There are also risks that could restrict further progress, including the emergence of new regional inequalities and divergent views over recovery priorities.
- This research paper’s findings are informed by data from the 2026 edition of the Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs and their views on the recovery process. The paper forms part of a series produced annually for the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) since 2023. It details what CSOs are doing to address the needs of war-affected groups, and which components of an inclusive recovery are already in place. With reference to the survey findings, the paper assesses the effectiveness of those components and identifies what more is needed.
- Our survey data demonstrate that 65 per cent of CSOs, jointly with community leaders, remain engaged in recovery-related activities. Of these, 55 per cent provide social, educational or health services to citizens, which are the most frequent interventions of the sector. A significant number of CSOs also undertake activities related to the implementation of systemic reforms and provide basic humanitarian assistance.
- In the four years since our survey was first conducted, perceptions of the quality of collaboration around recovery have improved at the local level, but have declined among national-level CSOs. The biggest barriers to an inclusive recovery right now are the lack of a national champion in central government, which would be a valuable way to signal political will; the threat of hostilities continuing indefinitely and citizens remaining mobilized in defence structures; and limited engagement with citizens on recovery processes and frameworks, such as the new public investment management (PIM) framework launched in 2025.

- Ongoing, wide-reaching reforms to Ukraine’s social protection system are already facilitating a degree of inclusion. Despite this, CSOs feel that they are not yet treated as equal partners across all stages of Ukraine’s recovery process. CSOs are frequently seen as resource-generators at the local level or knowledge partners by the national government. Without deep early civic integration, recovery policies risk being top–down, opaque and misaligned with the priorities of local communities, their economic and demographic realities.
- The war has created divergent needs across the country. Regions in western Ukraine have experienced an influx of IDPs from the eastern regions closer to the front-line. The focus in the west of Ukraine must therefore be on expanding schools, healthcare facilities, psychological support services and affordable housing, as well as creating jobs for newly integrated populations. Meanwhile, the front-line regions in eastern and southern Ukraine have been most impacted by conflict. Their immediate needs centre around rebuilding shattered infrastructure (such as bridges, housing, power grids and water treatment plants), and demining agricultural land, so that local economic activity can restart and returning populations can be accommodated.
- War-time practices and recent reforms are laying the groundwork for the emergence of a new ‘social contract’, in which civil society actors are not just emergency responders but pillars of national resilience. To enable this transformation to continue, the Ukrainian leadership must engage in substantive discussions about responsibilities, resource allocation and the values underpinning Ukraine’s social recovery.

## Recommendations

- This paper recommends structural improvements aimed at increasing inclusion and collaboration around the PIM, including further embedding the practice of the European Code of Conduct for Partnerships and stronger in-country collaboration. Specific recommendations for stakeholders – ranging from the Ukrainian government to international donors and CSOs themselves – include:
  - **Establishing a Civil Society Advisory Council at the Ukraine Donor Platform** to improve both in-country and international collaboration;
  - **Expanding the existing social services marketplace** by incentivizing more direct procurement from the sector;
  - **Creating a ‘percentage philanthropy’ mechanism** within the tax code that allows citizens to allocate a portion of their income tax to specific, vetted CSOs and charities;
  - **Prioritizing aid localization** to tailor interventions to specific community needs and distribute them more effectively throughout the country; and
  - **Investing in strengthening the institutional capacity of CSOs** to run effective public consultations, learn new processes (including PIM and DREAM), and develop high-quality standards and costing models for social services.

## Introduction

Russia’s war on Ukraine has now spanned more than 12 years, with the full-scale aggression lasting almost five years. Few inside or outside Ukraine would have imagined that the war would last for so long.

The Russia–Ukraine conflict has become a highly technological war and a harbinger for the future of warfare world-wide. With a small army and underfunded defence-industrial base at the outset, Ukraine had to deploy smart, technological solutions and rely on asymmetric means to resist a much larger adversary. During the conflict, Ukraine has ushered in a revolution in defence technology and procurement, with its extensive use of autonomous combat systems and the creation of a rapid innovation loop between combat units, data centres and production hubs.

However, Ukraine’s robust defence would not have been possible without its greatest asset – its people. Making the best use of Ukraine’s human capital is critical for the outcome of the war. It is just as significant for the country’s future security and long-term socio-economic prosperity.

Since 2022, the discourse on rebuilding Ukraine has shifted both domestically and internationally. At the start of the full-scale invasion, the discussion centred around the design of a new ‘Marshall Plan’ for Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction. Since then, it has evolved and developed in two new directions. The first concerns rapidly restoring the country’s capacity to sustain critical basic systems (such as education, energy, healthcare and transport). The second focuses on developing a holistic vision for recovery that includes social, economic and institutional dimensions, with a strong emphasis on adopting a more human-centric approach in contrast to one that is purely state-driven.

From early on, the Chatham House Ukraine Forum has promoted a comprehensive approach to recovery that includes four components:

- **Rebuilding vital national infrastructure** such as energy, hospitals, housing, logistics, schools and transport;
- **Modernizing institutions at the national and local level** through reforms designed to attract investment, facilitate EU membership, revive the economy and protect democratic governance;
- **Restoring individual well-being** through the expansion of mental and physical health rehabilitation programmes, economic support schemes, and educational and training opportunities; and
- **Healing communities and promoting collective resilience** through social cohesion and restorative justice measures, which involves compensation for war damages (including for victims of conflict-based sexual violence), rebuilding of public spaces, reintegration of veterans and IDPs, youth engagement, support for the elderly and people with disabilities.

This paper discusses the last two dimensions in detail and suggests ways to create viable partnerships among the main stakeholders to deliver results.

**Figure 1.** Ukraine, including front-line regions and temporarily occupied territories, as of 7 June 2026



Source: Institute for the Study of War (2026), 'Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 7, 2026', 7 June 2026, <https://understandingwar.org/research/russia-ukraine/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-7-2026>.

## Reckoning with the mounting social costs of war

Given the unprecedented scale and complexity of the damages done to human capital, the Ukrainian government must first acknowledge that it cannot address the needs of social recovery alone.

Five years of Russia's illegal aggression have devastated Ukraine's cities, communities, citizens and infrastructure – the foundations of any national economy. According to the World Bank's most recent assessment, the war has already caused \$195 billion of direct damages. The needs of the social sector (including education, healthcare, housing and social protection) account for \$201.2 billion – more than a third of Ukraine's total recovery needs of \$587.7 billion.

As the war continues, further shrinking of the labour market and tax base will inevitably hamper Ukraine's recovery efforts. This challenge is already being reflected in the macroeconomic data. Ukraine's GDP shrunk by almost a third in 2022, before rebounding (to 5.5 per cent) in 2023. The growth rate has since slowed, falling to just 1.8 per cent in 2025. Ukraine's overall GDP remains more than 20 percentage points below its pre-war baseline.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Samoiliuk, M. (2026), 'Ukraine War Economy Tracker', Centre for Economic Strategy, updated 15 May 2026, <https://ces.org.ua/en/tracker-economy-during-the-war/#:~:text=GDP,-Text%20updated%20on&text=After%20a%2028.8%25%20contraction%20in,economic%20recovery%20is%20gradually%20slowing.>

## **Establishing a new model for the post-war social recovery**

Ukraine’s pre-war economic model, centralized energy infrastructure and institutional designs cannot serve as a basis for the post-war recovery. The old model is not fit for the modern society that Ukraine’s people aspire to create.

Recovery demands a fundamental reconfiguration of the state’s obligations to its citizens. If this ambition is to be met and the Ukraine’s Economy of the Future (UEF) initiative<sup>2</sup> is to succeed, the government must prioritize protecting Ukraine’s human capital and engage all stakeholders in the recovery effort.

## **Ukraine’s success in resisting Russian invasion lies in its ‘whole-of-society’ model of defence – which involves a high level of mobilization among citizens, private sector, philanthropic organizations and local community leaders.**

Ukraine’s success in resisting Russian invasion lies in its ‘whole-of-society’ model of defence – which involves a high level of mobilization among citizens, private sector, philanthropic organizations and local community leaders.<sup>3</sup> During the first month of the full-scale invasion, more than 100,000 people from civilian professions joined territorial defence units.<sup>4</sup> Just as the civilian technology sector revolutionized contemporary warfare by repurposing its engineering talent, software programmers and commercial technology for the production of autonomous weapons systems, the next frontier for Ukraine is to apply the same innovative and collaborative spirit to its social sector.

By applying this ‘whole-of-society’ approach to the recovery and harnessing technological innovations, Ukraine can create the preconditions for a new ‘social contract’ to emerge – one based on a resilient social welfare architecture designed to restore and develop human capital both during and after the war. To enable this to happen, the Ukrainian leadership must engage in substantive discussion about responsibilities, resource allocation and the values underpinning Ukraine’s social recovery – similar to the UEF initiative.

This paper shows how a ‘whole-of-society’ recovery can create these preconditions – discussing what is happening already and what still needs to be done, followed by recommendations for decision-makers and civil society on actions to take.

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<sup>2</sup> The UEF initiative outlines a dual-track strategy for national recovery. This strategy prioritizes building a resilient foundation through macroeconomic stability, anti-corruption measures and the rule of law, while simultaneously modernizing critical infrastructure and liberalizing markets to mobilize private capital. To ensure long-term sustainability, the UEF initiative also emphasizes labour market modernization, human capital development and alignment with EU standards. These policies are designed to catalyse growth in nine high-potential priority sectors (ranging from military technology and to renewable energy and critical raw minerals), shifting Ukraine’s economic profile from one based on traditional heavy industry towards that of a high-tech, innovation-driven global competitor. See World Bank (2026), *Ukraine: Fifth rapid damage and needs assessment*, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Istomina, P., Ogryzko, L. and Haievska, A. (2025), *Civil society role in Ukrainian defense*, Sahaidachnyi Security Center, [https://sahasec.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Civil-Society-Role\\_A5\\_Web-1.pdf](https://sahasec.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Civil-Society-Role_A5_Web-1.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Territorial Defence Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (undated), ‘Історія ТРО’ [History of the SRO], <https://tro.mil.gov.ua/istoriya-tro>.

**Figure 2.** The human cost of the war to date



Sources: See below.<sup>5</sup>

## About this paper

The paper’s analysis is informed by Chatham House’s annual recovery survey of civil society organizations (CSOs) and their leaders conducted inside Ukraine since 2022. The paper incorporates new findings from the 2026 edition of the survey, analysing how well Ukrainian civil society is currently integrated into the recovery effort at the national and regional levels, and how it contributes to protecting and restoring human capital in local communities. The survey sought to evaluate key risks to recovery, the impact of a possible ceasefire, current models of engagement and ways to improve partnership between the main stakeholders.

The 2026 survey captures the views of CSOs working across all of Ukraine’s regions, including those on the front line of the conflict and the temporarily occupied territories (see Figure 1). Where relevant, the paper will distinguish between results representing CSOs working in Kyiv or nationally from those

<sup>5</sup> Mezha (2026), ‘Analysts report Ukraine population on government-controlled territory fell below 29.5 million’, 5 May 2026, [https://mezha.net/eng/bukvy/f83e6702\\_analysts\\_report\\_ukraine](https://mezha.net/eng/bukvy/f83e6702_analysts_report_ukraine); Hrebinka, O. (2025), ‘By the numbers: Ukraine’s population losses amid war’, *Frontliner*, 23 August 2025, <https://frontliner.ua/en/ukraine-population-losses-amid-war>; Bushkovska, N. (2026), ‘Reversing Ukraine’s population loss after four years of war’, *Think Global Health*, 24 February 2026, <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/reversing-ukraines-population-loss-after-four-years-of-war>; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2026), *Ukraine situation: UNHCR’s 2026 plans and financial requirements*, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/120716>; Hlushko, D. (2026), ‘V yakykh rehionakh Ukrayiny naybil’she vnutrishn’o peremishchenykh osib i yak zminylasya yikhnya kil’kist’ – infografika’ [Which regions of Ukraine have the most internally displaced persons and how their number has changed – infographic], *Apostrophe.ua*, 5 January 2026, <https://apostrophe.ua/society/vpo-v-ukraini-kyiv-ta-regiony-kinets-2025.html>; ‘Systemni porushennya prav lyudyny na TOT Ukrayiny: zustrich iz delehatsiyeyu Rady Yevropy’ [Systemic human rights violations in Ukraine’s TOT: meeting with the Council of Europe delegation], 27 March 2026, [https://www.ombudsman.gov.ua/news\\_details/sistemni-porushennya-prav-lyudini-na-tot-ukrayini-zustrich-iz-delegaciyeyu-radi-yevropy](https://www.ombudsman.gov.ua/news_details/sistemni-porushennya-prav-lyudini-na-tot-ukrayini-zustrich-iz-delegaciyeyu-radi-yevropy); Panchenko, O. (2026), ‘Pensiyi po invalidnosti 2026: khto i skil’ky otrymaye pisly indeksatsiyi’ [Disability pensions 2026: Who will receive how much after indexation], *TSN*, 22 March 2026, <https://tsn.ua/exclusive/pensiyi-po-invalidnosti-2026-khto-i-skilky-otrymaye-pisly-indeksatsiyi-3044459.html>; and Ukrainian National News (2026), ‘Ukraine already has 1.8 million veterans; the government aims to employ 100,000 of them by 2030’, 22 April 2026, <https://unn.ua/en/news/ukraine-already-has-18-million-veterans-the-government-aims-to-employ-100000-of-them-by-2030>.

reflecting CSOs operating regionally. For the 2026 edition of the survey, 681 individual complete responses were received from CSOs. 63 per cent of survey respondents represented CSOs operating regionally.

The paper also compares the views of front-line communities with those in the rest of Ukraine, and highlights groups working with veterans to better understand views represented by this community. The annex at the end of the paper includes the results of the 2026 survey in full and a detailed description of the survey methodology.

## **How civil society adds value**

Individual well-being and community healing are crucial elements to any successful recovery. Ukrainian civil society and private sector have demonstrated their willingness to be part of the solution, and are already playing their part in burden-sharing across all regions of Ukraine.

Ukraine’s civil society has adapted to the demands of war, filling many gaps in government capacity, contributing by supporting citizens in need and assisting local self-governance in coping with many challenges. The Chatham House survey series shows that, since 2022, between 60 and 70 per cent of organizations have been involved in recovery efforts to repair the damage caused by Russia’s invasion. Many of these organizations also advocate for the integrity, transparency and reform that are key for recovery, especially around anti-corruption. Most survey respondents believe firmly that by engaging the civil society sector in delivering recovery, the needs of the most vulnerable groups will be better met. Confidence in representing the needs of their beneficiaries has risen steadily, increasing from 45 per cent in 2024 to 52 per cent in 2026 among regional CSOs in particular.

Nationwide, the 2026 results indicate that 66 per cent of respondents valued their contribution to strengthening social cohesion and resilience. The relative proportion among CSOs working exclusively with the veteran community (representing 27 per cent of total survey respondents) is even higher: 71 per cent of respondents from this group emphasize their positive contribution to social cohesion and resilience. Among all CSOs, 60 per cent see their role in providing independent civic oversight and 41 per cent of CSOs cite their ability to offer innovative solutions to social challenges (see Annex, Q20).

## **Responding to complex needs through partnership**

Effective inclusion of Ukraine’s non-profits at various stages of recovery will be critical if the country is to harness its depleted human capital. War causes immense immediate humanitarian demands, while also requiring advance planning on how to restore social potential when active hostilities are over.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine (2026), ‘Housing reconstruction is the foundation of the country’s social recovery – Maryna Denysiuk at the German-British Wilton Park Conference’, press release, 25 March 2026, <https://mindev.gov.ua/en/news/vidbudova-zhytla-osnova-sotsialnoho-vidnovlennia-krainy-maryna-denysiuk-na-german-british-wilton-park-conference>.

Civil society actors, in collaboration with local communities, are increasingly delivering services to support fellow citizens. Partnership with local CSOs therefore presents an opportunity to strengthen the emerging state social-support system, especially for reaching smaller, rural communities and those communities across the country that are most isolated.

It is important to look at Ukraine’s human recovery through an intersectional lens: different forms of vulnerability can overlap. For example, women often face increased risks of gender-based violence and carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, which limits their ability to re-enter the workforce. IDPs often lose their social networks, professional certifications, and stable housing. In other words, a significant portion of the workforce could remain economically inactive because the barriers to entry are too high for those with multiple vulnerabilities.

CSOs are well placed to respond to this challenge. For example, a coalition of 15 Ukrainian cities is creating barrier-free routes, renovating public spaces, and training officials in universal design principles to meet the needs of war veterans, people with injuries and others. This project is supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).<sup>7</sup>

## **Making better use of scarce resources**

Financial scarcity provides another rationale for a more inclusive, diffused approach to social recovery. Ukraine’s annual immediate recovery needs are around \$15 billion per year.<sup>8</sup> The two-year Ukraine support loan of €90 billion from the EU will prioritize some social support via budget assistance,<sup>9</sup> but the demand is huge. Over 13 million of people are currently estimated to be receiving social security payments.<sup>10</sup> Around €20 billion or 21 per cent of Ukraine’s state budget for 2026 was allocated towards social protection and support, education and health (while 59 per cent was directed towards defence and security).<sup>11</sup>

As the war continues, Ukraine faces mounting financial pressures to fund its armed forces, while also having to sustain large social support expenses and rebuild critical energy infrastructure ahead of the 2026–27 winter. The estimated financial needs to prepare for the next heating season are nearly €5.4 billion.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, funding beyond 2027 has yet to be secured.

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2024), ‘Ukraine builds a barrier-free future: how UNDP supports the creation of inclusive communities and cities’, press release, 10 December 2024, <https://www.undp.org/ukraine/press-releases/ukraine-builds-barrier-free-future-how-undp-supports-creation-inclusive-communities-and-cities#:~:text=The%20significance%20of%20inclusivity%20was,overall%20well%2Dbeing%20of%20communities>.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank (2026), *Ukraine – Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA5)*, p. 54.

<sup>9</sup> European Council (2026), ‘Council finalises €90 billion support loan to Ukraine’, press release, 23 April 2026, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/04/23/council-finalises-90-billion-support-loan-to-ukraine>.

<sup>10</sup> Mereshchuk, V. (2026), ‘Denys Ulyutin: “The number of people out of work is rising sharply”’, *lb.ua*, 29 April 2026, [https://en.lb.ua/news/2026/04/29/37922\\_denys\\_ulyutin\\_number\\_people\\_out.html](https://en.lb.ua/news/2026/04/29/37922_denys_ulyutin_number_people_out.html).

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF (2025), *Ukraine’s State Budget 2026: Public Finance for Children (PF4C) Budget Overview*, December 2025, [https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/media/56126/file/PF4C%20Ukraine’s%20State%20Budget%202026\\_eng.pdf.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/media/56126/file/PF4C%20Ukraine’s%20State%20Budget%202026_eng.pdf.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> The New Voice of Ukraine (2026), ‘Ukraine seeks €5.4 billion to fortify power grid ahead of next heating season’, 26 April 2026, <https://english.nv.ua/nation/shmyhal-reveals-how-much-money-ukraine-needs-to-prepare-for-winter-50603226.html>.

Despite the structural successes of decentralization implemented since 2015, the fiscal autonomy of local communities is also under severe pressure, as the central government absorbs more revenue to sustain the war effort. In late 2023, the central government redirected the personal income tax paid by military personnel and law enforcement officers away from local/regional budgets and into a special national budget fund for arms production and procurement.<sup>13</sup>

## **As the war continues, Ukraine faces mounting financial pressures to fund its armed forces, while also having to sustain large social support expenses and rebuild critical energy infrastructure.**

While both state and local budgets saw revenue growth in 2025, the local share of Ukraine’s total consolidated budget revenue plummeted from 24.4 per cent in 2022 to 14.6 per cent in 2025.<sup>14</sup> In 2025, for the first time since the decentralization reform began in 2014, local budgets ended the year with a UAH 22.1 billion (\$501.4 million) deficit.<sup>15</sup> Previously, communities had typically maintained a surplus.

Local governments are legally responsible for social services, especially IDP support. But they now command the lowest share of national revenue since the decentralization reform began. The 2025 deficit was a direct consequence of wartime priorities – specifically, the centralization of resources for national defence, compounded by rising social expenditure and the urgent requirements of local territorial defence and infrastructure restoration.

All this means that the effective allocation of resources, robust partnerships with the non-government sector and a rigorous analysis of what truly delivers results must all be intentionally embedded into the design of the recovery system from the outset.

The government must promote and enable the creation of a new ‘social contract’, centred around the equitable distribution of resources and a meaningful recognition of the contribution of civil society, as well as the sacrifices made by Ukrainian veterans. As the Chatham House survey results show (see below), the reintegration of veterans into civilian life is one of the most significant social challenges and highest priorities for the recovery process. Succeeding in this task will require a committed partnership among all stakeholders.

<sup>13</sup> Reuters (2023), ‘Ukrainian lawmakers back use of military taxes to fund arms purchases’, 8 November 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukrainian-lawmakers-back-use-military-taxes-fund-arms-purchases-2023-11-08>.

<sup>14</sup> Onyshchuk, I. (2026), ‘Analysis of local budget execution in 2025: key trends and fiscal capacity of communities’, Decentralization.ua, 30 March 2026, <https://decentralization.ua/en/news/20555>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## How CSOs view the priorities for Ukraine’s recovery: Analysis of the 2026 survey

### Regional and national-based CSOs increasingly diverge on priorities

Throughout the years in which the Chatham House survey has been conducted, respondents have consistently selected modernizing state institutions, rebuilding physical infrastructure and supporting businesses to restart operations as Ukraine’s top three recovery priorities. However, in the 2026 edition, the reintegration of veterans into civilian life emerged as the top priority (see section below).<sup>16</sup>

The sustained focus on institutional modernization across the survey years demonstrates that Ukraine has a strong domestic support base for accelerating the reform agenda necessary for EU membership. Ukrainian civil society is sending a clear signal to its government and international donors that institutional modernization is essential for meeting Ukraine’s economic and social recovery needs.

### The sustained focus on institutional modernization across the survey years demonstrates that Ukraine has a strong domestic support base for accelerating the reform agenda necessary for EU membership.

The decline of modernizing state institutions as a recovery priority among regional CSOs is a concerning trend, however. In 2022, 55 per cent of respondents selected it in the top three. This rate fell to just 33 per cent in 2026 (see Figure 3). If the trend continues in the coming years, it could undermine the overall speed and depth of such reform across Ukraine. The quality of recovery would then be damaged, as social policy reform, public investment management (PIM) reform and anti-corruption measures all need to be implemented at the community level. Stronger engagement with institutional reform will also be critical for a successful transition from the humanitarian to the development phase among non-profit organizations.<sup>17</sup>

The decline in salience of institutional reform could be partially explained by CSOs’ focus on immediate priorities as the social costs of the war mount in their communities. This explanation would appear to be supported by the fact that modernization remains a high priority among national-level CSOs, with over

<sup>16</sup> ‘Veteran reintegration’ was added as a new option in the 2026 survey edition, given the high number of respondents who had already consistently named it as one of the key social challenges. Despite the risk that the introduction of a new category may dilute the figures for other responses, the overall trends identified across multiple surveys have remained consistent and clear.

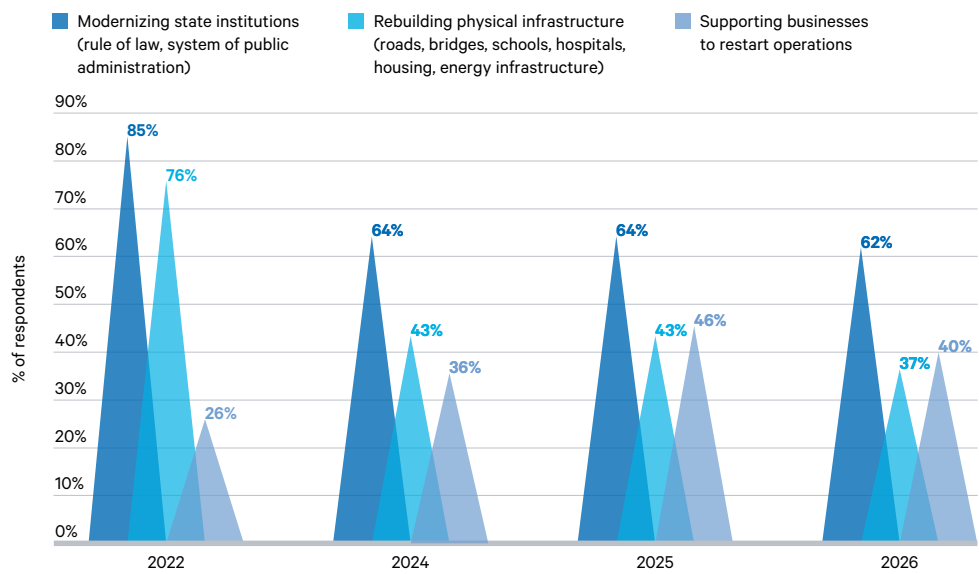
<sup>17</sup> Alliance UA CSOs (n.d.), ‘The Nexus isn’t jargon – it’s Ukraine’s essential framework for recovery’, <https://allianceuacso.com/the-nexus-isnt-jargon-its-ukraines-essential-framework-for-recovery>.

60 per cent of groups consistently placing it at the top of the list. Even if regional NGOs become more focused on immediate social needs, national-level counterparts are well placed to campaign for institutional reform.

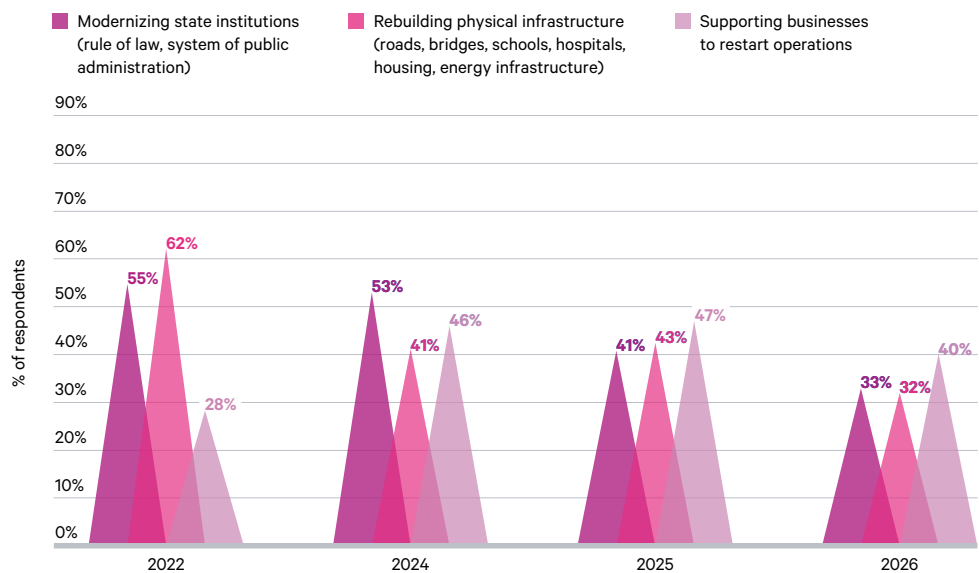
**Figure 3.** National-level CSOs continue to prioritize institutional reform, but the focus is shifting at regional level

Question: Please select three priorities for recovery that should begin even while the war is ongoing.

**Kyiv-based/national level**



**Regional level**



The high level of priority given to supporting businesses regeneration by regional NGOs has a clear rationale. Local grassroots organizations often partner with businesses to gather equipment, medical supplies and aid for both civilian needs and the armed forces. For example, in the town of Nizhyn in the Chernihiv region,

local businesses have partnered with local CSOs to create the region’s first veteran support centre.<sup>18</sup>

Companies are also collaborating with local CSOs to support veterans and IDPs, offering training and skills development to help them adapt to new communities and contribute to local economies. For example, the major Ukrainian agribusiness MHP has supported local communities through the ‘MHP Standing Together’ programme for veterans and the ‘MHP-Hromadi’ charity foundation, providing veterans and their relatives with legal, psychological and career development support.<sup>19</sup> Another example of partnership between CSOs and business is the ‘map of opportunities’,<sup>20</sup> a centralized, interactive online platform connecting IDPs with employment initiatives, entrepreneurship grants and training, provided by IREX.<sup>21</sup>

Ukrainian businesses are already funding local CSOs in support of recovery goals where they can, although businesses themselves are heavily impacted by the war. In addition, as in the example of the IREX opportunity map, businesses can support through employment schemes, particularly for IDPs and veterans. In 2026, survey respondents reported that 14 per cent of their recovery activities are funded through donations from Ukrainian businesses (see Annex, Q9). For smaller CSOs, it is vital that local businesses can flourish as they provide an additional source of funding at a time when those organizations face financial constraints.

Local groups place a greater emphasis on the immediate needs of fellow citizens affected by war. As the war continues, displacement remains a significant problem as people continue to flee from regions close to the front lines, such as Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia.<sup>22</sup> CSOs are often first responders and provide help with evacuation, much-needed humanitarian aid and socialization support to this vulnerable group. It is unsurprising therefore that, in front-line regions, the focus on veterans and mental health is greater than in Kyiv.

The need for a robust mental health policy is another dominant theme on which the two levels diverge. By 2026, regional CSOs were twice as likely as national ones (32 per cent vs 16 per cent) to select mental health as a key recovery priority. This regional prevalence reflects the deep integration of regional CSOs within traumatized communities and their understanding of the most urgent local needs. When asked to define societal resilience, 42 per cent of regional CSOs prioritized ‘individual resilience’ (overcoming burnout and trauma), compared to 29 per cent of national-level CSOs (see Annex, Q22).

<sup>18</sup> Hornova, V. (2024), ‘U Nizhyni vidkryvsya veterans'kyi prostir “Nezlamni”: yaku dopomohu tam mozna otrymaty’ [A veterans’ space “Nezlamny” has opened in Nizhyn: What help can you get there?], *Suspilne | Chernihiv*, 27 March 2024, <https://suspilne.media/chernihiv/715244-u-nizyni-vidkryvsya-veteranskij-prostir-nezlamni-aku-dopomogu-tam-mozna-otrimati>.

<sup>19</sup> MHP (undated), ‘MHP Standing Together’, <https://mhp.com.ua/en/pro-kompaniu/mhp-poruch>.

<sup>20</sup> Ednannia (undated), ‘Opportunities’, <https://yednanniazaradydii.org.ua/cases>.

<sup>21</sup> Mezha (2026), ‘IREX launches map of opportunities for IDPs, simplifying access to jobs and training’, 23 March 2026, [https://mezha.net/eng/bukvy/irex\\_launches\\_map](https://mezha.net/eng/bukvy/irex_launches_map).

<sup>22</sup> International Organization for Migration (2026), *Ukraine internal displacement report: General population survey Round 22*, January 2026, [https://dtm.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11461/files/reports/IOM\\_UKR\\_Internal%20Displacement%20Report\\_GPS%20R21\\_January\\_2025.pdf?iframe=true](https://dtm.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11461/files/reports/IOM_UKR_Internal%20Displacement%20Report_GPS%20R21_January_2025.pdf?iframe=true).

## New inequalities are emerging between regions

Russia’s invasion has fundamentally reshaped Ukraine’s internal geography and the Ukrainian government is already acknowledging the need for a differentiated approach based on local realities.<sup>23</sup>

The proximity of communities in the east and south of the country to the front line makes them easier targets for drone and bomb attacks. This increased danger has led to business exodus and internal displacement. 72 per cent of all infrastructure damage is concentrated in just six regions – Donetsk, Kharkiv, Luhansk, Kherson, Kyiv and Zaporizhzhia.<sup>24</sup>

Ukraine is witnessing a shift in economic gravity from the industrialized east and south to the western and central regions. Local budgets in front-line *hromadas* (communities) have effectively collapsed, as their industrial and tax bases were destroyed or fell under occupation.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, regions such as Lviv and Zakarpattia in the west have seen a surge in local revenues, driven by the relocation of thousands of businesses and millions of IDPs.<sup>26</sup> This concentration of resources in western and central regions and their major urban hubs risks leaving rural and smaller settlements to the north and east depleted of both labour and capital essential for recovery.<sup>27</sup>

### Box 1. CSOs in front-line communities have different priorities to those in the rest of Ukraine

The intensity of the war varies significantly across Ukraine’s regions. This variety is clearly reflected in the survey responses of CSOs based in front-line communities compared to those in the rest of the country.

CSOs in front-line regions prioritize the rebuilding of physical infrastructure, with 34 per cent placing it among their top three recovery priorities, compared to 25 per cent of their counterparts in other regions. Notably, CSOs in the Kyiv region also show strong concern for infrastructure at 32 per cent, making them a distinct outlier among non-front-line areas. This distinction likely reflects the ongoing need to repair damage from Russian strikes on the capital’s heating and power generation facilities.

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine (2025), ‘*Terytorial'no-orientovanyi pidkhid u stratehichnomy planuvanni* [Territorial-oriented approach in strategic planning], [https://mindev.gov.ua/storage/app/imported\\_content/67bdd50b14ab1.pdf](https://mindev.gov.ua/storage/app/imported_content/67bdd50b14ab1.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2025), ‘Updated damage assessment finds \$524 billion needed for recovery in Ukraine over next decade’, press release, 25 February 2025, <https://www.undp.org/ukraine/press-releases/updated-damage-assessment-finds-524-billion-needed-recovery-ukraine-over-next-decade>.

<sup>25</sup> Created by the Centre for Information Resilience, the ‘Eyes on Russia Map’ is an interactive tool using verified open-source information and satellite imagery to track and visualize Russian military movements, infrastructure damage and civilian harm. Using the filter ‘industrial’ to single out instances of Russian attacks on industrial infrastructure, the map shows how these attacks tend to concentrate around urban centres in Ukraine’s southern and eastern regions (as well as in Kyiv). See CIR (undated), ‘Eyes on Russia Map’, <https://www.info-res.org/eyes-on-russia/maps/eyes-on-russia-map>.

<sup>26</sup> Levonova, M. and Jarábik, B. (2025), ‘Ukraine’s regional shift: Realignment in wartime and beyond’, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 17 December 2025, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/12/ukraine-regional-realignment-wartime-postwar-reconstruction>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

A similar pattern emerges regarding ‘demining’, which is identified as a recovery priority by 18 per cent among CSOs working in front-line regions. This compares to an average of 12 per cent among CSOs operating elsewhere. Equally, 51 per cent of CSOs working in front-line regions considered supporting the war-time generation of children as a top recovery priority, compared to 45 per cent of CSOs operating in the rest of Ukraine.

37 per cent of CSOs working in front-line regions list ‘subcontracting social services to local NGOs’ as an effective solution to improve cooperation between CSOs and local authorities, compared to 34 per cent of their counterparts in more stable regions.

For front-line regions, it appears that the distinction between humanitarian aid and recovery has understandably become blurred. A national recovery plan should be strengthened by renewing the comprehensive Regional Development Strategy which expires in 2027.<sup>28</sup> These data points underscore the importance to tailored approaches to local needs, as those needs are informed by different experiences of war and therefore will require a different response.

## **Collaboration between CSOs and the state on acute social challenges is uneven**

To address the most pressing social challenges of recovery, CSOs are increasingly seeking cooperation with the state. However, national and regional CSOs vary on the most critical social problems that require collaboration. In 2026, regional CSOs regarded their top three priorities as:

- Reintegration of veterans (75 per cent);
- Strengthening national unity around a victory strategy (51 per cent); and
- IDP reintegration (50 per cent).

(See Annex, Q11 for more detail.)

The latter factor reflects a clear preference among regional CSOs for a ‘whole-of-society’ approach to recovery, where the government provides strategic policy direction and some financial resources, the private sector drives inclusive economic growth, and civil society facilitates the reintegration of the most war-affected groups into the labour market and local communities.

In contrast, the responses from national CSOs were more diffuse, with the top three similar but with different degrees of prioritization:

- Reintegration of veterans (54 per cent);
- Implementation of a wartime economy (e.g. prioritizing defence manufacturing and domestic procurement) (48 per cent); and
- Strengthening national unity (46 per cent).

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Restoration of Ukraine (undated), *Updated State Strategy For Regional Development For 2021–2027: Key Aspects*, information booklet, [https://decentralization.ua/uploads/attachment/document/1477/Довідка\\_МИУ\\_ІНФОРМАЦІЙНА\\_БРОШУРА\\_A4\\_engl.pdf](https://decentralization.ua/uploads/attachment/document/1477/Довідка_МИУ_ІНФОРМАЦІЙНА_БРОШУРА_A4_engl.pdf).

National CSOs also place significant weight on the demographic crisis and the necessity of skills retraining for the working-age population.

### **Support for veterans remains a high priority**

A focus on support for veterans has been a constant feature of the response from CSOs at all levels since this option was included in the survey in 2025.

As noted above, some differences remain. Regional CSOs prioritize veteran reintegration significantly more than their national counterparts (75 per cent vs 54 per cent), perhaps reflecting their direct experience of working with demobilized soldiers and anxiety over how a large-scale return of military personnel post-war might affect local communities.

The prominence of veteran issues in the Chatham House survey reflects a widespread concern that state-run services may lack the capacity to meet the growing needs of those fighting the war. While most of the military remains mobilized in order to maintain troop levels during this attritional conflict, a major reform announced by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in May 2026 aims to introduce phased demobilization and clearer service terms.<sup>29</sup>

## **The prominence of veteran issues reflects a widespread concern that state-run services may lack the capacity to meet the growing needs of those fighting the war.**

Early data indicates that those who have already been demobilized – largely comprising those with health issues – face significant barriers to reintegration, including mental health challenges, bureaucratic complexity, financial inequity and difficulties re-entering the civilian workforce.<sup>30</sup> If people do not see a clear path to victory or a fair service model, social cohesion may begin to fray. A positive development is the emergence of veteran-led groups providing psychological support, legal advocacy and sports-based rehabilitation.<sup>31</sup> Consistent with our broader survey findings, these groups prioritize good mental health as the foundation of successful transition to civilian life.

<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Defence of Ukraine (2026), ‘Reform of the Defence Forces of Ukraine: defined service durations and revised service remuneration’, news article, 1 May 2026, <https://mod.gov.ua/en/news/reform-of-the-defence-forces-of-ukraine-defined-service-durations-and-revised-service-remuneration>.

<sup>30</sup> International Organization for Migration (2023), *The social reintegration of veterans in Ukraine*, report, November 2023, [https://ukraine.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11861/files/documents/2024-01/veterans-social\\_reintegration\\_eng.pdf](https://ukraine.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11861/files/documents/2024-01/veterans-social_reintegration_eng.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Veterans Reintegration Programme (2025), *Mapping of veteran organisations 2025*, report, <https://veteran-reintegration.in.ua/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/report-mapping-of-veteran-organizations-2025.pdf>.

### Box 2. The Veteran Support Fund

A positive example of how a successful social recovery model can take a holistic and collaborative approach across multiple stakeholders is the *Varto* (“Worth it”) grant scheme. The scheme is designed to support veteran-owned businesses and relies on public–private partnerships – including with Kernel, a leading agricultural production company.<sup>32</sup>

A survey by the Ukrainian Veteran Fund – a state institution under the Ministry of Veterans Affairs providing financial support for veteran-led businesses, mental health assistance, and tools for reintegration – showed that 64 per cent of Ukrainian veterans want to start their own business.<sup>33</sup> There are already many successful cases of businesses being created by veterans across Ukraine.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike veterans in the UK and the US who predominantly have professional military backgrounds, most Ukrainian veterans were civilians before the war began. This fact could, in theory, make the reintegration process easier. But a strong and well-developed infrastructure is needed to assist people in finding a new purpose and adapt to new circumstances, including living with disability or needing new skills to re-enter the labour market.

## Civic oversight is essential to uphold integrity

While Ukraine’s resilience is frequently praised, it is not an unlimited resource. The cumulative pressures of prolonged, high-intensity war risk eroding the country’s social foundations. To replenish war-time resilience, as our survey shows, respondents name three key measures. First is CSOs’ strong support for strengthening institutional integrity through resolute anti-corruption measures. Second is stronger cooperation with local and regional authorities to create networks for provision of aid. Finally, gradually restoring local self-government is placed third. In the view of CSOs at all levels, modernization of political institutions must go hand-in-hand with the delivery of services essential for community restoration and the mitigation of embezzlement risks around recovery funds (see Annex, Q22).

However, as with other questions around priority, our survey reveals a notable divergence between national and regional CSOs on what is most important to boost national resilience: national CSOs place higher value on institutional accountability and effectiveness than their regional counterparts (46 per cent vs 32 per cent). Despite this difference, a broad consensus remains on the necessity of clean governance. An overwhelming majority of both national and regional

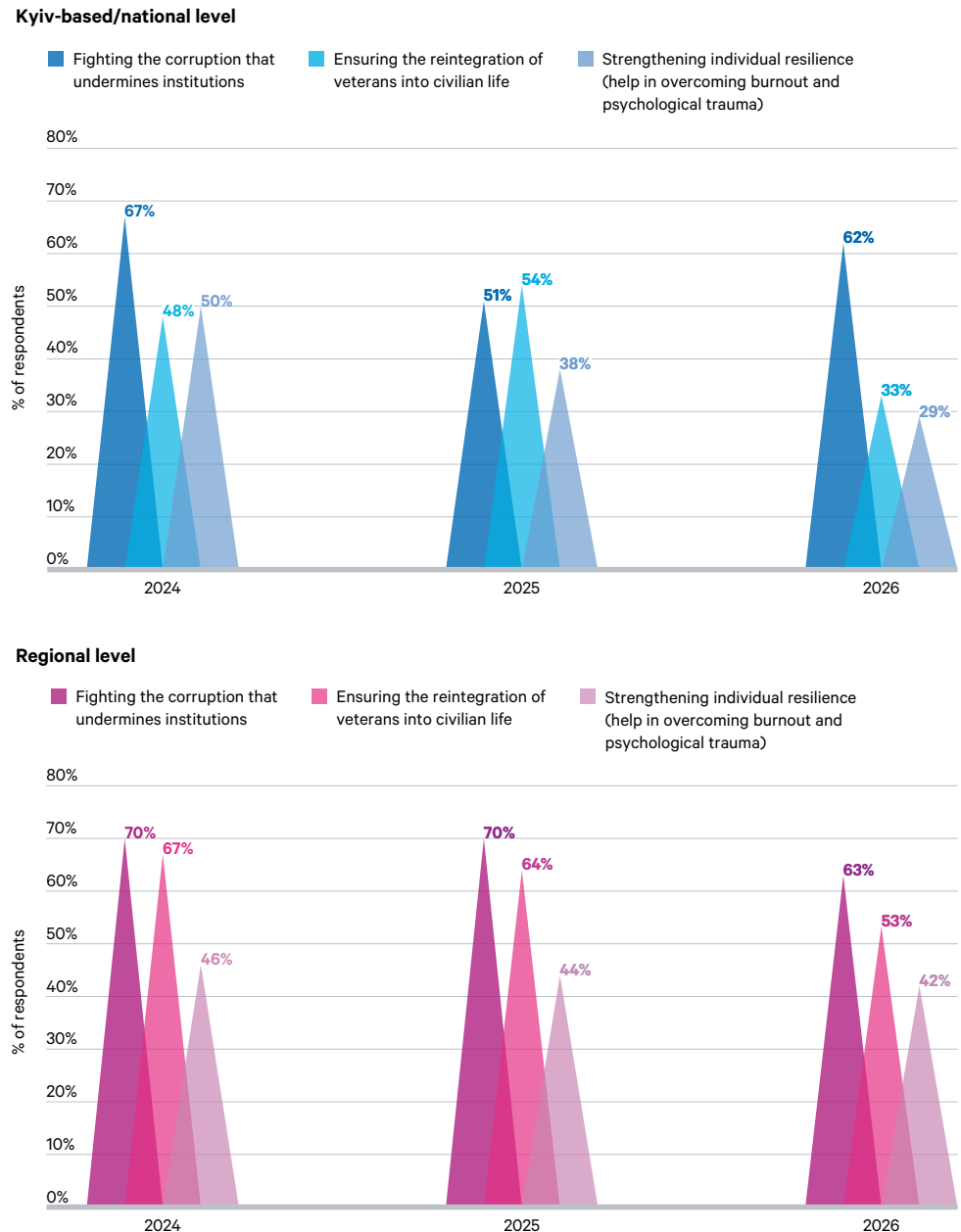
<sup>32</sup> Ukrainian Veterans Foundation (2026), ‘Startuvav konkurs hrantiv dlya veterans’koho biznesu “Varto: 4 roky pidtrymky” [The grant competition for veteran businesses “Worth it: 4 years of support” has been launched], 26 January 2026, <https://veteranfund.com.ua/newsukr/ctartuvav-konkurs-hrantiv-dlia-veteranskoho-biznesu-varto-4-roky-pidtrymky>.

<sup>33</sup> Ukrainian Veterans Foundation (2023), *The second anonymous online survey among veterans and active military personnel “Needs of veterans”*, 6–12 February 2023, p. 6, <https://veteranfund.com.ua/doc/Needs%20of%20veterans.docx.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Yankiv, O. (2025), ‘The business of recovery: how entrepreneurship is helping Ukrainian veterans reintegrate into civilian life’, *Ukrayinska Pravda*, 25 November 2025, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/articles/2025/11/25/8008781>.

CSOs (62 per cent vs 63 per cent) identify combating corruption as the primary requirement for strengthening wartime resilience. This response has remained consistent across the last three years of Chatham House surveys (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** Although the levels of prioritization have changed between surveys, fighting corruption has remained a top concern throughout  
 Question: Which elements of societal resilience should be prioritized during wartime?



The civil society sector remains committed to monitoring recovery expenditures, with 60 per cent of Chatham House respondents asserting that the primary value of civil society is to act as a ‘watchdog’ (see Annex, Q20). However, the commitment to civic oversight has seen a marked decline, dropping from 68 per cent in 2022 to 60 per cent in 2026. This trend likely reflects the severe funding shocks following

the 2025 suspension of USAID assistance, which forced many organizations to scale back monitoring activities and lay off specialized staff.

Despite these constraints, several civil society initiatives continue to bridge the oversight gap and engage local groups. For example, the Fiscal Policy Research Centre<sup>35</sup> monitors direct expenditure, including those from the European Investment Bank and the Fund for the Elimination of Consequences of Armed Aggression. Meanwhile, the Big Recovery Project (BRP) is Ukraine’s largest civic monitoring initiative.<sup>36</sup> BRP focuses on public investment at the community level (specifically schools, hospitals and residential repairs) by leveraging data from the Prozorro digital public procurement platform and E-data public finance portals.

The primary obstacle to more effective oversight remains the lack of granular data at the local level about funded recovery projects. While the DREAM platform serves as a centralized hub for managing, monitoring and coordinating all recovery projects, it does not display projects that have already secured funding.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the Ukrainian finance ministry does not provide real-time updates to DREAM on financial transactions related to projects approved for funding. Similarly, the ministry publishes the list of public investments approved for 2026 with the national implementing agencies, but it is not clear to which communities these resources will be allocated. For example, the State Fund of Regional Development lists 2 million UAH in the public investment portfolio, but lacks information as to what is funded.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, of the UAH 256 billion allocated for public investment in 2025, approximately UAH 187 billion was sourced from foreign donors, yet tracing these funds to local outcomes remains a significant challenge for independent monitors.<sup>39</sup>

### **Consultation on individual projects is improving, but more needs to be done at the strategic level**

The most significant evolution in Ukraine’s recovery delivery is the introduction of the Public Investment Management (PIM) framework.<sup>40</sup> Launched in 2025, this system streamlines national and local planning by creating a single project pipeline and ensuring individual recovery projects are directly linked to broader community development strategies and national sectoral strategies.

The PIM framework aggregates the recovery pipeline within the DREAM ecosystem, aiming for a ‘single window’ for all investment activity in Ukraine. As of early 2026, the DREAM portal carries an extensive portfolio of projects worth a total of UAH 6.4 trillion. However, a significant gap remains between planning and

<sup>35</sup> Fiscal Policy Research Center (undated), ‘Analytics’, <https://fiscalcenter.org/en/analytics>.

<sup>36</sup> BRP Big Recovery Portal (undated), ‘Main Page’, <https://brp.org.ua/en>.

<sup>37</sup> DREAM (undated), ‘DREAM objects map’, <https://map.dream.gov.ua>.

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (2025), ‘Publicni investytsiyi u byudzheti-2026: modernizatsiya infrastruktury, enerhetyky, transportu i sotsial’nykh posluh’ [Public investments in the 2026 budget: modernization of infrastructure, energy, transport and social services], 25 December 2025, [https://www.mof.gov.ua/uk/news/publicni\\_investitsii\\_u\\_byudzheti-2026\\_modernizatsiia\\_infrastrukturi\\_energetiki\\_transportu\\_i\\_sotsialnikh\\_poslug-5511](https://www.mof.gov.ua/uk/news/publicni_investitsii_u_byudzheti-2026_modernizatsiia_infrastrukturi_energetiki_transportu_i_sotsialnikh_poslug-5511).

<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine (2025), ‘Sektoral’ni proektni portfeli’ [Sectoral project portfolios], 16 July 2025, <https://mindev.gov.ua/upravlinnia-publichnymy-investytsiiamy/sektoralni-proektni-portfeli>.

<sup>40</sup> Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine (2025), ‘What is public investment management reform (PIM)?’, 15 August 2025, <https://mindev.gov.ua/en/news/shcho-take-reforma-upravlinnia-publichnymy-investytsiiamy-rim>.

execution: only UAH 134.6 billion (\$3 billion) has been approved by the Strategic Investment Council for the Single Project Pipeline, making it eligible for state budget financing.<sup>41</sup>

The perception of DREAM as a civic engagement tool has shown modest improvement in the Chatham House survey. In 2026, 15 per cent of regional CSOs and 14 per cent of Kyiv-based groups rated the platform as ‘effective’, up from 11 per cent and 10 per cent respectively in 2024 (see Annex, Q14).<sup>42</sup> This improvement in perception is partly due to the fact that each project on DREAM has to describe how wider constituencies have been consulted or what is planned for the future. This requirement forces local officials to think more about engagement, but leaves room for them to either avoid the process or conduct it in a limited way. They are often brought in during the final stages of a project to validate decisions already made, rather than being consulted during the initial assessment and planning phases.

The DREAM system so far remains incomplete as it fails to promote the inclusion of civil society in the process. Although a recent government resolution established the procedures for evaluating and implementing public investments, DREAM lacks specific requirements for public consultations and community-level engagement during the project preparation phase.<sup>43</sup> The DREAM operational team is aware of this gap and is planning to develop additional functionality in reference to community engagement in 2027–28.

While the reform is an overall positive, Ukraine is currently in a transitional phase of implementation, in which the strategic planning process and public investment allocations are not fully aligned. Currently, stakeholder inclusion happens only at the stage of strategic planning in the community. Such strategies tend to be approved for between five and 10 years, meaning that many of them will not be updated as part of PIM and citizens and CSOs often will not be consulted on most local investments.

Another assessment among communities shows that civic participatory practices are rarely used in PIM at the local level.<sup>44</sup> Most often, the local executive shares the investment portfolio only with council members, rather than discussing it with other interested stakeholders and target groups. Similarly, the guidance for community mid-term plan of prioritized public investments only briefly states the requirement for citizens’ engagement. Best practices, guidance and good models are currently lacking.

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<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (undated), ‘Mizhvidomcha komisiya z pytan’ rozpodilu publichnykh investytsiy’ [Interdepartmental Commission on the Distribution of Public Investments], [https://mof.gov.ua/uk/interdepartmental\\_commission\\_on\\_the\\_distribution\\_of\\_public\\_investments-901](https://mof.gov.ua/uk/interdepartmental_commission_on_the_distribution_of_public_investments-901).

<sup>42</sup> Lutsevych, O. (2024), *Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society: Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs – 2024 update*, other resource, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 19, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024-06-05-ukraine-wartime-recovery-role-civil-society-lutsevych.pdf.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2025), ‘Deyaki pytannya upravlinnya publichnymy investytsiyamy [Some questions about public investment management], Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution No. 527, 28 February 2025, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/527-2025-%D0%BF#Text>.

<sup>44</sup> Bilyi, B. (2026), ‘Ilyuziya zaluchennya: shcho naspravdi vidbuvayet sya z publichnymy investytsiyamy v hromadakh?’ [The illusion of engagement: what is really happening with public investment in communities?], Institute of Civil Society, 26 April 2026, <https://www.csi.org.ua/news/ilyuziya-zaluchennya-shho-naspravdi-vidbuvayetsya-z-publichnymy-investytsiyamy-v-gromadah>.

PIM is a vital step for both managing EU pre-accession and cohesion funds and preparing Ukraine for larger capital inflows. But its ability to ensure genuine local inclusion and transparency in resource allocation remains unproven.

The appeal of European practices is increasing and likely reflects the high level of support among Ukrainians for EU membership. The European Code of Conduct on Partnerships<sup>45</sup> remains popular as an approach, but is rarely applied in Ukraine: 23 per cent of our survey respondents propose it as an effective way to improve engagement at the local level – a slightly smaller proportion compared to 2025 (27 per cent) (see Annex, Q17).

## Which elements of social recovery are already in place?

### Developing a new approach to social service delivery

Since 2023, the Ukrainian government has been restructuring the country’s system of social support, prioritizing community-based, inclusive and targeted assistance. This transformation is defined by three complementary strategic shifts. The first shift is a broad departure from the Soviet-era, status-based model of provision (which focused on cash payments over practical assistance) in favour of a holistic, human-centric approach tailored to individual needs. Examples of this shift in practice include the new system mandating a transition from institutional orphanages to family-based care (aligning with EU accession requirements), and First Lady Olena Zelenska’s accessibility initiative to foster the reintegration of veterans and civilians with disabilities.<sup>46</sup>

The second shift is intended to reduce the bureaucratic burden for war-affected populations through digitization, anchored by the ‘Diia’ app/portal and the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere (UISSS).<sup>47</sup> Diia enables rapid registration of IDPs, emergency payments and applications for compensation for property damaged by war in one place. Users can also apply for child support, housing subsidies, pension services, and unemployment benefits directly through the app or portal. The UISSS consolidates a disparate collection of databases into a unified system for efficient case management of social assistance, payments and services for citizens.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> European Commission (undated), ‘European Community of Practice on Partnership (ECOPP)’, [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/policy/communities-and-networks/ecopp\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/communities-and-networks/ecopp_en).

<sup>46</sup> President of Ukraine (2025), ‘Olena Zelenska: Rivni mozhlyvosti dlya vsikh – bezbar’nyernist’ same pro tse’ [Olena Zelenska: Equal Opportunities for Everyone – This is What Accessibility is All About], press release, 26 March 2026, <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/olena-zelenska-rivni-mozhlyvosti-dlya-vsikh-bezbaryernist-sam-96861>.

<sup>47</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2024), *Analytical report “Access to social services for the population affected by the armed aggression of the Russian Federation”*, pp. 8–9, <https://www.rada.gov.ua/uploads/documents/75654.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2025), ‘Zakon pro yedynu informatsiynu systemu sotsial’noyi sfery’ [Law on the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere], Document 4607-IX, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/4607-20#Text>. See also Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (2025), ‘Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopts law on the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere: More Accessible Support, Less Bureaucracy’, press release, 18 September 2025, <https://www.msp.gov.ua/en/press-center/news/verkhovna-rada-of-ukraine-adopts-law-on-the-unified-information-system-of-the-social-sphere:-more-accessible-support-less-bureaucracy>.

The third shift – and the most significant in the context of this paper – is that the state no longer acts as the sole provider of social services. A new model for purchasing social services allows local communities to identify their specific needs and choose between private, civil society and municipal service providers on a competitive basis, with state compensation available for the costs.<sup>49</sup> These innovations are reflected in the Social Recovery Strategy for 2024–26 presented by the Minister of Social Policy, Oksana Zholnovych, at the 2023 Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) in London.<sup>50</sup>

Ukraine has adopted a comprehensive legislative framework to formalize the role of local authorities and CSOs as primary partners in delivering recovery projects and social services on the local level. According to the ‘Law on Social Services’, the responsibility for assessing and providing social services lies with local self-government bodies (such as village, settlement and city councils).<sup>51</sup>

Parliament introduced legislative amendments in April 2022, increasing the powers of local authorities and specifying that social services are to be provided on an emergency basis under martial law.<sup>52</sup> In April 2023, the Ministry of Social Policy issued guidance for local authorities on how to determine social service needs among communities through the formation of working groups. These working groups can also include representatives from civil society and affected vulnerable people.<sup>53</sup> Local communities are encouraged to use local government funds to contract CSOs, allowing them to cover capacity gaps and better tailor social services such as psychosocial support, family-based care and services for veterans to local needs.

The government has also facilitated the process of involving CSOs on the local level through several legislative acts. In 2021, the National Strategy for Promoting the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine for 2021–26 had been published. This strategy adopted the principle of ‘no solutions for civil society without civil society’, encouraging active cooperation between state authorities, local government and CSOs at all stages, from identifying problems and solutions to monitoring progress.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The official state registry of eligible social service providers is available via Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (2026), ‘Dani pro nadavachiv sotsial’nykh posluh’ [Data on social service providers], <https://soc.gov.ua/edata/providers-list>.

<sup>50</sup> Government of Ukraine (2023), ‘Human capital development: Oksana Zholnovych presented Ukraine’s social recovery strategy at the International Conference in London’, 22 June 2023, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/rozvytok-liudskoho-kapitalu-oksana-zholnovych-predstavyla-stratehiu-sotsialnoho-vidnovlennia-ukrainy-na-mizhnarodnii-konferentsii-u-londoni>.

<sup>51</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2019), ‘Zakon pro sotsial’ni posluhy’ [Law on social services], Document 2671-VIII, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2671-19#Text>. See also Verkhovna Rada (2026) [1999], ‘Zakon pro mistsevi derzhavni administratsiyi’ [Law on local state administrations], Document 586-XIV, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/586-14#Text>.

<sup>52</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2022), ‘Pro vnesennya zmin do deyakykh zakoniv Ukrainy shchodo nadannya sotsial’nykh posluh u razi vvedennya nadzvychaynoho abo voyennoho stanu v Ukraini abo okremykh yiyi mistsevostyakh’ [On amendments to certain laws of Ukraine regarding the provision of social services in the event of the introduction of a state of emergency or martial law in Ukraine or in certain localities], Document 2193-IX, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2193-20#Text>.

<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (2023), ‘Pro zatverdzhennya Poryadku vyznachennya potreb naselennya administratyvno-terytorial’noyi odynytisi/ terytorial’noyi hromady u sotsial’nykh posluhakh’ [On approval of the Procedure for determining the needs of the population of an administrative-territorial unit/territorial community in social services], Document z1169-23, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1169-23#Text>.

<sup>54</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2021), ‘Ukaz Prezydenta Ukrainy pro natsional’nu stratehiyu spryannya rozvytku hromadyans’koho suspil’stva v Ukraini na 2021-2026 roky’ [Decree of the President of Ukraine on the national strategy for promoting the development of civil society in Ukraine for 2021–2026], Document 487/2021, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/487/2021#Text>.

This principle was also reflected in the Action Plan for 2025–26 approved by the Ukrainian government in March 2025 as part of its National Strategy.<sup>55</sup> The action plan was developed in close cooperation with civil society representatives,<sup>56</sup> and includes 34 key measures on how to strengthen civic society’s engagement, improve local decision-making and align the process with EU standards. In particular, Task 24 explicitly recognized the importance of increasing civil society actors’ capacity to act as social service providers using state funds. In 2022, draft law No. 8084 aimed to simplify registration and expand the legal rights of CSOs.<sup>57</sup> A 2024 law codified the introduction of participatory tools such as public discussions and roundtables to strengthen cooperation between *hromada* residents and local authorities.<sup>58</sup> In January 2026, a new procedure was approved by the government to simplify the provision of social services at a local level, further expanding opportunities for civil society to cooperate with local authorities on a contractual basis to provide social services.<sup>59</sup>

As shown a report by the NGO Ednannia showed,<sup>60</sup> the main advantage of developing social services and recovery projects at the community level is the knowledge of and proximity to those who will benefit from them, effectively representing a ‘tool for community development’, strengthening social cohesion and trust in local institutions.<sup>61</sup> However, despite these legislative advances, CSOs and charitable organizations still represent a minority (roughly 14 per cent) of formally registered social service providers on the Ministry of Social Policy’s register.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2025), *Plan zakhodiv z realizatsiyi u 2025–2026 rokakh Natsional'noyi stratehiyi spryannya rozvytku hromadyans'koho suspil'stva v Ukrayini na 2021–2026 roky* [Action plan for the implementation of the national strategy for promoting the development of civil society in Ukraine for 2021–2026 in 2025–2026], p. 29, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/uploads/public/67e/166/361/67e16636163e9539173550.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2024), *Rezultaty opratsyuvannya propozyitsiy instytutiv hromadyans'koho suspil'stva ta yikh predstavnykiv, naukovykh ustanov, ekspertiv, hromadyan do proektu rozporядzhennya Kabinetu Ministriv Ukrayiny “Pro zatverdzhennya planu zakhodiv z realizatsiyi u 2025–2026 rokakh Natsional'noyi stratehiyi spryannya rozvytku hromadyans'koho suspil'stva v Ukrayini na 2021–2026 roky”* [Results of processing proposals from civil society institutions and their representatives, scientific institutions, experts, and citizens to the draft resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On approval of the action plan for the implementation in 2025–2026 of the National Strategy for Promoting the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine for 2021–2026”], [https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/17-civik-2018/rubrik\\_spryannya/propo-to-plan-zahod-25-26.pdf](https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/17-civik-2018/rubrik_spryannya/propo-to-plan-zahod-25-26.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2023), ‘Pro pryynyattya za osnovu proektu Zakonu Ukrayiny pro vnesennya zmin do deyakykh zakoniv Ukrayiny shchodo unormuvannya diyal'nosti ta derzhavnoyi reyestratsiyi hromads'kykh orhanizatsiy’ [On the adoption as a basis of the draft Law of Ukraine on Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on the Regulation of the Activities and State Registration of Public Organizations], Document 2873-IX, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/main/2873-IX#Text>.

<sup>58</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2024), ‘Zakon pro publichni konsultatsiyi’ [Law on public consultations], Document 3841-IX, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3841-IX#Text>.

<sup>59</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2026), ‘Deyaki pytannya orhanizatsiyi nadannya sotsial'nykh posluh’ [Some issues of organizing the provision of social services], Document 64-2026-ii, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/64-2026-%D0%BF#n11>.

<sup>60</sup> Ednannia is one of the Ukraine Forum’s partners in the 2026 Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs.

<sup>61</sup> Demchenko, I. and Bulyha, N. (2025) *Yak zrobyty hromadu syl'nishoyu: prosti kroky do zaprovadzhennya sotsial'nykh posluh* [How to make a stronger community: simple steps to implementing social services], report, Ednannia, p. 6, <https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/26/03/10/Брошюра.pdf>.

<sup>62</sup> Agency for Legislative Initiative (2023), ‘Social services under wartime conditions: New changes and challenges’, <https://parlament.org.ua/en/analytics/social-services-under-wartime-conditions-new-changes-and-challenges>. See also Ednannia (2024), *Interest and capacity of civil society organizations to provide social services. Report on the results of sociological research*, p. 7, <https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/24/07/22/Social%20Services%20Study.pdf>.

## Providing vital services

Civil society as an institution retains high levels of trust among Ukrainians. According to a December 2025 survey by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 79 per cent of respondents reported trust in civil society institutions – a figure that mainly reflects support for volunteers and is surpassed only by the armed forces.<sup>63</sup> This high level of trust is a valuable asset for the country’s social recovery and indicates that the non-profit sector would have a high legitimacy to delivery various social services, including sensitive services such as mental health support (see below).

Overall, 55 per cent of Chatham House survey respondents reported ‘providing social, educational, health services for citizens’ as part of their activities. Significantly, in this instance, the proportion is much higher among CSOs operating regionally (61 per cent) than among Kyiv-based/national level CSOs (29 per cent).

The survey shows that regional CSOs play a vital role in sustaining both immediate humanitarian and long-term community social needs. 35 per cent of respondents operating regionally reported ‘providing basic humanitarian assistance in crisis and emergency situations’ as part of their activities, compared to just 14 per cent of CSOs working on the national level (see Annex, Q5).

Regional CSOs also reported working with key vulnerable groups (including IDPs, children, veterans and their families) in higher numbers compared to those at the national level (see Annex, Q4). However, the disparity does not apply to work with veterans and their families, with CSOs operating at the regional and national levels reporting similar rates of engagement (28 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively).

## Responding to Ukraine’s mental health crisis

With an estimated 15 million people requiring some level of psychological support, the mental health crisis has expanded beyond displaced populations to the general public.<sup>64</sup> In response, the Ukrainian government – in an initiative championed by Olena Zelenska and the Mental Health Coordination Centre – is mainstreaming mental health services across medical and educational sectors as part of its ‘How are you’ programme.<sup>65</sup>

By April 2026, the Ministry of Social Policy had established 386 ‘Centres for Resilience’ to provide psychosocial support and family counselling across the country, with additional facilities planned.<sup>66</sup> Under this national programme,

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<sup>63</sup> Hrushetskyi, A. (2025), ‘Trust in public institutions’, press release, Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 13 January 2026, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1578&page=5>.

<sup>64</sup> International Rescue Committee (2026), ‘IRC: Prolonged war drives mental health crisis across Ukraine’, ReliefWeb, 29 April 2026, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/irc-prolonged-war-drives-mental-health-crisis-across-ukraine>.

<sup>65</sup> Ty yak? [How are you?] (undated), ‘Home page’, <https://howareu.com>.

<sup>66</sup> Interfax-Ukraine (2026), ‘Do 400 zroste kil’kist’ “Tsentriv zhyttestiykosti” v Ukrayini do kintsya roku – Svyrydenko’ [The number of ‘Resilience Centers’ in Ukraine will increase to 400 by the end of the year – Svyrydenko], 24 April 2026, <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/1162045.html>.

'mobile rehabilitation modules' have also been set up across Ukraine.<sup>67</sup> These units provide specialized, affordable and high-quality physical rehabilitation care and socio-psychological support to veterans and civilians in remote areas. The modules operate with the support of regional state authorities, international humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross and private actors.<sup>68</sup>

In addition, the Catholic aid charity Caritas operates 40 local crisis centres that in 2025 provided various assistance to 90,000 people.<sup>69</sup> The charity has also joined the initiative to open local Centres of Resilience. In 2026, its team was operating 72 such centres.<sup>70</sup> These centres serve as a 'one-stop shop' for veterans, IDPs and families in crisis.

These services are the beginning of a new model of provision that is closer to the end user. But greater clarity is needed on what high-quality 'resilience services' can and should be. Such services also need to be distributed more equally across Ukraine, as smaller communities will currently struggle with access and awareness of such assistance.

Our survey shows that regional organizations play a vital role in the provision of these services and will be vital to the development of the new model. 55 per cent of the regional CSOs providing social services now include mental health support in their remit – twice as many as national CSOs (27 per cent). Similarly, 40 per cent of regional CSOs operate community spaces essential for social connectivity (a proven factor in mitigating PTSD).<sup>71</sup> Again, this proportion is twice as high as the rate among national CSOs (19 per cent) (see Annex, Q6).

## Maintaining Ukraine's education system

The toll of the war on Ukraine's educational infrastructure is staggering. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, Russian attacks have damaged over 4,500 institutions and completely destroyed 400 schools,<sup>72</sup> with the World Bank estimating direct losses at \$13.4 billion.<sup>73</sup> Currently, 85 per cent of children

<sup>67</sup> Bezbarernist (2024), 'Proyekt z vstanovlennya mobil'nykh reabilitatsiynykh moduliv masshtabuyet'sya – novi prostory zapratsyuyut' u tr'okh hromadakh' [The project to install mobile rehabilitation modules is being scaled up – new spaces will be operational in three communities], <https://bbu.org.ua/proiekt-z-vstanovlennya-mobilnih-reabilitacinih-moduliv-masshtabuietsya-novi-prostori-zapracujut-u-troh-gromadah/#:~:text=Мобільний%20реабілітаційний%20модуль%20-%20це%20будинок%20площею,модульною%20технологією%20повністю%20безбар'єрний%20оснащений%20якісним%20реабілітаційним>.

<sup>68</sup> Oschadbank (2025), 'A barrier-free rehabilitation module and a specialised outdoor area for the recovery of Ukrainians affected by the war were opened in Holovanivsk', 16 June 2025, <https://www.oschadbank.ua/en/news/u-golovanivsku-vidkrili-bezbarernij-reabilitacijnij-modul-ta-specializovanij-majdancik-dla-vidnovlennja-ukrainciv-aki-postrazdali-vid-vijni>.

<sup>69</sup> Based on authors' interview with Caritas representatives and internal data from a Caritas report shared with Chatham House.

<sup>70</sup> Caritas (2026), 'Four years of war "In Ukraine 4 million people have no home"', news article, 19 February 2026, <https://www.caritas.org/ukraine/emergency/four-years-of-war-in-ukraine-4-million-people-have-no-home>.

<sup>71</sup> 21 Triangles (undated) 'Review: Planting S.E.E.D.S – Our Brain's Foundation', <https://www.21triangles.com/review-planting-s-e-e-d-s-our-brains-foundation>.

<sup>72</sup> Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (2026), 'Education in emergency', <https://saveschools.in.ua/en>. See also Lisovyi, O. via Facebook (2026), 'Ukrayina perezhyla shche odnu vazhku nich...' [Ukraine has experienced another difficult night...], 15 April 2026, <https://www.facebook.com/oksenlisovyi/posts/pfbid02qJfKoAV1e7edMn73PSc2XQ2mURsW4gmPxF5vHKuZVvW63Q1MPze5V83uzChqSdzVI?rdid=acohE58AZ6UA4Kz0#>.

<sup>73</sup> World Bank (2025), 'Learning and school reforms continue in Ukraine despite war challenges', 25 March 2025, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2025/03/25/learning-and-school-reforms-continue-in-ukraine-despite-war-challenges>.

in Ukraine study in a face-to-face and hybrid format, while 15 per cent of children rely completely on online learning.<sup>74</sup>

The human cost is particularly acute in front-line regions, which are frequently disrupted by power outages and air raid alerts. 83 per cent of young children in those regions exhibit signs of emotional distress and delayed development.<sup>75</sup> This disruption not only creates immediate mental health challenges, but also threatens Ukraine’s future labour market participation and economic growth by depleting the skilled workforce necessary for recovery.<sup>76</sup>

Regional CSOs are providing a vital service in keeping these services going. Our survey shows that, in 2026, 45 per cent of regional CSOs work with children and young people, while 17 per cent provide extra-curricular activities in or outside schools (see Annex, Q4 and Q6).

### **Box 3. How CSOs are providing educational services**

The Lithuanian-funded ‘Future School for Ukraine’ initiative<sup>77</sup> offers a blueprint for a green, resilient recovery. In partnership with Ukraine’s State Agency of Restoration and Infrastructure Development,<sup>78</sup> the initiative selected a winning design by Italy’s Scandurra Studio and Ukrainian experts. These modular, adaptive designs are provided free of charge, prioritize ‘mentally restorative’ environments, and can be adjusted to evolving community needs. These schools are built using sustainable, locally sourced materials, and integrate community spaces, psychological rehabilitation centers and dual-use shelters.<sup>79</sup>

This model demonstrates how state institutions can foster international partnerships to deliver local, scalable, long-term solutions that safeguard social resilience and economic revitalization.

Another successful transnational collaboration in the educational sector is the Multi-Year Resilience Programme,<sup>80</sup> which focuses on rehabilitating school shelters to facilitate the return to safe, in-person learning. By reducing the reliance on remote education, the programme – delivered by the Ministry of Education and Science in coordination with a consortium of international and national CSOs – directly addresses the mental health and developmental setbacks facing Ukrainian youth.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>74</sup> UkrInform (2025), ‘Skil’ky ditej v Ukrayini navchayut’sya v ochnomu ta zmishanomu formatakh’ [How many children in Ukraine study in full-time and blended formats?], 23 December 2025, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/4072635-skilki-ditej-v-ukraini-navcautsa-v-ochnomu-ta-zmisanomu-formatakh.html>.

<sup>75</sup> UNICEF (2025), ‘4.6 million children in Ukraine face ongoing educational barriers as fourth academic year during war begins’, press release, 1 September 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/46-million-children-ukraine-face-ongoing-educational-barriers-fourth-academic-year>.

<sup>76</sup> Caruso, G. (2026), *The Human Capital Losses of the War in Ukraine*, World Bank, 24 February 2026, <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/5c9598063f47f2c96935621be315173b-0140062023/original/The-War-in-Ukraine-and-Human-Capital-Losses.pdf>.

<sup>77</sup> Future School For Ukraine (undated), ‘Home’, <https://futureschoolforukraine.eu>.

<sup>78</sup> Established in 2023, the agency is the primary state body responsible for rebuilding housing, critical infrastructure, energy grids and transport systems. See DREAM (undated), ‘DREAM Implementers: State Agency of Restoration and Development of Infrastructure of Ukraine’, <https://dream.gov.ua/implementers/body/1970?fromUri=/implementers/body>.

<sup>79</sup> Central Project Management Agency of Lithuania (2025), *Building future school for Ukraine – Giving hope to Ukraine’s young generation*, <https://cpva.lt/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/CPVA-Future-school-for-Ukraine-programme-onepager.pdf>.

<sup>80</sup> Zhyzhyian, P. (2026), ‘The MYRP program transforms Ukrainian schools into a ‘place of power’ for students and teachers’, *Kyiv Post*, 8 March 2026, <https://www.kyivpost.com/post/70911>.

<sup>81</sup> Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (undated), ‘Education Cannot Wait’, <https://osvitanemozhechekatky.org.ua/en>.

## What might prevent a ‘whole-of-society’ recovery?

### The prospect of a prolonged state of war

Ukrainians acknowledge that peace remains a distant prospect. According to a survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in March 2026, 70 per cent of Ukrainians remain sceptical about the likelihood of the current talks leading to a lasting peace.<sup>82</sup> According to the same survey, 54 per cent express a readiness to endure the war as long as necessary and 62 per cent categorically rejected ceding any territory that Ukraine still holds in exchange for Western security guarantees. While the number of Ukrainians ready to consider territorial concessions to achieve peace has steadily increased over time,<sup>83</sup> the Ukrainian government recognizes that the option remains politically and strategically untenable.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the shift in global attention towards the Persian Gulf has stalled the US-led effort to negotiate peace with the Kremlin, deepening the prevailing sense of disillusionment among Ukrainians.

This growing disillusionment has direct implications for the recovery process. 68 per cent of Chatham House survey respondents pointed to the continuation of military operations as one of the most significant risks (see Annex, Q12). This view has remained stable since last year’s survey.<sup>85</sup>

When asked to select the top three implications of a ceasefire, 63 per cent of survey respondents replied that defence spending would have to remain high to maintain credible deterrence, while 60 per cent claimed that Ukraine would have to stay mobilized to repel another possible Russian attack (see Annex, Q23). These results show some continuity with previous years, reflecting a concern that a state budget consumed by defence and security priorities would lead to an underfunded and more complicated social recovery.

However, when asked about the domestic implications of a ceasefire without a final peace settlement, there was a distinct decline in the belief among CSOs that Ukraine would remain fully mobilized. Between 2025 and 2026, this expectation dropped from 64 per cent to 49 per cent among national CSOs, and from 72 per cent to 60 per cent among regional CSOs. This downward trend may reflect growing confidence in the deterrent effect of a multinational ‘reassurance’ force deployed by the ‘Coalition of the Willing’, led by the UK and France.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (2026), ‘Perceptions of negotiations, attitudes to the offer to exchange Donetsk oblast for security guarantees, and how much longer are ready to ensure war: Results of a survey conducted on March 1-8, 2026’, press release, 20 March 2026, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1597&page=2>.

<sup>83</sup> Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (2025), ‘Dynamics of readiness for territorial concessions and impact of interpreting “territorial concessions”’, press release, 9 October 2025, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1559&page=8>.

<sup>84</sup> Bielieskov, M. (2026), ‘Why unilaterally surrendering Donetsk Oblast equals strategic and military suicide for Ukraine’, Kyiv Independent, 22 April 2026, <https://kyivindependent.com/why-unilaterally-surrendering-donetsk-oblast-equals-strategic-and-military-suicide-for-ukraine>.

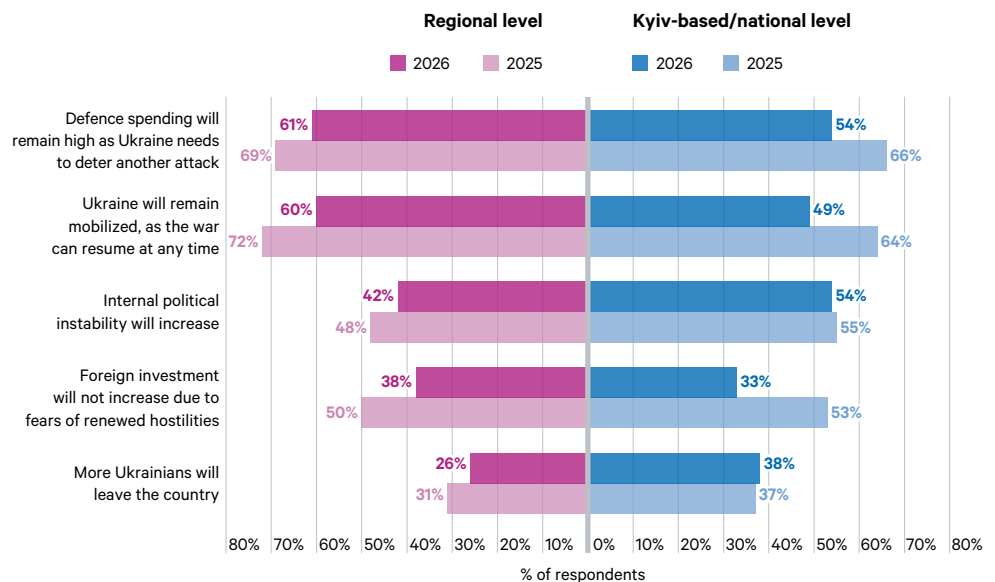
<sup>85</sup> Lutsevych, O. (2025), *Mobilizing ‘Team Ukraine’ for a successful recovery: How the state, communities and citizens can rebuild the country together*, research paper, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 51, <https://doi.org/10.55317/9781784136567>.

<sup>86</sup> European Commission (2026), ‘Robust Security Guarantees for a Solid and Lasting Peace in Ukraine – Statement of the Coalition of the Willing’, press release, 6 January 2026, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/fr/statement\\_26\\_45](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/fr/statement_26_45).

The fact that concern around defence and mobilization remains significantly higher at the regional level suggests a widespread recognition among CSOs that local communities will face a more difficult task in restoring human capital if their members remain mobilized. National CSOs are more connected to high-level diplomatic tracks and macro-economic planning. Their relative optimism likely stems from proximity to discussions surrounding international security guarantees. Meanwhile, the daily reality for regional CSOs is that of the front-line and border communities. For a community to rebuild its human capital, it needs stability and a focus on economic development. If local youth and those of working age are required for defensive structures or continuous readiness even after a ceasefire, they cannot fully participate in social and economic recovery.

**Figure 5.** Most respondents expected security and defence to remain the focus of attention, even in the event of a ceasefire

*Question: What are the implications of a ceasefire on recovery (without a final peaceful settlement) for the internal situation in Ukraine?*



In contrast to their national-level counterparts, regional CSOs are growing more optimistic about emigration trends and refugee returns. Between 2025 and 2026, the share of regional CSOs anticipating increased refugee returns in the event of a ceasefire rose from 16 per cent to 22 per cent, while those expecting further emigration dropped from 31 per cent to 26 per cent. This shift may be tied to the Ukrainian government’s evolving focus on systemic, long-term ‘pull factors’, in place of a reliance on temporary financial incentives. Central to this approach is the Demographic Development Strategy of Ukraine through 2040, which aims to support IDPs and repatriate displaced citizens by fostering a robust domestic economy, restoring safe infrastructure and expanding essential social services.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2024), ‘Strateiha demohrafichnoho rozvytku Ukrainy na period do 2040 roku’ [Strategy of demographic development of Ukraine for the period until 2040], 30 September 2024, [https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-skhvalennia-stratehii-demohrafichnoho-rozvytku-ukrainy-na-period-do-2040-roku-922r-300924?fbclid=IwZxh0bgNhZWOCMTEAAR00NjecgranX100hT6otqljhlNr-aaErh6gfCH7P51JkB-pTsRgKBl2a4A\\_aem\\_tzZOWy83LPYg67CvO1D7PA](https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-skhvalennia-stratehii-demohrafichnoho-rozvytku-ukrainy-na-period-do-2040-roku-922r-300924?fbclid=IwZxh0bgNhZWOCMTEAAR00NjecgranX100hT6otqljhlNr-aaErh6gfCH7P51JkB-pTsRgKBl2a4A_aem_tzZOWy83LPYg67CvO1D7PA).

The slight growth in belief that Ukrainian refugees may return could also be driven by public information about discussion inside the EU on the possible suspension of temporary protection beyond 2027.<sup>88</sup>

### **Corruption undermining the recovery**

The 2026 survey data suggest that public perception on recovery risks has undergone a significant shift. For the first time since 2022, more than 70 per cent of respondents ranked the ‘embezzlement of recovery funds’ as the primary threat to national recovery, narrowly eclipsing concerns regarding continued hostilities.<sup>89</sup> This finding correlates with the perception of corruption in the recovery process among the general population, as reflected in survey data published by Transparency International in late 2025.<sup>90</sup>

## **Corruption is rightly seen not merely as a financial crime but as an existential threat to national defence, as diverted funds directly weakened Ukraine’s energy resilience ahead of the winter.**

This change is likely a reaction to a series of corruption scandals during 2025, including allegations by the national anti-corruption authorities regarding the misappropriation of funds earmarked for energy infrastructure protection and implicating top officials and associates close to the President.<sup>91</sup>

Civil society is concerned about national and local governments’ capability to control corruption and ensure that reconstruction funds are spent with integrity. Corruption is rightly seen not merely as a financial crime but as an existential threat to national defence, as diverted funds directly weakened Ukraine’s energy resilience ahead of the winter. Such scandals also harm Ukraine’s international standing, possibly jeopardizing its EU accession aspirations and the continuation of Western assistance. They also impact public morale and erode social cohesion. All these things are vital for a successful recovery process.

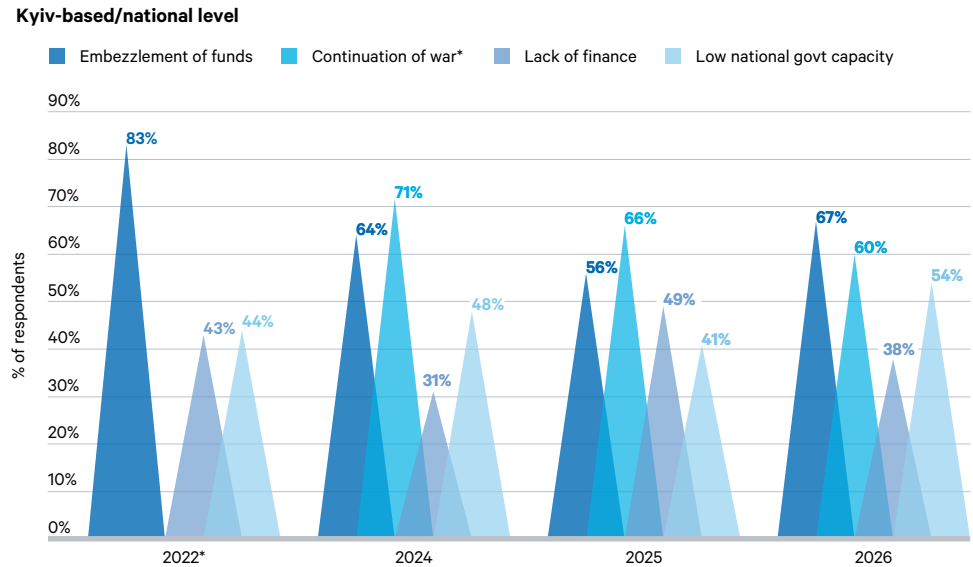
<sup>88</sup> Vysotska, T. (2026), ‘EU has not yet decided whether to extend temporary protection for Ukrainians’, *European Pravda*, 18 May 2026, <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/eng/news/2026/05/18/7237798>.

<sup>89</sup> The survey brought together these two dimensions (misuse vs inefficient use of funds) under one option, though, in conversations with CSOs in Kyiv, it was highlighted that these two dimensions should be treated as distinct, with the latter referring primarily to local CSOs’ capacity and upskilling needs.

<sup>90</sup> Transparency International Ukraine (2025), ‘How Ukrainians Perceive Reconstruction, Corruption, and European Integration – A Public Opinion Poll’, 24 September 2025, <https://ti-ukraine.org/en/research/how-ukrainians-perceive-reconstruction-corruption-and-european-integration-a-public-opinion-poll>.

<sup>91</sup> Melkozerova, V. and Dettmer, J. (2025), ‘Ukraine corruption scandal explained: The \$100M plot rocking Zelenskyy’, *Politico*, 12 November 2025, <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-corruption-scandal-explained-100m-plot-rocking-volodymyr-zelenskyy-energy-sector>.

**Figure 6.** Embezzlement of recovery funds is now seen as the primary threat to national recovery, ahead of concerns over the continuation of hostilities  
 Question: What are the three top risks for rebuilding Ukraine?



\* 'Continuation of war' was not included as an option in the 2022 survey.

### A squeeze on funding

Financial precarity remains a systemic risk for the success of national recovery, with 37 per cent of Chatham House survey respondents in 2026 identifying lack of funding as a primary risk. Here, as on other questions, there was a significant disparity between national and regional organizations: while 52 per cent of national-level CSOs received international donor support, only 35 per cent of regional CSOs reported the same (see Annex, Q9). The gap in international support has widened since 2025, when 66 per cent of national CSOs and 43 per cent

of CSO operating regionally reported receiving funding from this source.<sup>92</sup> This contraction is largely attributable to the termination of major USAID programmes in 2025. The consequences of US aid funding being withdrawn were felt immediately and represented a serious loss for the sector. According to a February 2025 survey, 42 per cent of Ukrainian CSOs had to suspend or close existing programmes and nearly a quarter were forced to downsize staff.<sup>93</sup>

In 2026, Chatham House survey respondents reported that 19 per cent of their recovery activities were funded by Ukrainian philanthropic organizations. This rate has remained stable since last year (see Annex, Q9). Meanwhile, 21 per cent reported receiving individual donations from Ukrainian citizens – a drop of 10 percentage points compared to 2025. Other studies have shown that widespread economic strain and emotional burnout have resulted in a decline in philanthropic activity, although an overwhelming majority of people continue to contribute their money, time or material assistance.<sup>94</sup>

Strengthening Ukraine’s culture of giving and helping philanthropic sector flourish will be critical to pulling together domestic resources. Ukraine’s philanthropic sector already plays a significant role for social recovery in local communities – for example, by supporting local entrepreneurship, reskilling workers and promoting psycho-social services (see Box 4). Formal measures such as ‘percentage philanthropy’ mechanisms – which allow taxpayers to allocate a small percentage of their income tax directly to a registered NGO – could help revitalize communities and foster deeper social cohesion.

It should be noted that CSOs specializing in veteran reintegration took a different view on risks compared to those working with other vulnerable groups. For CSOs working with veterans and their families, ‘national-level official incompetence’ (44 per cent) outweighed ‘lack of finance’ (34 per cent) as a top concern in the 2026 survey. The difference in results suggests that such organizations feel that veterans’ affairs are sufficiently prioritized in funding cycles, but they worry that national government officials do not adequately understand what veterans need. This thesis is supported by the data published by the Veteran Fund in December 2025, showing that 55 per cent of veterans surveyed felt the state had failed in its obligations towards the veteran community and 40 per cent regarded government veteran programmes as ‘rather ineffective’ or ‘not effective at all’.<sup>95</sup>

## **Civil society’s internal fragilities**

The survey responses in 2026 reveal that 54 per cent of organizations see risks coming from the non-profit sector itself, with national-level groups showing a higher level of concern (see Annex, Q21). These risks fall into three categories.

<sup>92</sup> Lutsevych, O. (2025), *Mobilizing ‘Team Ukraine’ for a successful recovery*, p. 50.

<sup>93</sup> Acaps Analysis Hub Ukraine (2025), *Ukraine: Implications of the US foreign aid cuts on humanitarian, development, and government-led programmes*, thematic report, p. 3, [https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/04/04/20250331\\_ACAPS\\_Thematic\\_report\\_Ukraine\\_Implications\\_of\\_US\\_foreign\\_aid\\_cuts.pdf](https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/04/04/20250331_ACAPS_Thematic_report_Ukraine_Implications_of_US_foreign_aid_cuts.pdf).

<sup>94</sup> National Network of Local Philanthropy Development (2025), ‘Ukrainian philanthropy 2025: Who gives, how and why’, p. 18, <https://www.philanthropy.com.ua/en/materials/ukrainian-philanthropy-2025-who-gives-how-and-why>; Zagoriy Foundation (2024), *Doslidzhennya sfery blahodiynosti* [Research on the field of charity], p. 10, [https://zagoriy.foundation/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/02\\_12\\_2\\_doslidzhennya\\_sektoru\\_blagodijnosti.pdf](https://zagoriy.foundation/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/02_12_2_doslidzhennya_sektoru_blagodijnosti.pdf).

<sup>95</sup> Veteran Fund (2025), ‘Portret Veteran 2025’ [Veteran’s Portrait 2025], <https://veteranfund.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Portret-veterana-2025.pdf>.

First, there is deep concern regarding the co-option of recovery processes by local officials, through the involvement of ‘loyal’ CSO at the expense of independent groups. This type of ‘imitation’ civic engagement can lead to disappointment among dedicated activists. The level of concern has remained consistent with respondents’ answers from 2025.<sup>96</sup>

Second, there is a lack of effective coordination and trust between CSOs and local authorities. The prevailing environment risks fostering a zero-sum competition for dwindling financial and human resources.

Finally, the survey responses highlighted a persistent struggle with low capacity, competence and burnout among smaller, community-based CSOs. This challenge was also featured in a 2024 study by Ednannia.<sup>97</sup> With reduced capacity, there is a risk that the sector could be monopolized by a few entities with better resources and that civic participation at community level could decline as a result.

## What are the main barriers to inclusion?

Given the protracted nature of the war, the initial surge of volunteering is being tested by fiscal recentralization and burnout at the local level. A genuine social recovery requires moving beyond ad-hoc cooperation towards a structured system – one where civil society is not there just to fill gaps, but is seen as an essential partner in delivery and oversight. As Ukrainian think-tank the Agency for Legislative Initiative has noted, the involvement of non-state actors helps to optimize social service delivery, particularly as communities confront the gap between rising demand and dwindling resources.<sup>98</sup>

The proportion of national CSOs indicating a ‘lack of political will at the top level of government’ has increased over the course of the Chatham House survey from 64 per cent in 2024 to 76 per cent in 2026. The opposite trend is observable among regional CSOs. While 67 per cent of regional CSOs selected this option back in 2024, only 57 per cent did so in 2026 (see Annex, Q15). Kyiv-based groups, who have more proximity to government agencies, point to a lack of leadership to design and deliver effective engagement. This strongly suggests that the national government needs to rethink how it includes, communicates and organizes its cooperation with the sector.

The survey data indicates a striking disconnection between government-led recovery policy and the lived experience of civil society actors. Between 2024 and 2026, the proportion of Kyiv-based CSOs who felt meaningful involvement in recovery dropped from 57 per cent to 36 per cent (see Annex, Q13). This 21-point drop suggests that, despite the initial unifying effect of 2022, civil society is still facing barriers to their full participation.

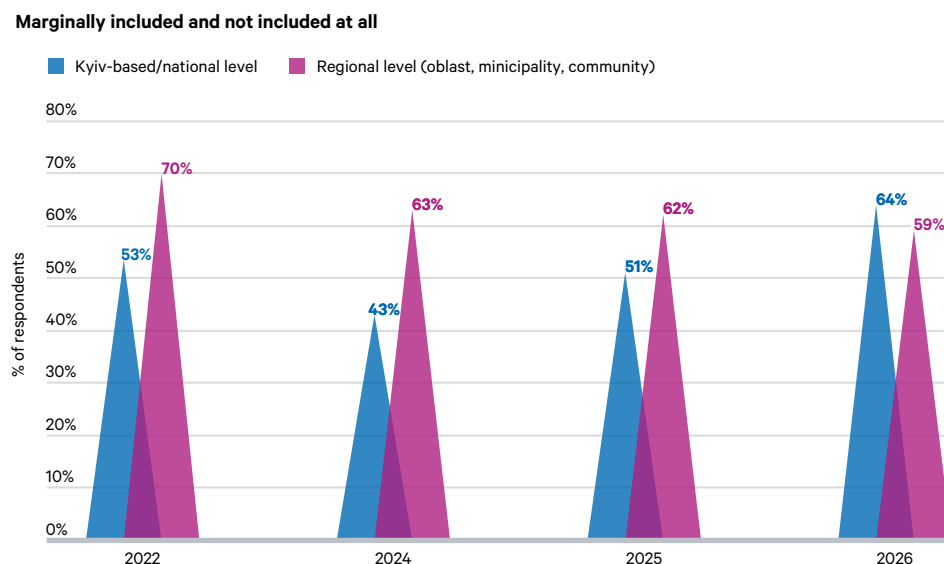
<sup>96</sup> Lutsevych (2025), *Mobilizing ‘Team Ukraine’ for a successful recovery*, p. 26.

<sup>97</sup> Ednannia (2024), *Interest and capacity of civil society organizations to provide social services. Report on the results of sociological research*, pp. 10–11.

<sup>98</sup> Agency for Legislative Initiative (2024), *Sotsial ni posluhy v Ukraini: Suchasnyy stan, problemy, obmezheniya* [Social services in Ukraine: Current state, problems, limitations], p. 5, [https://parlament.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/ali\\_study\\_socialservices.pdf](https://parlament.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/ali_study_socialservices.pdf).

**Figure 7.** Regional NGOs are now more satisfied with the level of inclusion than their national-level counterparts

*Question: How would you rate the inclusion of civil society in planning recovery to date?*



Meanwhile, survey data show a slight improvement in terms of regional CSOs’ perceived level of involvement in recovery plans. As noted above, this likely reflects increased collaboration with local authorities in drafting community recovery plans and addressing various issues, such as working with IDP councils and veteran hubs, and assistance in securing funding from Western donors. It is worth noting that 22 per cent of regional CSOs and 41 per cent of national-level groups indicated that local authorities are their target support group for recovery (see Annex, Q4). At the same time, a more pessimistic outlook emerged from an informal survey conducted by Chatham House’s Ukraine Forum in collaboration with partners ahead of the 2026 URC.<sup>99</sup> In the words of one participant:

Civil society organizations and local communities must be recognized as co-creators and watchdogs of recovery, not only beneficiaries. While recognized formally, civil society participation remains uneven and often consultative rather than co-decisional.<sup>100</sup>

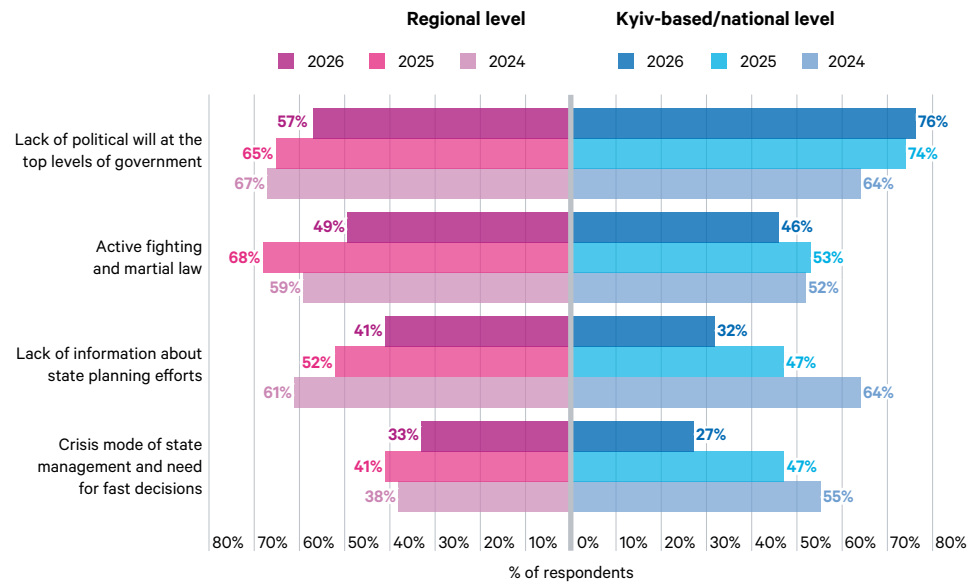
Despite these concerns, the 2026 Chatham House CSO survey responses show an improvement in the flow of information about recovery and adaptation to governing under the stress of war. The salience of these obstacles to inclusion has decreased compared with earlier surveys.

<sup>99</sup> The full list of partners includes Build Ukraine Back Better Network; Chatham House Ukraine Forum; Foundations for Ukraine Network; European Endowment for Democracy; German Marshall Fund of the United States; Institute for State Effectiveness; International Renaissance Foundation; Open Society Foundations; RISE UKRAINE Network; Robert Bosch Foundation; and Stefan Batory Foundation.

<sup>100</sup> Gdansk Common Message (2026), ‘Survey responses. Initial summary for reflection and further feedback ahead of URC 2026 Civil Society Forum’ (not for public distribution).

**Figure 8.** Communication on state planning for recovery has improved since 2022

Question: What are the three main obstacles to stronger engagement of civil society in recovery at present?



### Local partnerships on service delivery expand, but national-level inclusion declines

Chatham House survey data from 2026 reveals a maturing relationship between the civil society sector and local government as professional partners in social service delivery. 51 per cent of regional CSOs characterized their collaboration with local authorities as ‘good’ or ‘very good,’ while only 8 per cent reported an ‘unsatisfactory’ relationship (see Annex, Q7). The ‘it depends’ (17 per cent) and ‘satisfactory’ (20 per cent) responses likely reflect the uneven quality of local self-government across different regions, where collaboration often hinges on the personal support of local leaders, as well as available budget resources.<sup>101</sup> As one respondent noted:

Cooperation with local authorities is generally constructive, but its effectiveness often depends on the personal position of the leadership, rather than on stable institutional mechanisms. Some communities have a limited understanding of their own role in the field of social services, showing fatigue and a decrease in initiative. Uneven capacity and limited resources also affect the quality of interaction.

At the same time, there has been a surge in cooperation between municipalities, particularly regarding basic service delivery. In 2025, the number of new multi-year cooperation agreements rose by 57 per cent year-on-year (increasing to 210 from 134 in 2024).<sup>102</sup> By the early part of that year, the State Register of Cooperation

<sup>101</sup> Ednannia (2024), *Interest and capacity of civil society organizations to provide social services. Report on the results of sociological research*, p. 14.

<sup>102</sup> Markuts, Y., Darkovich, A. and Shymanskyi, V. (2026), ‘Community Monitoring–January 2026’, Vox Ukraine, 23 February 2026, <https://voxukraine.org/en/community-monitoring-january-2026#:~:text=Intermunicipal%20cooperation%20is%20gradually%20becoming,to%20achieve%20economies%20of%20scale.>

of Territorial Communities had recorded over 1,400 active agreements, signalling a robust trend towards collaborative local governance and more sustainable, efficient service delivery systems.<sup>103</sup>

This spike in municipal cooperation is a strategic response to resource scarcity. By pooling resources, smaller *hromadas* can achieve economies of scale in services like waste management, water supply and social housing that would be almost impossible to fund otherwise. This trend raises hopes that the social recovery process could become more cohesive.

#### Box 4. Local cooperation in action

There are a number of positive examples showcasing the success of collaboration between local CSOs, *hromadas* and international donors.

The Small Grants for Social Services initiative is a major funding programme in Ukraine that establishes transparent, competitive procurement procedures for social services at the community level. Administered by Ednannia, the initiative is part of the broader SPIRIT (Social Protection for Inclusion, Resilience, Innovation and Transformation) project, funded by the UK Government and implemented in partnership with UNICEF, the World Bank and the Ministry of Social Policy.<sup>104</sup> By providing CSOs with operational funding and professional training, the small grants initiative empowers local partners to deliver high-quality, essential care to vulnerable families.<sup>105</sup>

'Brave to Rebuild' is a Ukrainian volunteer initiative dedicated to restoring homes and social infrastructure in war-affected communities, particularly in the Kyiv, Kharkiv and Kherson regions. The organization works with local authorities to ensure that support meets specific community needs. Since early 2023, Brave to Rebuild has partnered with GIZ Ukraine on more complex reconstruction projects such as integrating autonomous utility systems and solar energy to keep critical medical wards functioning during power grid outages.<sup>106</sup> The organization positions itself 'as a bridge between international partners and local communities', aiming to introduce participatory approaches to recovery.<sup>107</sup>

The Shchedryk Charity Foundation provides humanitarian aid to the Mykolaiv and Kherson regions, including support to IDPs and elderly people. The Danish government had donated new trolleybuses and buses to the city of Mykolaiv,

<sup>103</sup> Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine (2026) 'Reyestr dohovoriv pro spivrobotnytstvo terytorial'nykh hromad (stanom na 15.04.2026)' [Register of cooperation agreements of territorial communities (as of 04/15/2026)], <https://mindev.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/uploaded-files/reyestr-pro-spivrobotnytstvo-terytorialnyh-gromad-standom-na-15-04-2026.xlsx>.

<sup>104</sup> UK Government (2025), 'The UK launches flagship SPIRIT programme to drive social recovery in Ukraine', press release, 7 February 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-uk-launches-flagship-spirit-programme-to-drive-social-recovery-in-ukraine>.

<sup>105</sup> Ednannia (undated), 'Providing financial support as small grants for social services to families with children and children and/or early intervention services in Ukraine project', <https://ednannia.ua/en/programs/small-grants-for-social-services>.

<sup>106</sup> Brave to Rebuild via Facebook (2024), 'Blahodiyunny fond Smilyvi vidnovlyuvaty rozpochynaye vidbudovu 8 ob'yektiv sotsial'noyi...' [The Brave to Rebuild charity foundation begins the reconstruction of 8 social facilities...], 23 July 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/BraveToRebuildUA/posts/благодійний-фонд-сміливі-відновлювати-розпочинає-відбудову-8-об'єктів-соціальної-/474669648654013>.

<sup>107</sup> Brave to Rebuild via LinkedIn (2026), 'Brave to Rebuild has become a partner in the final event of the "Special Program for Support to Ukraine/EU4ResilientRegions" (SAP/EU4RR)...', December 2025, <https://www.linkedin.com/posts/brave-to-rebuild-has-become-a-partner-in-ugcPost-7386421196696846336-16IR>.

but a lack of trained drivers was preventing their full use. Shchedryk covered the cost of training for 100 people and provided a monthly stipend to those trainees.<sup>108</sup> As a result, the newly trained drivers gained employment with the municipal transport company, which allowed the city to establish new routes, strengthening the economy of the city overall.<sup>109</sup>

## How to include civil society more effectively

### Build on existing formats

When regional CSOs assessed existing engagement formats, three main options emerged as most significant (combining ‘effective’ and ‘moderately effective’ ratings) (see Annex, Q14).

The most highly regarded format is **participation in annual international events**, such as the URC. 60 per cent of regional CSOs rated this format positively. At the same time, national CSOs were twice as likely to label these forums as ‘ineffective’ (33 per cent vs 16 per cent). Regional actors appear to value the international networking opportunities and appreciate rare direct access to international donors and top-level Ukrainian government officials. Meanwhile, national CSOs – which are closer to the daily policy process in Kyiv – likely view these conferences as performative.

The data highlight these networking events as a specific point of contention for veteran-focused CSOs. These organizations were significantly more critical of the URC than other CSOs, with 27 per cent judging participation as ‘ineffective’, a 10-percentage-point difference in dissatisfaction compared to CSOs serving other vulnerable groups. This difference in perception could reflect a sense that the international-level discourse on recovery may be failing to address the urgent, specialized needs of the veteran community (namely rehabilitation, mental health and reintegration), focusing instead on long-term international investment. The fact that the very people who have sacrificed so much for Ukraine’s survival feel excluded from the recovery dialogue poses a risk to long-term social cohesion.

The second highest was **consultation**. 48 per cent of regional CSOs favoured consultations regarding the Ukraine Plan within the European Union’s Ukraine Facility framework. The positive reception of the Ukraine Facility consultations reinforces the role of EU integration as a driver for social recovery. Local communities see the EU’s Ukraine Facility not just as a funding source, but as a protective framework that forces the central government to engage with civil society and provides external standards of good governance as an example to live up to.

<sup>108</sup> Verbytska, T. (2026), ‘From handing out bread to awarding grants: How a Mykolaiv charity expanded its support across two regions’, *Philanthropy in Ukraine*, 16 February 2026, <https://philanthropyinukraine.org/en/knowledge-hub/publication/vid-rozdachi-khliba-do-vydachi-hrantiv-mykolaiv>.

<sup>109</sup> Shchedryk (2025), ‘U Mykolayevi vidkryvsya novyy bahatofunktsional’nyy Tsentр dopomohy: «Shchedryk» rozshyryuye pidtrymku hromady’ [A new multifunctional assistance center has opened in Mykolaiv: “Shchedryk” expands community support], 31 July 2025, <https://shchedryk.info/2025/07/31/у-миколаев-і-відкрився-новий-багатофу>.

Responses on participation in legislative work were among the most polarized in the 2026 survey: 45 per cent of regional CSOs saw it as positive, while 31 per cent of regional respondents labelled it as ‘ineffective’. This disparity among CSOs operating at the same level suggests that, although civil society might be invited to join the process, their impact on final legislation remains inconsistent or opaque. Among national-level CSOs, the response was better, with 59 per cent reporting positive engagement.

In contrast, the decentralization framework appears to be evolving positively, with state actors increasingly viewing CSOs as technical partners in delivering social recovery services. 57 per cent of regional CSOs positively appraised their inclusion in specialized working groups at the ministerial and local levels.

**Civic oversight** was the third highest. The appetite is especially strong at the local level, with 59 per cent of regional CSOs judging the monitoring of recovery projects on the ground as an efficient mechanism. However, a significant technological and awareness gap exists regarding the DREAM system. National CSOs are almost three times more likely than regional ones to label DREAM as ‘ineffective’ (30 per cent vs 11 per cent). For regional CSOs, DREAM is often seen as an empowerment tool. For a local activist in Kherson or Kharkiv, for example, the system allows them to see local or central government plans for their specific street or hospital. National CSOs, meanwhile, tend to view these systems as data dumps that lack the analytical depth needed for high-level policy advocacy. While regional CSOs were generally less critical, 39 per cent responded ‘hard to say’. This high number suggests either that many organizations have not yet had the chance to use DREAM or that more work is needed to raise awareness of the system’s relevance for local monitoring.

## **Perceptions of the State Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development vary widely. 51 per cent of regional CSOs view cooperation there as ‘effective’, compared to only 36 per cent at the national level.**

Perceptions of the State Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development vary widely. 51 per cent of regional CSOs view cooperation there as ‘effective’, compared to only 18 per cent who view it as ‘ineffective’. Only 36 per cent of national CSOs view it positively, while 30 per cent rate it negatively. This divergence is perhaps due partly to decentralization and partly to the agency’s mandate. Thanks to Ukraine’s decentralization reform, the reconstruction of schools and hospitals now falls under the jurisdiction of local authorities (though the agency is responsible also for infrastructure of national significance). Conversely, national CSOs typically prioritize high-level institutional modernization (see Figure 3). Therefore, they are more likely to judge the agency on procedural criteria like transparency, procurement reform and legal frameworks, where they may perceive less progress than in delivery of physical rebuilding projects.

## Improve engagement at the national level

There is a consensus at the national level on the importance of establishing permanent structures to institutionalize civil society’s involvement in recovery. By proposing to be included in the National Recovery Council (in 2026, 47 per cent of CSOs overall supported this idea), CSOs are seeking a consultative power within the highest decision-making body of the state (see Annex, Q16). The council was originally formed in 2022 to prepare the Lugano Recovery Plan. But since then, it has become dysfunctional but no other body is better placed to allow for the civil society sector’s permanent collaboration and engagement on recovery.

Support for the creation a Civil Society Council at the Ukraine Donor Platform (UDP) declined slightly, from 35 per cent in 2025 to 32 per cent in 2026. The sectoral working groups of the UDP have a ‘Human Capital’ cluster with five sub-groups on education, health, social protection, veterans and gender equality. These groups do not formally include CSOs. When the UDP held its first major civil society dialogues, the hope was that these interactions would evolve into a binding, formalized Civil Society Council – similar to the Business Advisory Council previously launched by the platform.<sup>110</sup> Instead, engagement has largely stayed in the form of ad hoc, quarterly ‘Civil Society Dialogues’, with thematic sessions on front-line regions and social recovery.<sup>111</sup> While the percentage drop in approval is relatively small so far, it could possibly signal that CSOs are becoming more sceptical of the UDP’s effectiveness. Moreover, regional CSOs might suspect that international institutions will gravitate towards larger, well-established, English-speaking CSOs based in Kyiv, leaving the platform disconnected from the realities of community-level rehabilitation.

Regional CSOs were more enthusiastic about international forums such as the EU–Ukraine Civil Society Platform than their Kyiv-based counterparts: 25 per cent of regional CSOs rated this platform as an ‘effective’ mechanism to increase civil society engagement at the national level, compared to just 14 per cent of national-level CSOs. This difference suggests that regional CSOs, in particular, view the EU as a more reliable arbiter than their national government in terms of maintaining transparency and ensuring the inclusion of local civil society actors in the recovery process.

A strong preference for ‘citizen engagement panels’ (similar to EU models) – reported by 50 per cent of CSOs overall in 2026 – suggests appreciation of deliberative democracy as a method of inclusion. Non-profits want to participate meaningfully in the recovery process at all stages and harness the voices of various constituencies. It is a strong signal to the European Commission to build up and promote this practice in Ukraine. Participatory democracy via digital tools would work well, given the existing push for digitalization, and could be easily applied for recovery consultations.<sup>112</sup>

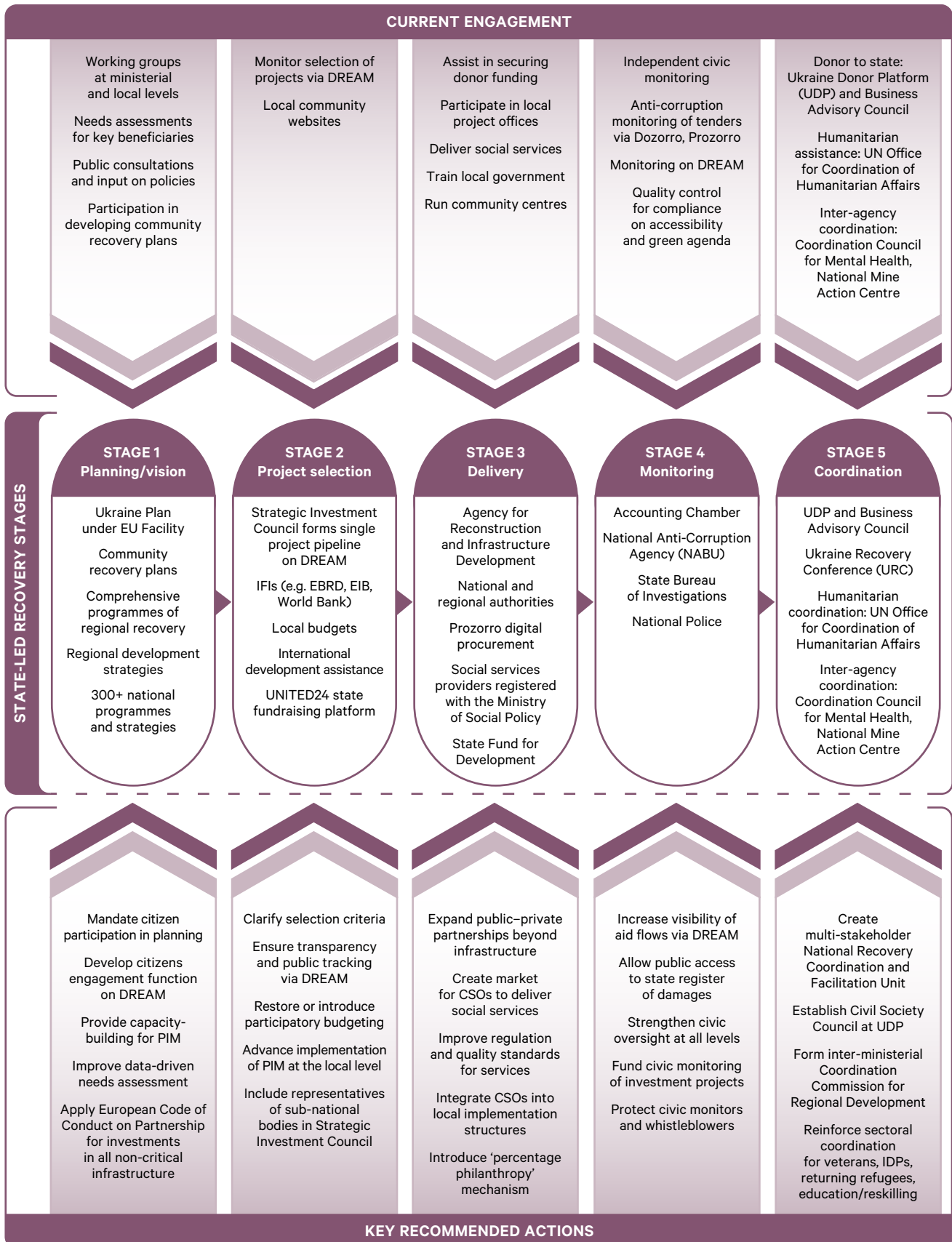
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<sup>110</sup> Ukraine Donor Platform (undated), ‘Business Advisory Council’, <https://ukrainedorplatform.com/business-advisory-council>.

<sup>111</sup> Ukraine Donor Platform (undated), ‘Civil Society Engagement’, <https://ukrainedorplatform.com/civil-society-engagement>.

<sup>112</sup> For an example of a local digital participation instrument, see DIY4Change.world (undated), ‘Ukrainian DIY4C Tools For Better Cities’, <https://diy4change.world/copy-of-d4c-module>.

**Figure 9.** How civil society currently engages with the recovery and what more can be done: A framework for inclusion at all stages



### Enable CSOs at all levels to take part in planning and delivery

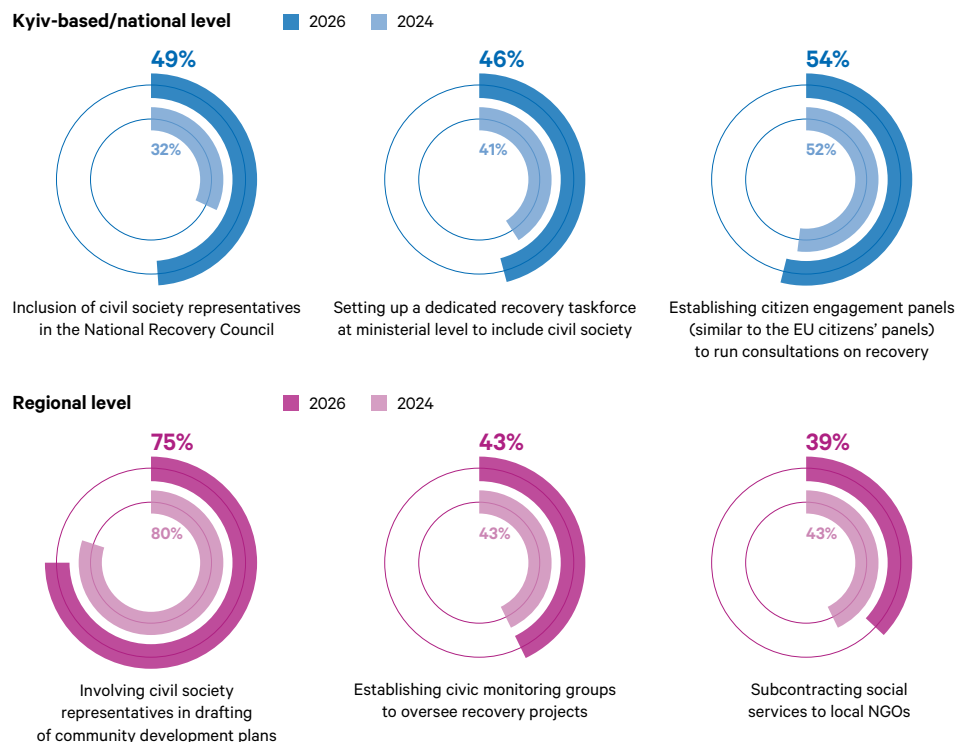
There is strong support among CSOs for inclusive planning: in the 2026 survey, 74 per cent of all respondents saw civil society involvement in the drafting of community recovery plans as a priority (see Annex, Q17). This high level of support, consistent among both national and regional CSOs, indicates that local agency is widely seen as a fundamental pillar of the Ukrainian recovery discourse and that CSOs’ experience in drafting recovery plans and comprehensive recovery programmes to date has been largely positive.

Moreover, 42 per cent of Chatham House survey respondents overall support the establishment of civic monitoring groups to oversee projects, while 34 per cent advocate for participatory budgeting. The consensus between regional and national CSOs in this area – in contrast to other questions – indicates a unified front regarding transparency and accountability, consistent with the widely held view that prevention of corruption is a prerequisite for a successful recovery.

However, there was a sharp decline in regional CSOs supporting the model of subcontracting social services to local NGOs, dropping from 51 per cent in 2025 to 39 per cent in 2026. This 12-percentage-point drop likely reflects increased burnout and the tough financial reality of subcontracting, rather than a loss of interest. The survey data show that only 16 per cent of CSOs received funding from local budgets for their recovery work (see Annex, Q9). Subcontracting also requires rigorous reporting, auditing and legal compliance, and some regional CSOs may have found that the bureaucratic burden of government contracts outweighed the financial benefits.

**Figure 10.** National- and regional-level CSOs agree on the importance of both inclusive planning and civic monitoring

*Question: What three models of effective engagement of civil society in recovery would you propose at present (under martial law)? [choose three]*



There was a marginal increase in support among CSOs in front-line regions for subcontracting, with 37 per cent responding favourably, compared to 34 per cent in regions elsewhere. This small but notable lead suggests that CSOs operating near the front line are becoming more eager than organizations elsewhere to engage with local sources of funding, and see themselves as the primary (and sometimes only) reliable providers of social safety in the most volatile parts of the country.

### **Localize aid and social service procurement**

The most favoured action for improving collaboration between civil society and local authorities for social service delivery long-term is for international donors to fund local partnerships directly, rather than routing aid through national or international intermediaries. This proposition was supported by 46 per cent of respondents in the 2026 survey (see Annex, Q18). Demand is even more pronounced among CSOs focused on veterans (50 per cent), which show significantly higher support for this model than those serving other vulnerable groups. This suggests that veteran organizations view the current aid architecture as too slow and disconnected to meet the urgent (and often hyper-local) needs of returning soldiers.

## **In focus group discussions, Ukrainian CSOs lamented that the short cycle of project-based activities led by international donors disrupts existing collaboration efforts between CSOs and local authorities, undermining the sustainability of social service delivery.**

The Alliance of Ukrainian Civil Society Organizations has released a strategic roadmap that urges international donors to pivot from emergency aid to sustainable, community-driven investment to better protect Ukraine’s human capital. Under this model, CSOs would act as equal partners, empowered to lead complex social projects beyond the constraints of short-term humanitarian cycles.<sup>113</sup>

In focus group discussions conducted by Ednannia, Ukrainian CSOs lamented that the short cycle of project-based activities led by international donors disrupts existing collaboration efforts between CSOs and local authorities, undermining the sustainability of social service delivery.<sup>114</sup> This sentiment was also reflected in the informal survey of Ukrainian and international CSOs cited above.<sup>115</sup>

As one participant put it:

Funding cycles are too short for the work that needs to be done. Most international support to Ukrainian organizations comes in 12-month cycles. Recovery – veteran reintegration, mental health, youth, workforce development, community rebuilding – takes years.

<sup>113</sup> Alliance UA CSOs (undated), ‘Our Work: Locally led response strategy in Ukraine (2024-2029)’, <https://allianceuacso.com/our-work>.

<sup>114</sup> Ednannia (2024), *Interest and capacity of civil society organizations to provide social services. Report on the results of sociological research*, p. 11.

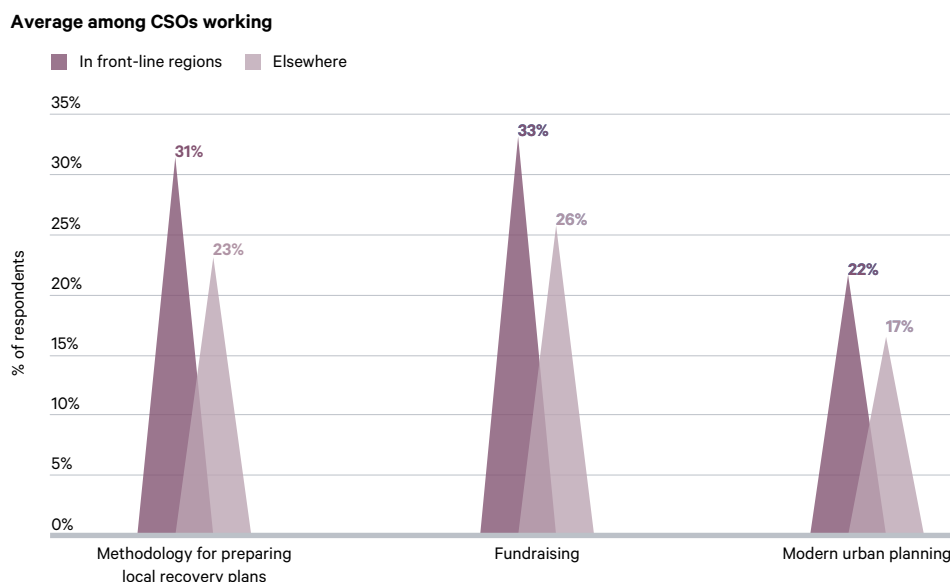
<sup>115</sup> Gdansk Common Message (2026), ‘Survey responses. Initial summary for reflection and further feedback ahead of URC 2026 Civil Society Forum’ (not for public distribution).

While 35 per cent of Chatham House survey respondents supported the idea of setting up working groups to co-design social service roadmaps, a higher percentage (41 per cent) now prioritize the procurement of social services directly from local budgets, indicating a desire for a more professionalized and sustainable relationship between CSOs and local government. In a period of martial law and fiscal crisis, CSOs prefer the stability of procurement contracts over the potentially more volatile and unpredictable nature of public discussions and legislative debates.

19 per cent of front-line CSOs demanded that local authorities report on social needs gaps, compared to 15 per cent of those operating elsewhere in Ukraine. This discrepancy reflects front-line CSOs’ confidence in their own knowledge of local realities and needs. Those organizations want to feed information upwards and pressure the state to acknowledge the gaps they are seeing on the ground to ensure that their support is better targeted and synchronized with municipal efforts. At the same time, on average, CSOs working in front-line regions (compared to CSOs active elsewhere) have different upskilling needs (see Figure 11 and Annex, Q24), reflect different experiences of war and more scarce human resources. In many communities, CSOs promote new policy changes introduced in Kyiv and assist local officials to ensure compliance with new processes, such as the PIM framework.

**Figure 11.** Local CSOs in front-line regions and elsewhere in Ukraine have different upskilling needs

*Question: What kind of training and skills (either personal or organizational) do you require for implementing recovery projects?*



### Forge direct relationships between international donors and CSOs

The fact that front-line CSOs are more confident in their role as service providers (37 per cent vs 34 per cent of CSOs working elsewhere) suggests that donors should adopt an approach that acknowledges these different realities. Front-line CSOs already know what the needs are in their areas. What they need is the capacity to meet those needs.

In front-line regions, the recovery must be funded through direct grants to these established local networks, rather than waiting for international intermediaries or centralized municipal capacity to catch up. Careful monitoring would allow for the best models to be scaled, while funding is gradually transferred to local budgets, possibly in cooperation with local community foundations.

In the 2026 survey, 42 per cent of respondents agreed that international donors should make civil society engagement a formal condition for fund disbursement to the authorities (see Annex, Q19). The stability of this figure among regional CSOs since 2024 is telling: it suggests that ‘inclusive recovery’ remains largely a rhetorical commitment, rather than reality. By demanding conditionality, CSOs are asking external funders to secure them a seat at the table that the state might otherwise not provide, given the perceived lack of political will (see Annex, Q15).

Regional CSOs felt significantly more empowered in recovery projects than their national counterparts. 64 per cent of regional CSOs considered their current participation in the development of projects for international donors to be ‘effective’ or ‘moderately effective’, compared to 51 per cent of national CSOs (see Annex, Q14). The 14-percentage point difference suggests a gradual improvement in the ‘localization’ of recovery assistance and that local organizations are increasingly gaining the technical capacity (e.g. reporting, auditing and English-language coordination) required by international standards. This result also validates commitments made by international donors to increase funding to local responders.<sup>116</sup>

However, other data point to a more pessimistic view. One of the most striking trends emerging from the 2026 survey is a sharp decline in the number of regional CSOs favouring a percentage set-aside for competitive funding, dropping from 62 per cent in 2024 to 42 per cent in 2026. This decline could reflect a general sense of fatigue and the high barrier to entry for international tenders. Small regional CSOs may consider that competition often favours large, English-speaking national CSOs or international consultants over local actors.

To ensure a successful social recovery, donors must lower the bureaucratic barriers and devise more formats for coordination and knowledge-exchange. Reporting and legal requirements have become too complex and difficult to manage for organizations operating under wartime stress. A report by the Robert Bosch Foundation has highlighted the fact that Ukrainian CSOs operate under dire conditions, ‘where survival, recovery, and transformation unfold at once [...] while carrying trauma, exhaustion, and profound uncertainty’.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Humanitarian Action (2025), ‘Funding for local and national actors’, 3 April 2025, <https://humanitarianaction.info/article/funding-local-and-national-actors>.

<sup>117</sup> Bentz, O. (2026), *Beyond survival: Regenerative organizational development support in wartime Ukraine*, report, Stuttgart: Robert Bosch Foundation, p. 8, [https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/2026-04/Beyond%20Survival\\_Regenerative%20OD%20Support\\_%20Ukraine\\_Wartime%20.pdf](https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/2026-04/Beyond%20Survival_Regenerative%20OD%20Support_%20Ukraine_Wartime%20.pdf).

## Policy recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to reflect the needs identified above and are aimed at all stakeholders in creating a framework for a comprehensive, human-centric recovery.

### For the Ukrainian government:

- **Develop more effective communication that reaches the local level,** to support local CSOs’ knowledge of the current reform agenda and provide practical guidance on how they can take part in the delivery and/or monitoring of local government to ensure effective implementation. Expand existing forums for civil society engagement in the Ukraine Donors Platform (UDP) and engage with local associations and networks of local self-government (such as the Association of Ukrainian Cities and the Association of Territorial Communities of Ukraine)<sup>118</sup> on common thematic issues such as IDP or veteran reintegration.
- **Improve in-country coordination and collaboration at all stages of the recovery process, from strategy to implementation and monitoring.** Establish a cross-sectoral recovery coordination and facilitation unit to bring together key stakeholders (national government, Western donors, private sector actors and CSOs) to share knowledge and data, and better coordinate on communication and capacity-building needs.

This effort could be facilitated as part of the human recovery sectoral groups at the UDP. By extending participation in these groups to representatives of civil society, private companies and philanthropy, space would be created for the generation of ideas, coordination and feedback. A pilot case could focus on housing policy, veteran reintegration or diaspora engagement in recovery.

A coordination and facilitation unit such as this could help increase the spread of information across Ukraine and broaden the uptake of various state-funded programmes among target groups, especially those in small communities. The unit could map key activities related to social recovery using the DREAM system. It could also collate information about various local recovery hubs – including state resilience centres, veterans’ spaces, community clubs and centres – and regional agencies for recovery, among other relevant contacts. The unit could connect and pool global expertise for the benefit of Ukraine. The lessons learned may then yield innovative and effective solutions that can be replicated in other countries.

- **Provide clear guidelines on best practice for stakeholder and community engagement in the public investment process.** Invest in joint training for government, private sector actors and CSOs on the European Code of Conduct on Partnerships, the upcoming new civic engagement modules on DREAM and other tools for civic monitoring. The design of these investments, particularly in social recovery, should be based on the needs of target groups and focus on the improvement of their well-being.

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<sup>118</sup> Unbroken (undated), ‘UNBROKEN University’, <https://unbroken.org.ua/directions/unbrokenuniversity>.

- **Embed the use of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership** within the newly established Public Investment Management (PIM) framework at the local level. This practice will build the institutional strength required for regional and local CSOs to access and manage EU cohesion funds, which Ukraine will unlock once it achieves EU accession. Update the PIM guidelines to mandate that municipal projects must go through a formalized consultation process with local representatives of civil society, academia and business before being included in the DREAM system.
- **Improve the visibility of financial data in the DREAM ecosystem** by implementing standardized tracking tools. Provide a breakdown of the whole financial pipeline, including allocated funds, tranches released, actual expenditures and contractor disbursements. Implement regional and local filters with intuitive visual aids (such as bar charts indicating real-time progress towards targets).
- **Develop and promote a public consultation module via DREAM** that engages interested stakeholders already at the level of developing strategy and further down the line when large projects (meaning those of 500 million UAH and above) are approved for funding. Create a secure communication channel in the DREAM interface, through which verified local CSOs can flag discrepancies between reported financial spending and physical project completion. This instrument should also feature a clear model for the DREAM platform to respond to this feedback. This facility will be important to reduce the risk of corruption.
- **Expand the social services marketplace** to increase the number of suitable service providers and improve the quality of services. The Ministry of Social Policy and Ministry of Veteran Affairs should evaluate various pilot schemes (such as resilience and veteran hubs, or grants for veteran-owned businesses) to improve their understanding of models that could be scaled. Data-collection and -monitoring are essential for identifying gaps in services and resources, either between various vulnerable groups or regions. CSOs – especially large network coalitions – can also be an effective partner in providing such data.
- **Improve knowledge-sharing on recovery data**, either by developing UDP<sup>119</sup> resources or by expanding DREAM’s functionality. Integration of data will eliminate duplicate entries, align strategic donor priorities with local municipal workflows and act as an institutional repository for lessons learnt. International donors will be better able to track how their macro-level commitments are being converted into individual community projects. Meanwhile, allowing *hromadas* to upload technical blueprints, procurement templates or post-project evaluations will help prevent costly mistakes, encouraging mutual learning.
- **Accelerate the legislative finalization and technical implementation of a ‘percentage philanthropy’ mechanism within the Tax Code of Ukraine.** This mechanism will enable citizens to direct a fixed percentage of their personal

<sup>119</sup> OECD (2026), *Consolidating Ukraine’s recovery architecture: Where it stands and next steps*, Global Relations Policy Papers, 1 (1), [https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2026/02/consolidating-ukraine-s-recovery-architecture\\_88f06be6/e55159d1-en.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2026/02/consolidating-ukraine-s-recovery-architecture_88f06be6/e55159d1-en.pdf).

income tax to selected CSOs. The draft bill was registered in mid-2022.<sup>120</sup> Given the current fiscal squeeze, allowing such allocations to vetted non-profits would help bolster organizations that are already supporting veterans and their families. Over the longer term, the mechanism will help develop a culture of giving and ensure domestic financial sustainability for the recovery process, while aligning social service provision with local needs.

### **For Ukrainian CSOs:**

- **Form more thematic, regional and local clusters** to share resources and advocate for policy changes with one voice. Instead of competing for the same small grants, local CSOs would be able to aggregate data, share operational costs and wield enough collective bargaining power to influence regional and national recovery priorities.
- **Work on costing and improving standards of service provision.** For a social services market to be effective, CSOs must prove their value and competitive advantage, as compared to private or community-owned service organizations. CSOs involved in service provision (and those hoping to become involved) need to document and demonstrate impact. Include representatives of key groups that benefit from these services on governance boards to grow and develop services in line with clients’ needs and expectations.
- **Improve perceptions of the sector’s integrity.** Given the sector’s internal fragilities, and to mitigate the risks of co-optation and corruption in the sector identified by our survey participants, self-regulation, the quality of non-profit governance, and the accountability of organizations to members and key constituencies should all be strengthened. Civil society must be proactive in inviting representatives of the Ukrainian government and Western donors to discuss these risks and propose solutions. Together, they should determine if a new regulatory body (akin to the Charity Commission in the UK) could appropriately be established, or whether this function could instead be performed by Ukraine’s Ministry of Justice. These discussions should also cover how best to institute a vetting process for CSOs involved in bidding for recovery funding – possibly along similar lines to the State Register of Social Services Providers. Set a clear delineation between groups responsible for monitoring public spending and those to which recovery work is subcontracted.
- **Conduct reference studies and surveys** to ensure that strategic policies are evidence-based and relate to the lived experiences of affected populations. Projects like this will also allow CSOs to communicate these needs to local authorities and modify social protection when necessary. It will allow presenting a stronger case for grant applications to international donors, informing them directly on the specific, on-the-ground needs of Ukrainian communities.

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<sup>120</sup> Verkhovna Rada (2022), ‘Proyekt Zakonu pro vnesennya zmin do Podatkovoho kodeksu Ukrayiny (shchodo zaprovadzhennya mekhanizmu vidsotkovoho vidrakhuvannya dlya pidtrymky neprybutkovykh orhanizatsiy)’ [Draft Law on Amendments to the Tax Code of Ukraine (regarding the introduction of a percentage deduction mechanism to support non-profit organizations)], Document no. 4775-IX, <https://itd.rada.gov.ua/billinfo/Bills/Card/39744>.

### For international donors:

- **Strengthen civil society representation in the UDP** by establishing a Civil Society Council, similar to the existing Business Council. The two secretariats in Kyiv and Brussels should seek to engage both Ukraine-based and diaspora organizations from countries with large Ukrainian communities in the recovery process. Members of the new council should be selected by nominations to the secretariat from networks, associations and platforms that represent key stakeholders for the recovery (such as educators, environmental groups, IDPs, people with disabilities, veterans and young people).
- **Prioritize ‘direct localization’.** Ensure that local Ukrainian CSOs are not just implementers for international NGOs and enable them to lead the humanitarian and recovery response. Because local CSOs possess local knowledge and remain embedded in their communities, this approach can create a more sustainable process in the long-term. By enhancing localization, international donors can bypass the heavy cost overheads often associated with large international intermediaries and benefit from a more efficient distribution of resources tailored to specific community needs.
- **Provide flexible, multi-year funding – particularly in front-line regions.** Social recovery includes complex matters like helping people to overcome psychological trauma or integrating IDPs into changed and traumatized communities). It can often take years to achieve. To enable NGOs to provide these services effectively, abandon six-month project cycles and instead provide ‘core funding’ that allows local partners to plan long-term. Consider introducing consortium- or network-based grants that require co-application from groups of 3–5 local CSOs representing different municipalities or specialized skills on a single recovery theme (e.g. environmental protection, anti-corruption monitoring or psycho-social support for veterans). This type of grant will allow CSOs to pool their resources and enhance their influence with local authorities.
- **Harmonize reporting standards.** Donors must lower the bureaucratic barriers for smaller, local CSOs to encourage their participation in recovery. Coordinate with other donors to create a single, unified reporting template for Ukrainian partners. Local CSOs invest many hours filling out different forms for different international donors. Lifting this bureaucratic burden could incentivize smaller CSOs with limited capacity to participate.
- **Invest in capacity-building and mentorship,** especially for those CSOs working with vulnerable groups in front-line regions. Provide workshops to help smaller CSOs build the institutional strength needed to manage large projects. Assist CSOs willing to provide social services in developing clear standards, costing, monitoring and marketing.
- **Emphasize the human dimension of the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) and engage with a wider range of veteran-led CSOs.** Ensure that major URC panels on defence industry growth and regional development include speakers from the Ukrainian veteran community. Veterans have first-hand experience with logistics, demining and social realities in the front-line regions, making their input invaluable. Mirror the URC’s business-to-business fair with dedicated spaces

focused on human capital to facilitate direct connections with Ukrainian CSOs specializing in needs such as wartime-trauma therapy, prosthetic innovation, vocational retraining and accessible urban design.

## Conclusion

The protracted nature of Russia’s war on Ukraine has created new security, social and economic challenges, and exacerbated existing problems that have been accumulating for years. With defence and security taking absolute priority, the war effort has increased the pressure on the Ukrainian government to address the social needs of the most heavily affected populations.

Ukraine can only prevail in this war of unprovoked aggression, and ‘bounce forward’ in its economic and social development post-war, if its citizens see economic opportunities and policies that prioritize their well-being. Ukraine’s precarious demography makes this approach especially relevant, as the country needs to encourage its refugees to return from elsewhere in Europe, maintain its youth and talented workforce, and sustain a large military force to deter Russia in the future. Ukrainian civil society and communities can help in realizing this vision if given the opportunity.

It is encouraging that, in response to the unprecedented scale of social and economic challenges, the process of forging of a new ‘social contract’ in Ukraine is under way. The social contract is no longer a paternalistic, top–down relationship, where the state is the sole provider of recovery and community rejuvenation. It is instead evolving into a multi-party partnership, in which civil society acts as a co-producer of public goods. It is critical for all partners to build on this momentum.

## Annex: The 2026 Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs

### Methodology

For the latest iteration of the recovery survey of Ukrainian CSOs, Chatham House partnered with 15 Ukrainian organizations and coalitions. These organizations were: the International Renaissance Foundation; ISAR Ednannia; the Alliance of Ukrainian CSOs; the National Network for Development of Local Democracy; RISE Ukraine; the EU–Ukraine Civil Society Platform; Right to Protection; Veteran Hubs; the League of the Strong; IDP Councils; the Network of Recourse Centres for Local Democracy; the Ukrainian Climate Network; Foundation ‘The Day After’: Women Leader Coalition for Ukraine’s Future; Roskvit; and Restart.

The survey – conducted in March 2026 via SurveyMonkey in Ukrainian, and comprising 26 structured questions and one ‘open’ question – was circulated to 30,638 registered CSOs. A total of 1,004 individual responses were received, with 681 people providing complete answers. Only complete responses were analysed for this research paper.

The geographical distribution of CSOs that completed the survey was diverse, consisting of Kyiv-based groups operating exclusively or mainly at the national level (9 per cent), regional-level groups (63 per cent) and groups working at both levels (27 per cent).

This year, respondents were asked to specify the region(s) in which they work. Significantly, the survey captured CSOs working across all regions of Ukraine, including those on the front line and in the temporarily occupied territories.

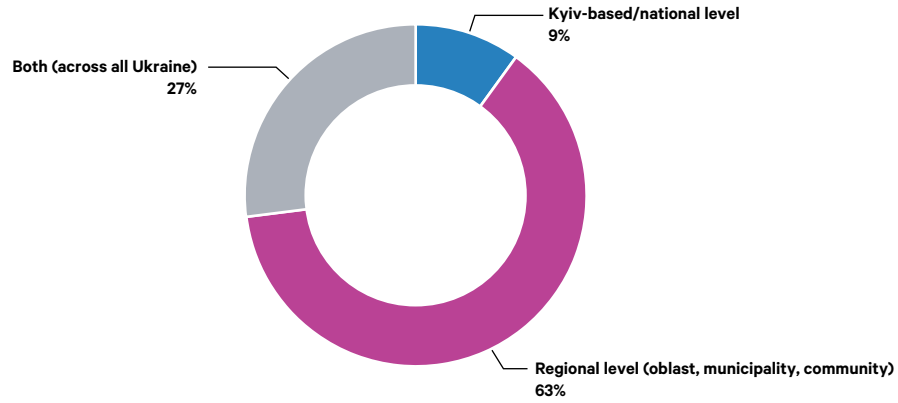
For each of the survey’s structured questions, respondents were asked to pick from a range of responses, with a specific instruction (choose one option; choose three options; choose all options that apply) depending on the question. For several questions, there was also a blank text field for participants to fill out in case they wanted to expand on their ‘other’ responses in their own words.

Most questions were repeated from the 2022, 2024 and 2025 surveys. This longitudinal data allows significant changes over time to be captured. The 2026 survey also featured new questions designed to assess how CSOs collaborate with local authorities and better define the specific social groups and activities involved in their social service programmes. For some questions (e.g. on recovery priorities), additional options for respondents were included. These additional options included some around the reintegration of veterans.

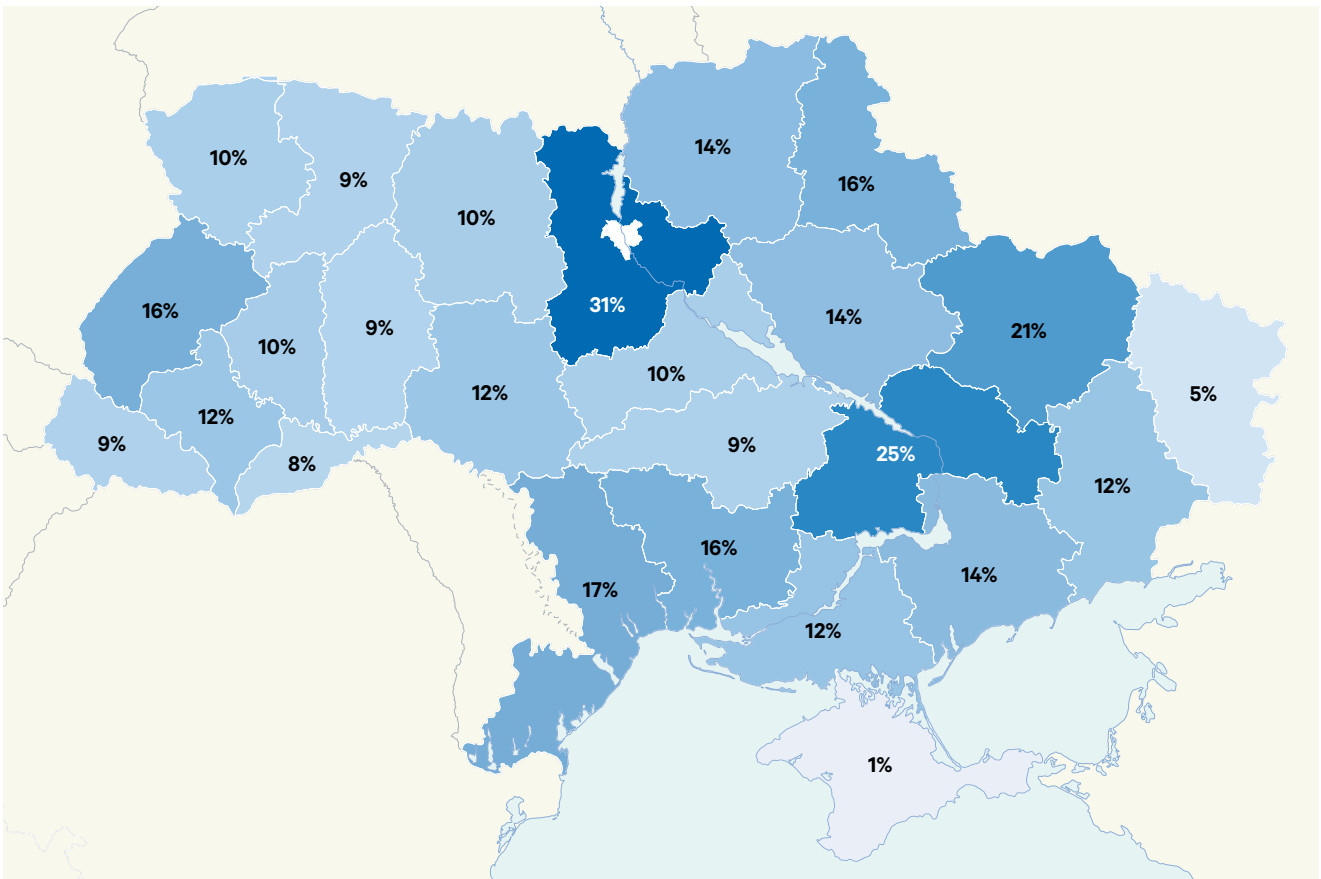
Chatham House’s team travelled to Kyiv to host a public discussion of the preliminary survey findings on 21 April 2026. This event, organized by the GIZ ‘Strengthening Communities in South and East Ukraine Through Localized Action’ (EMPOWER) programme, gathered a range of regional community leaders who provided humanitarian assistance, rapid recovery support and aided local self-governance in areas dealing with the direct consequences of the 2022 invasion.

## Results of the 2026 survey

**Question 1.** Where does your organization primarily work? [choose one]

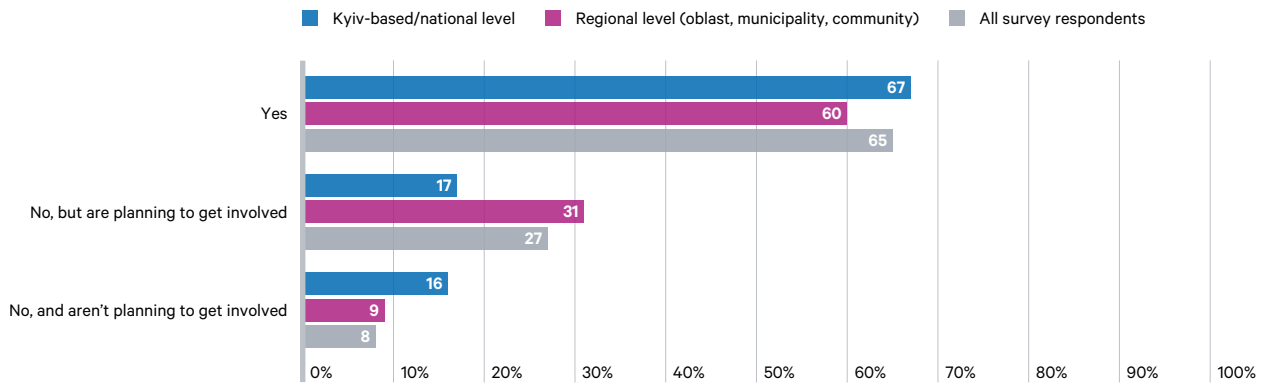


**Question 2.** In which oblast do you primarily work? [multiple choice]

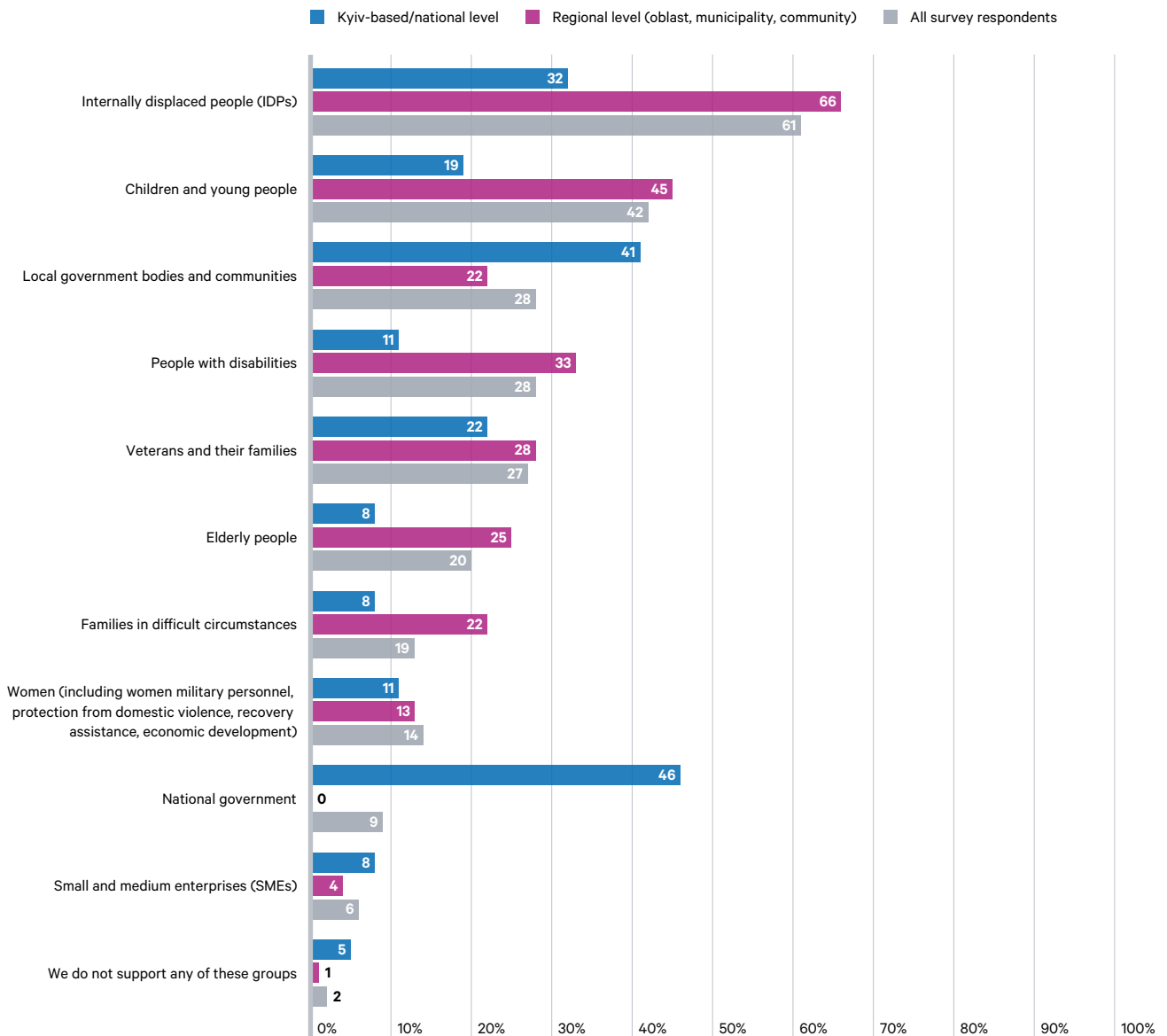


**Why a 'whole-of-society' model is essential for Ukraine's recovery**  
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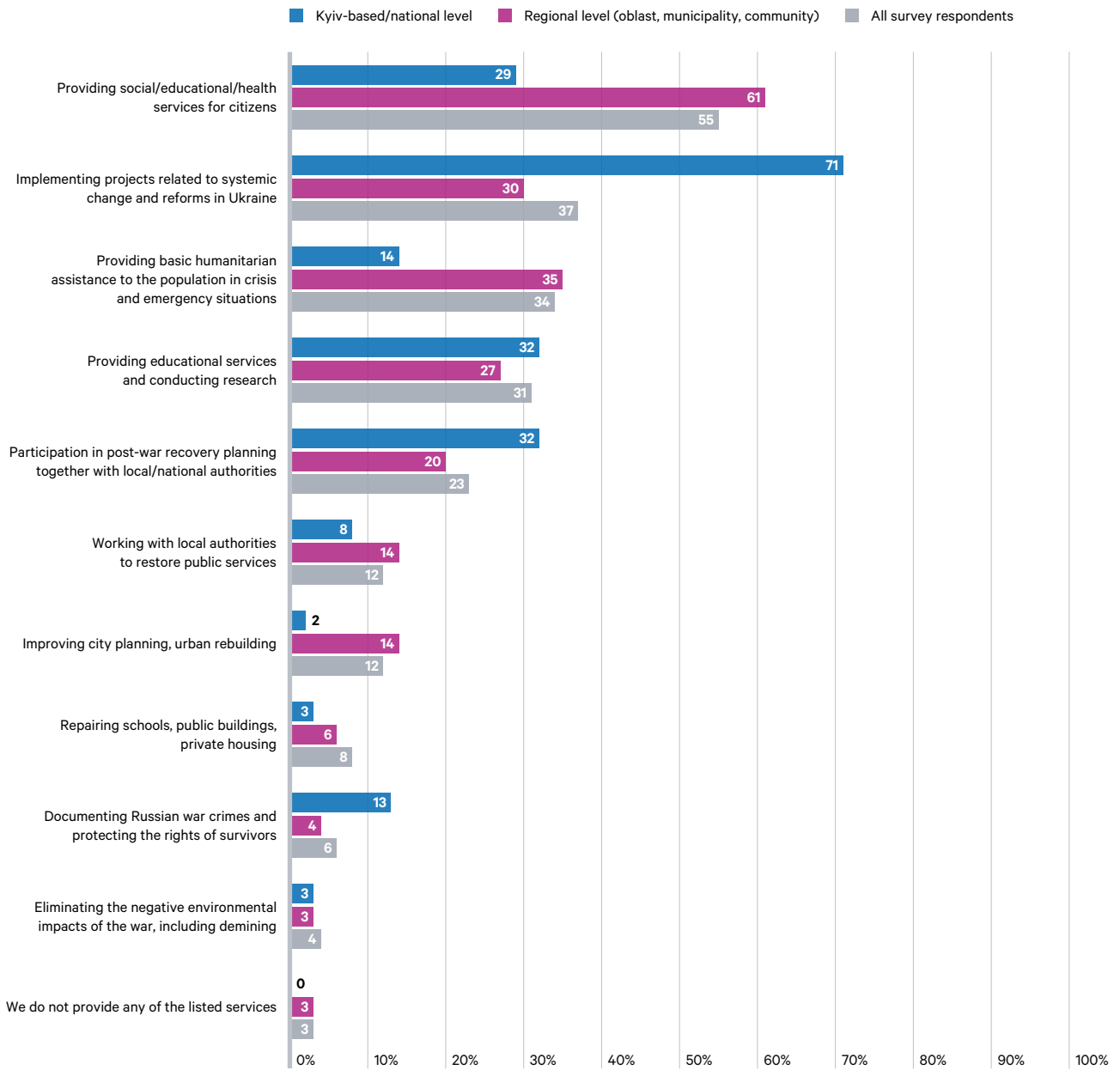
**Question 3.** Are you already involved in recovery efforts to repair the damage caused by the Russian invasion? [choose one]



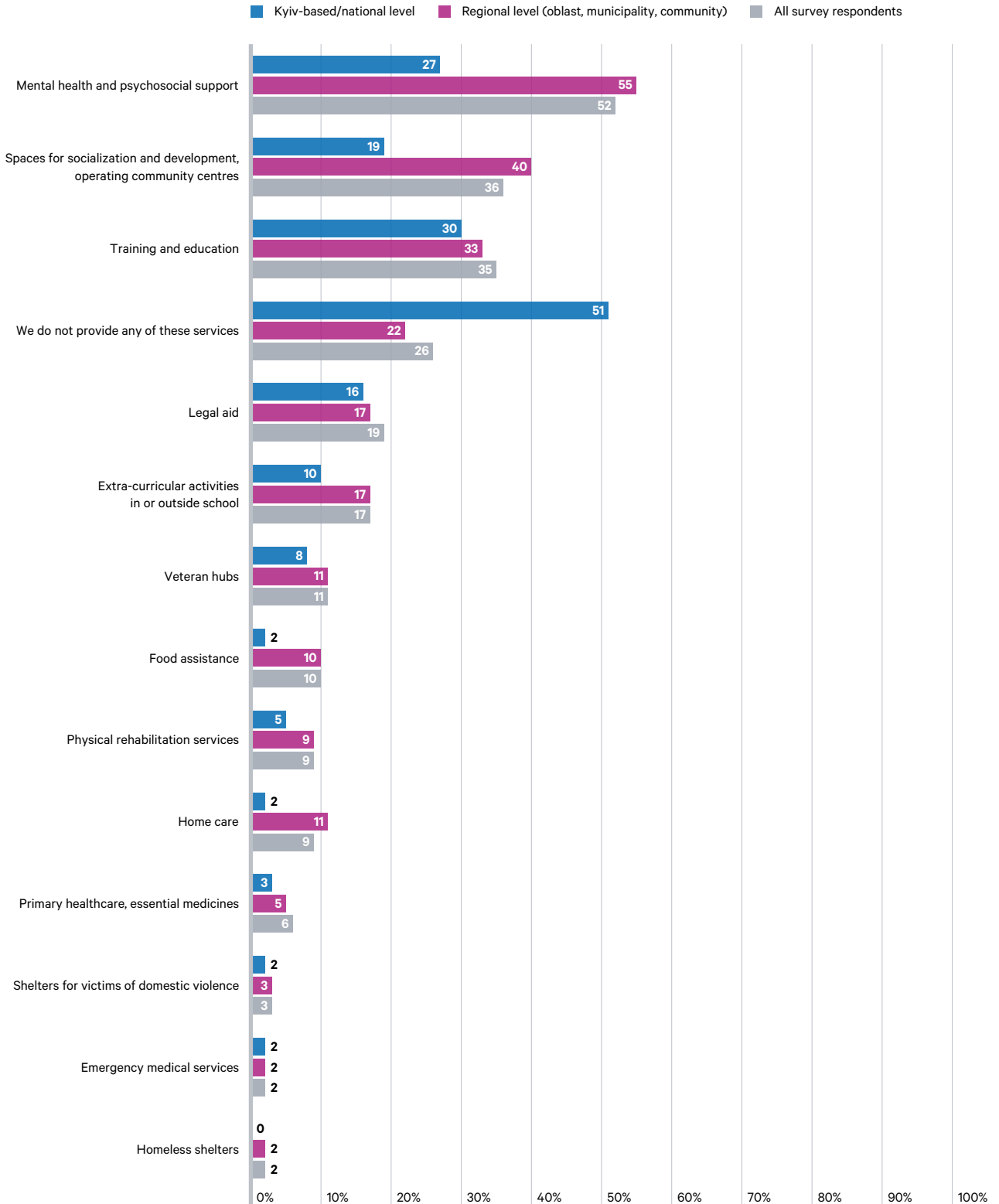
**Question 4.** What social groups do you mainly support in your work? [choose three]



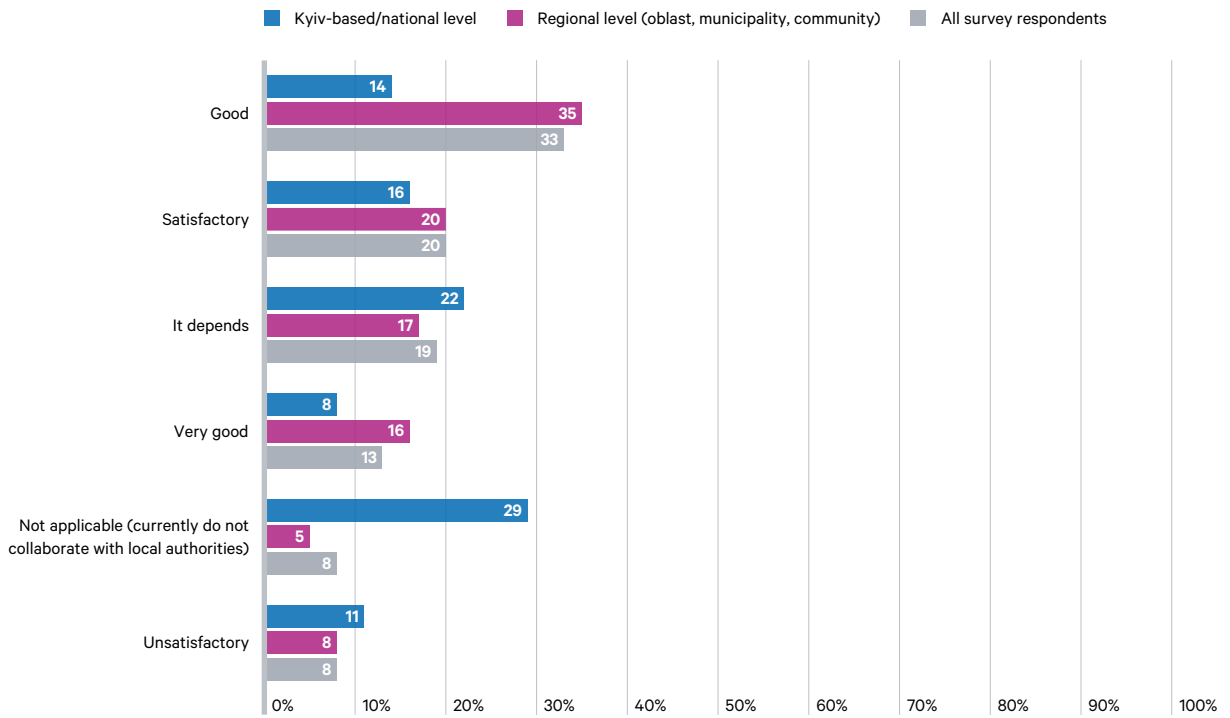
**Question 5. How would you describe your activities related to recovery? [multiple choice]**



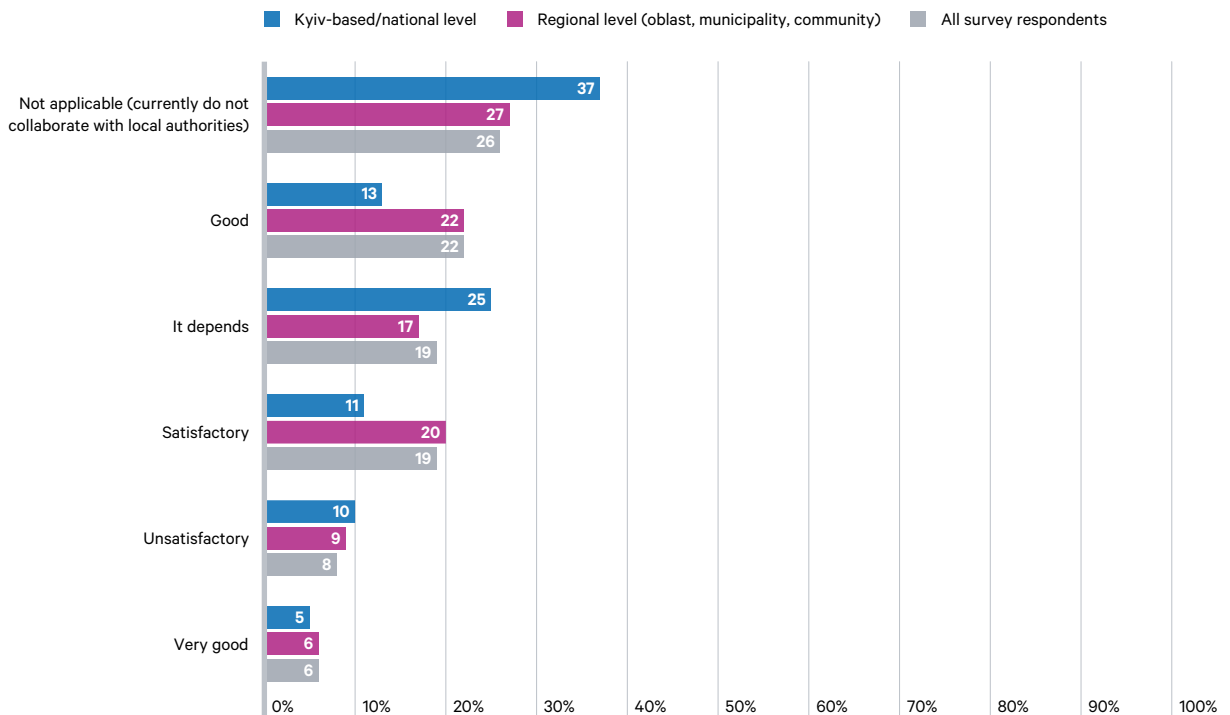
**Question 6.** If you selected 'Providing social/educational/health services for citizens' in Question 5, please identify the specific services you provide [multiple choice]. If you do not provide such services, select the option 'We do not provide these services'



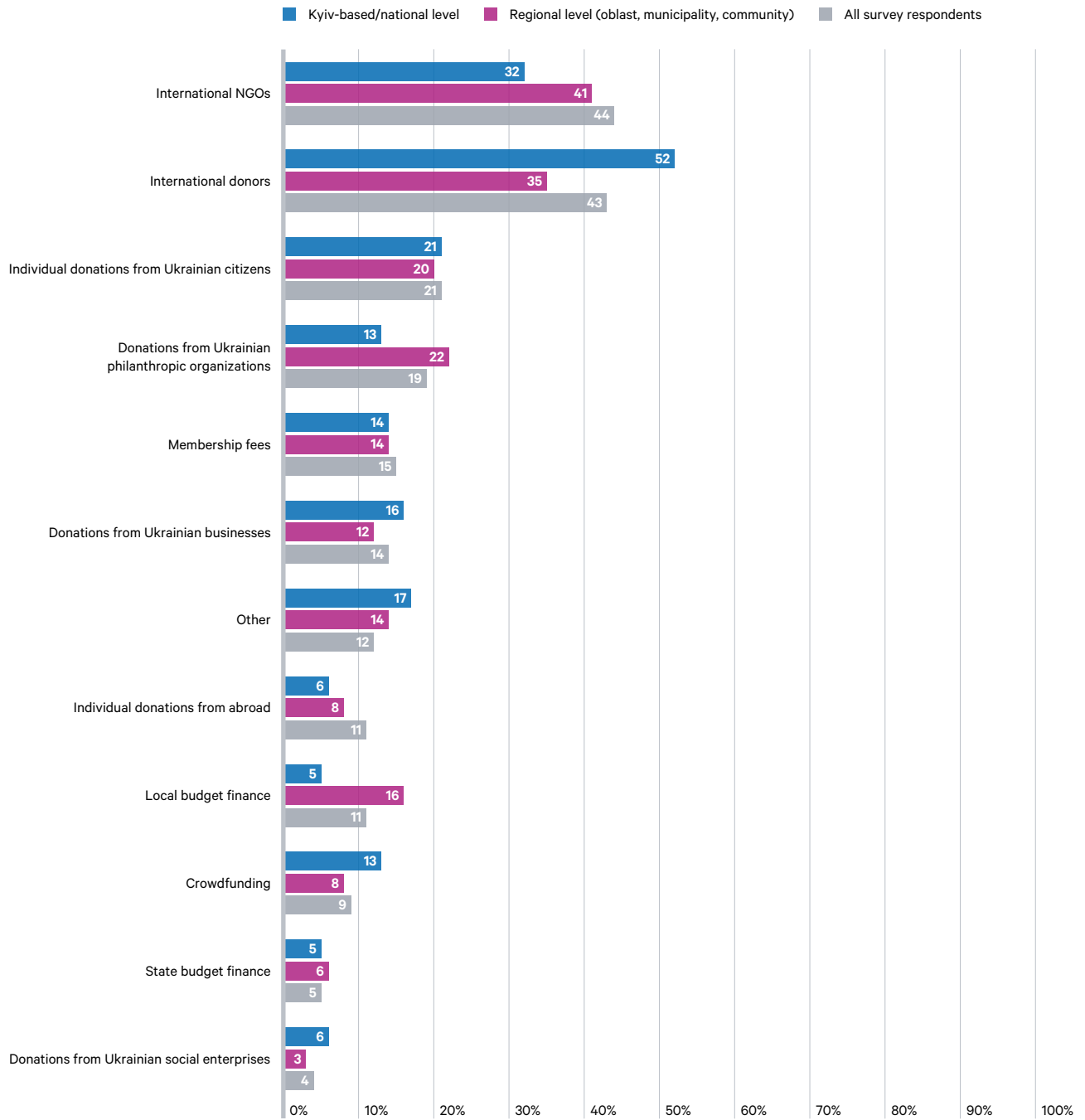
**Question 7.** How would you rate your collaboration with local authorities (village, town, city councils) in delivering social services in the region(s) where you operate? [choose one]



**Question 8.** How would you rate your collaboration with regional military administrations (oblast level) in delivering social services in the region(s) where you operate? [choose one]

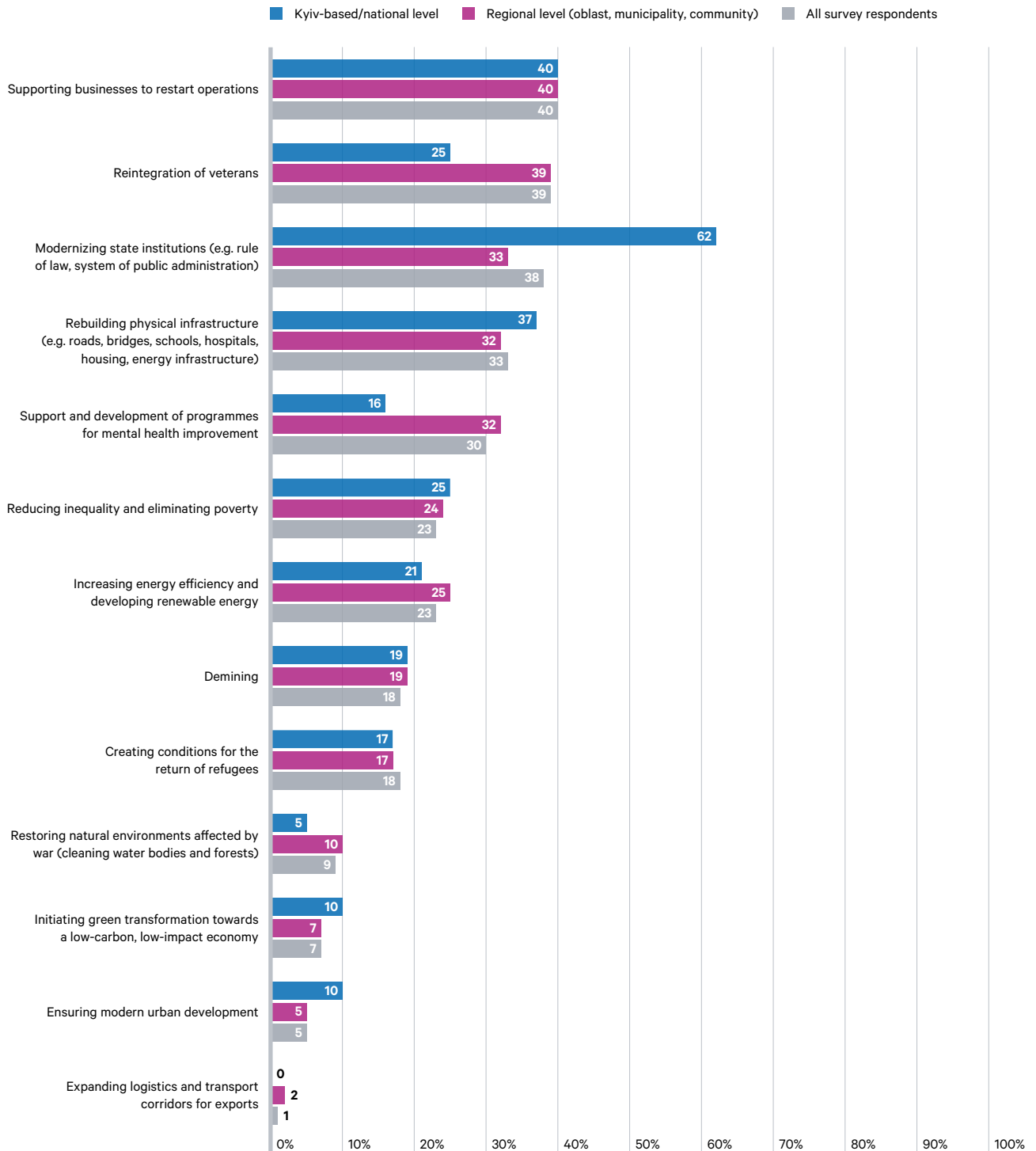


**Question 9.** How does your CSO currently finance recovery projects? [multiple choice]

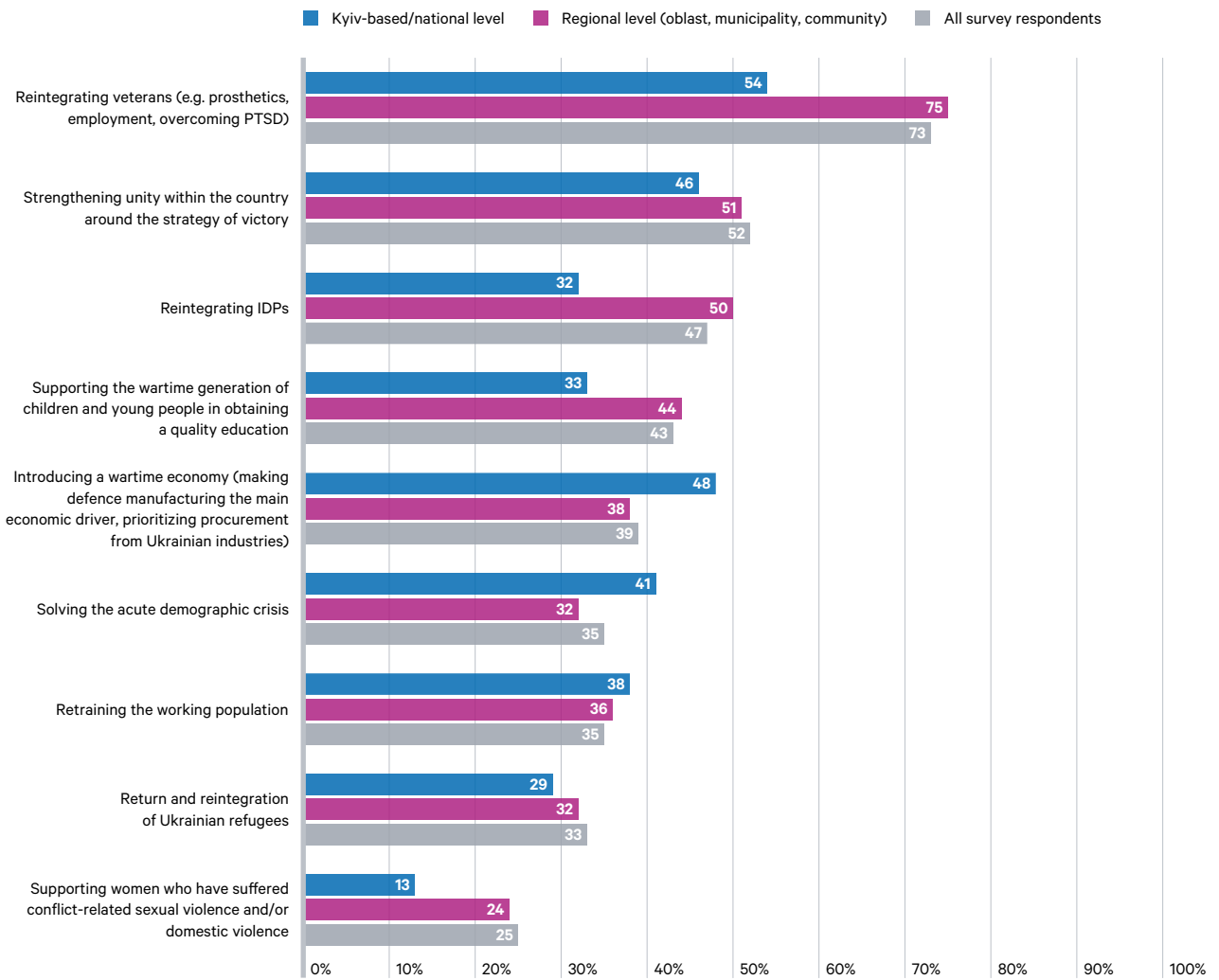


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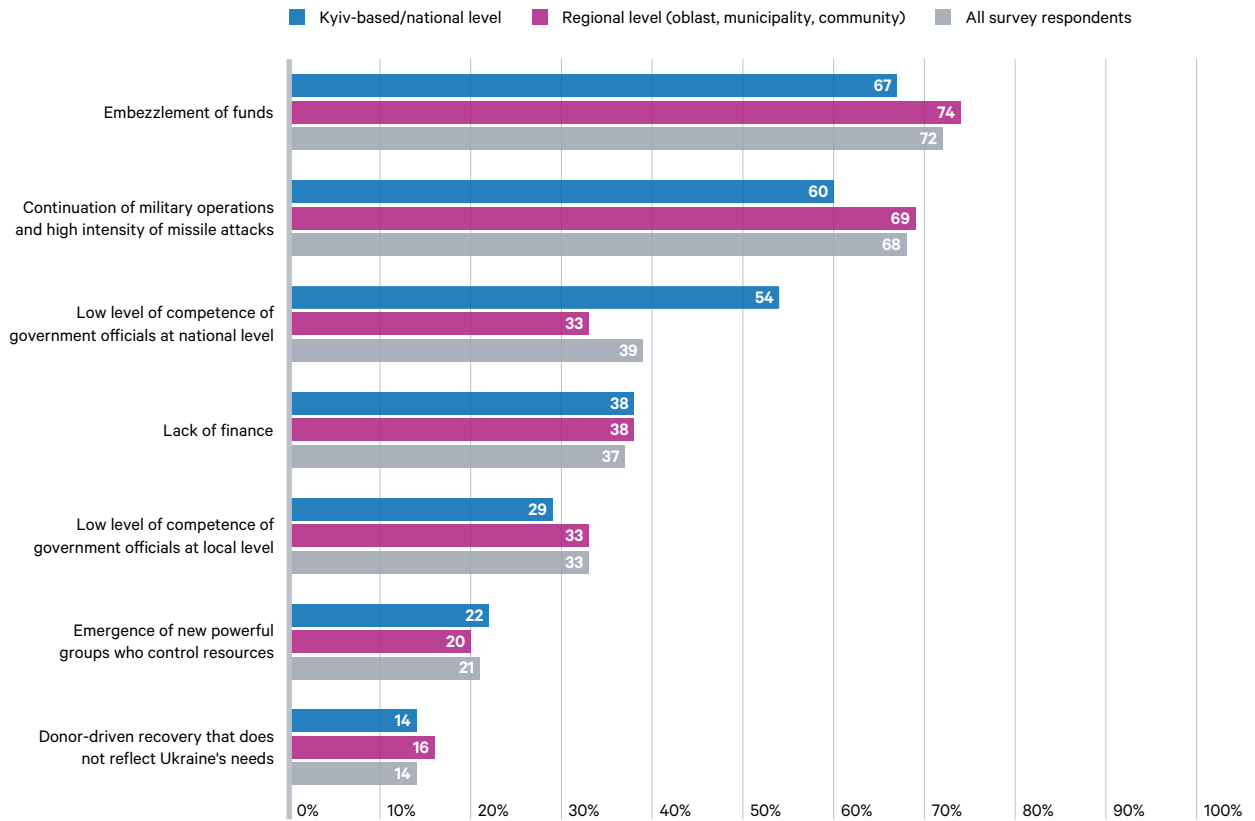
**Question 10.** Please select three priorities for recovery that should begin even while the war is ongoing [choose three]



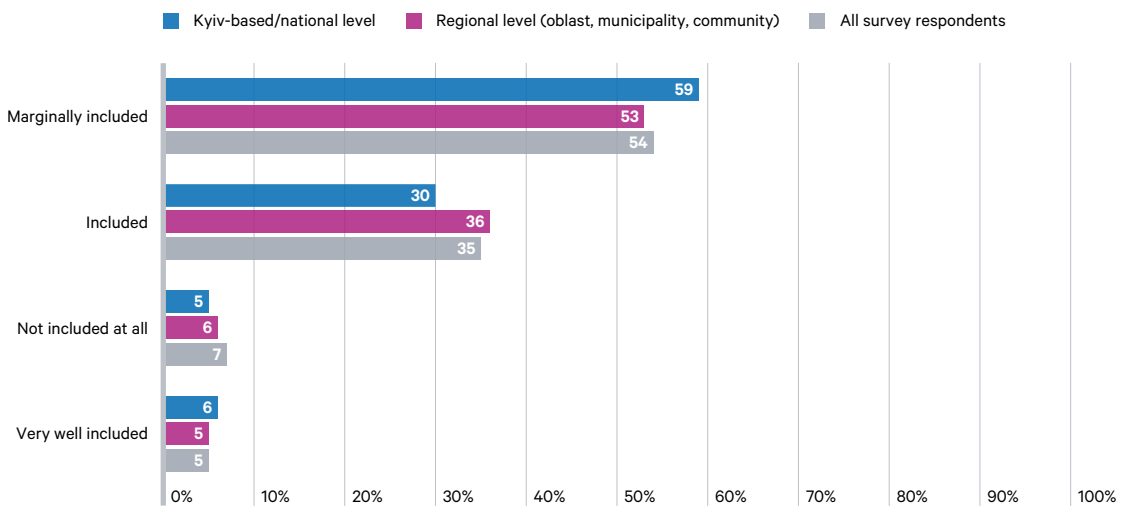
**Question 11.** What are the most pressing social challenges that should be addressed by the combined efforts of the government, business and civil society? [multiple choice]



**Question 12. What are the three top risks for rebuilding Ukraine? [choose three]**

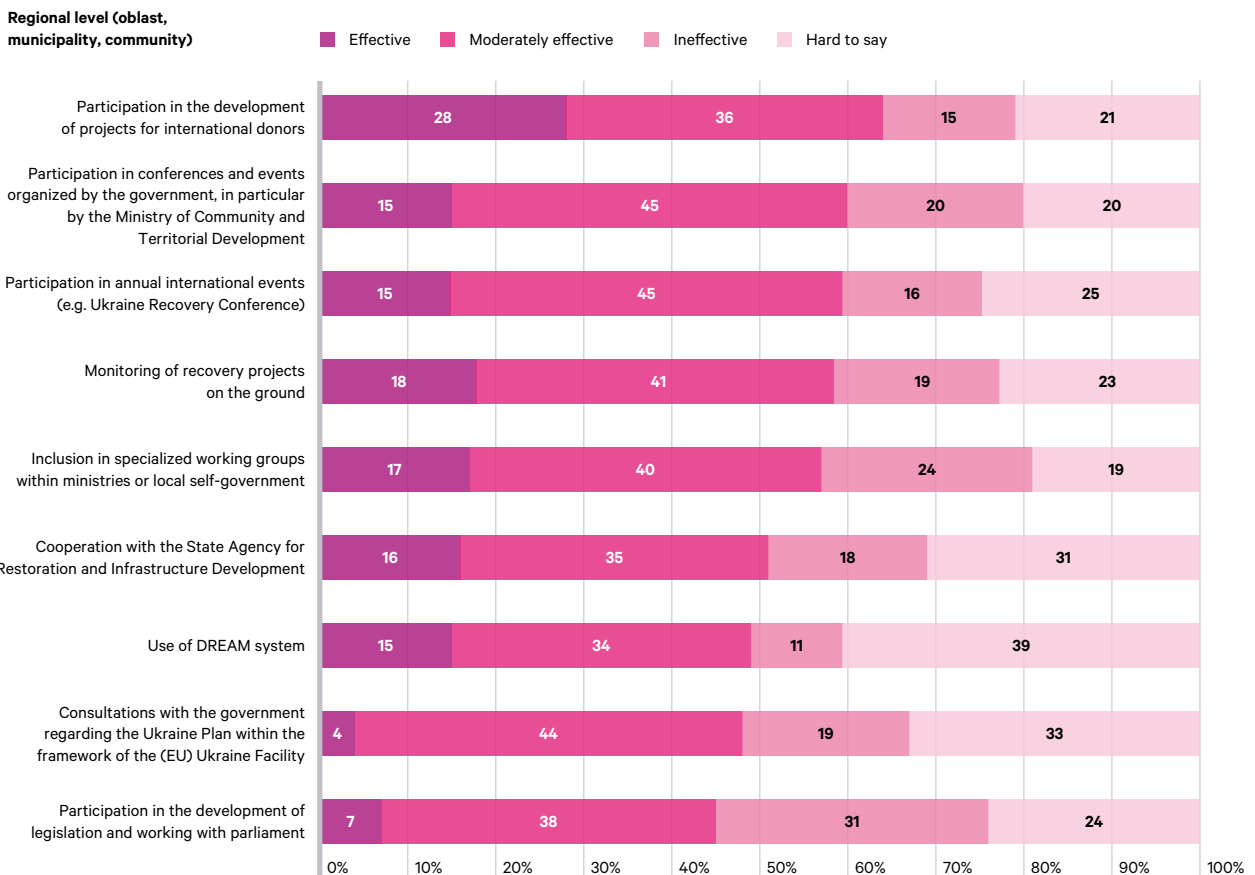
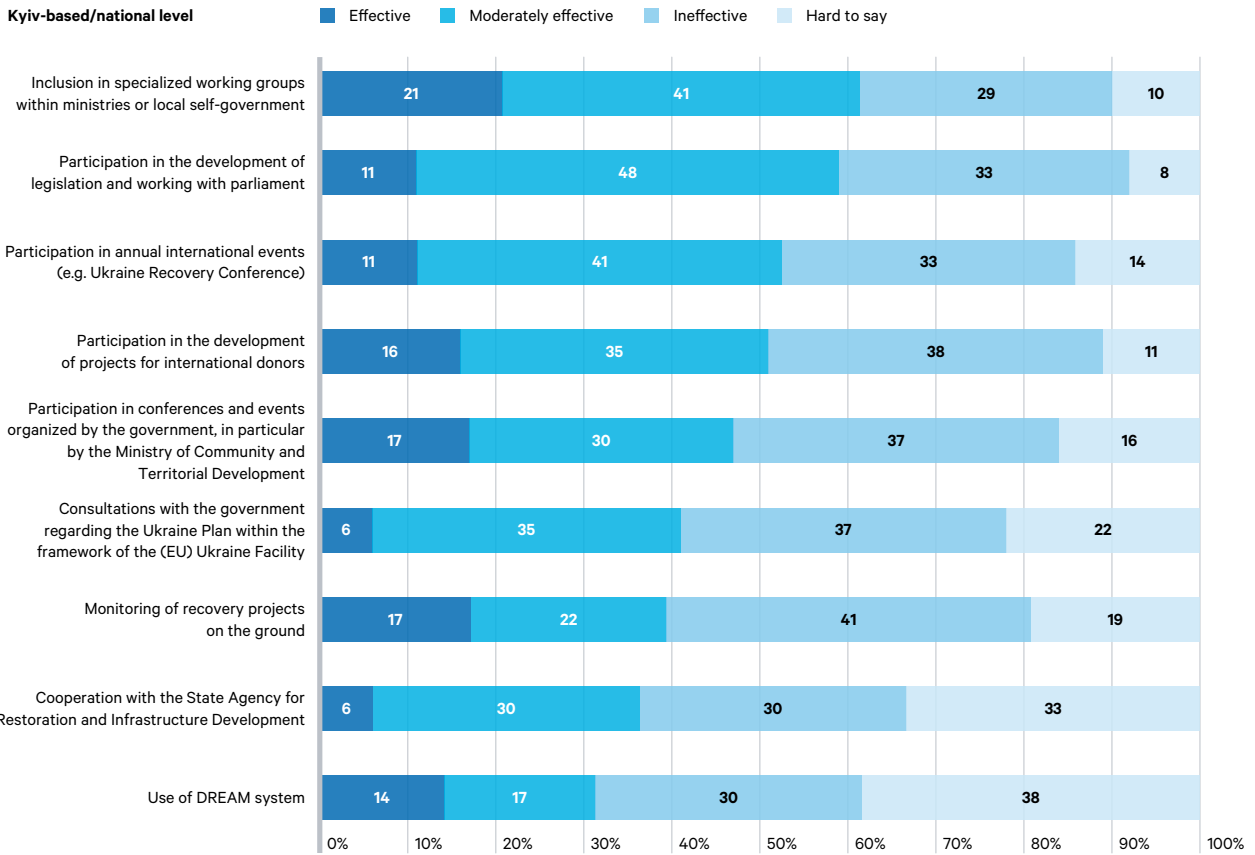


**Question 13. How would you rate the inclusion of civil society in planning recovery to date? [choose one]**



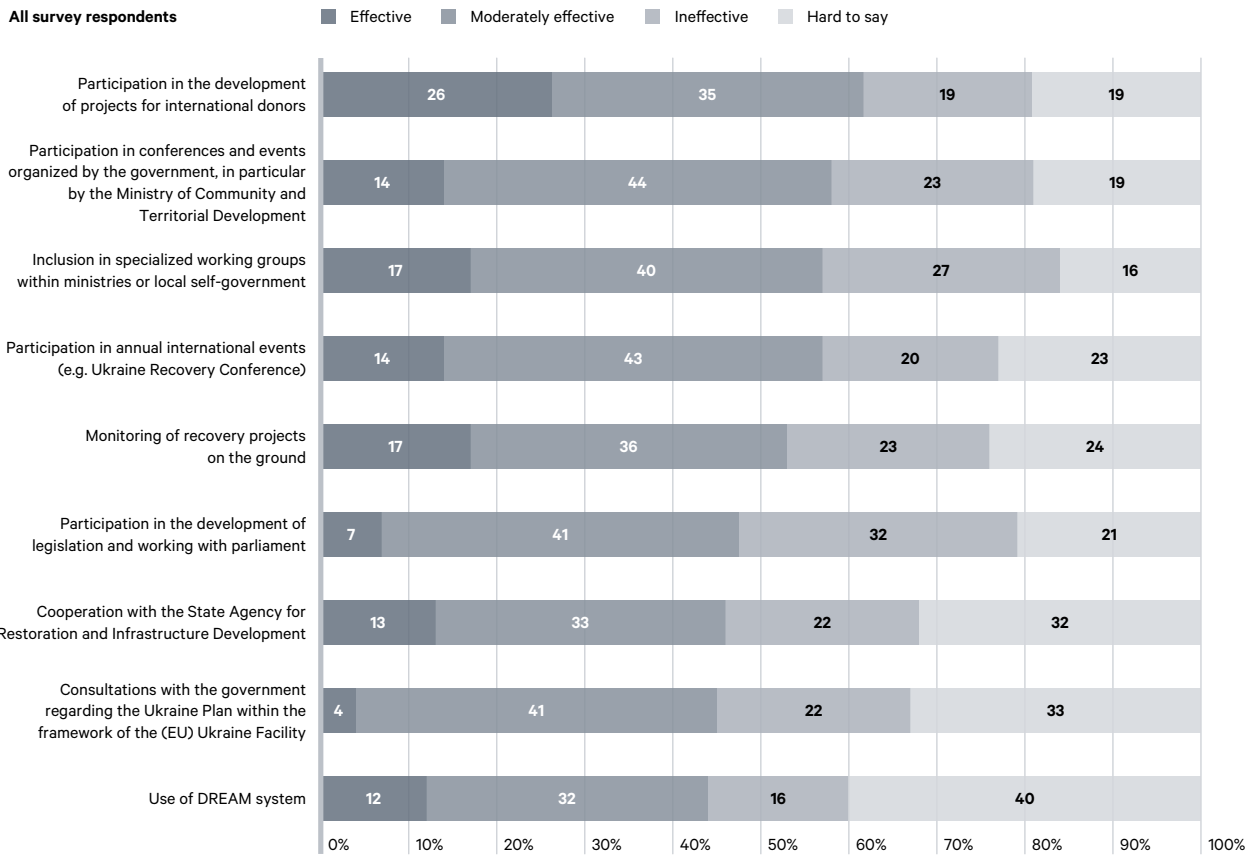
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**Question 14.** How would you rate the effectiveness of existing formats for involving civil society in recovery? [rate each format]



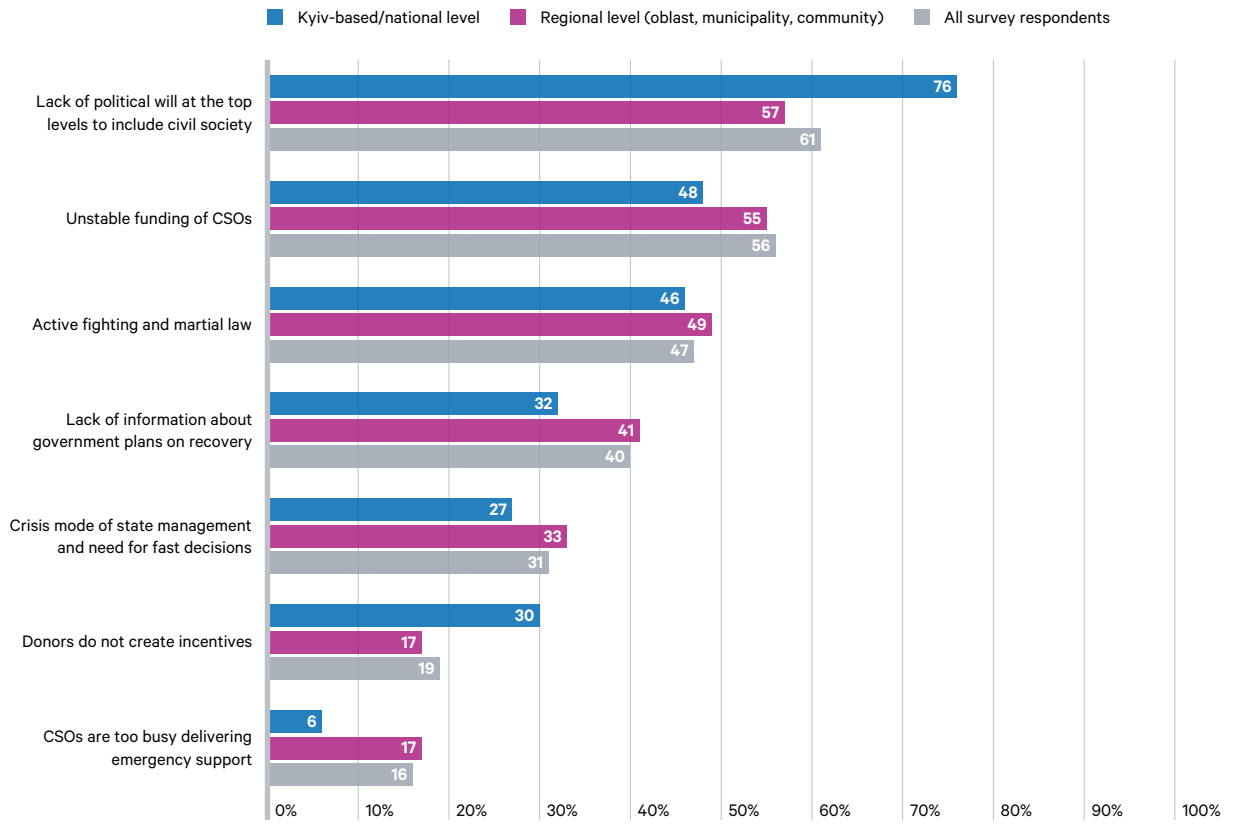
## Why a 'whole-of-society' model is essential for Ukraine's recovery

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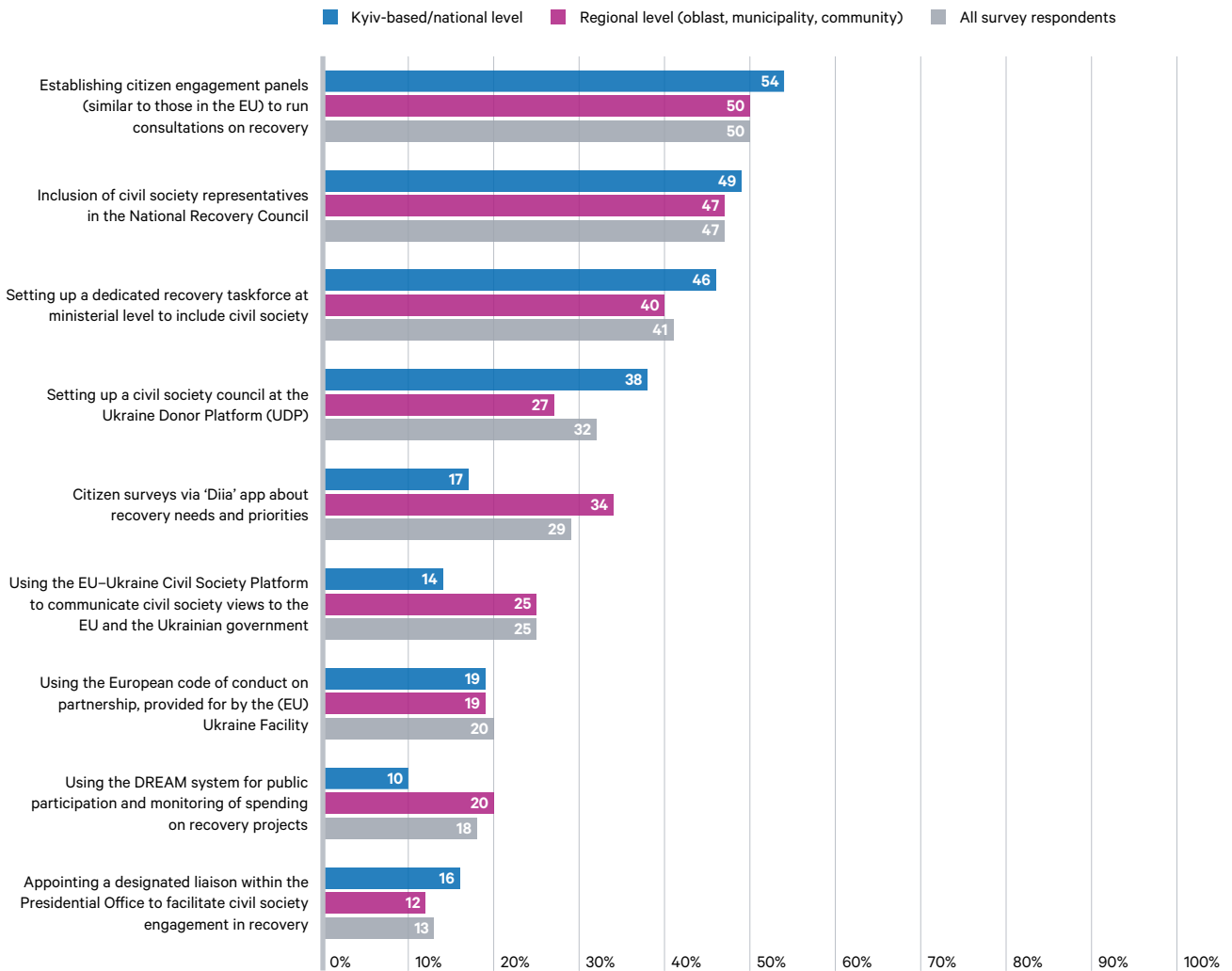
Note: Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Question 15. What are the three main obstacles to stronger engagement of civil society in recovery at present? [choose three]**

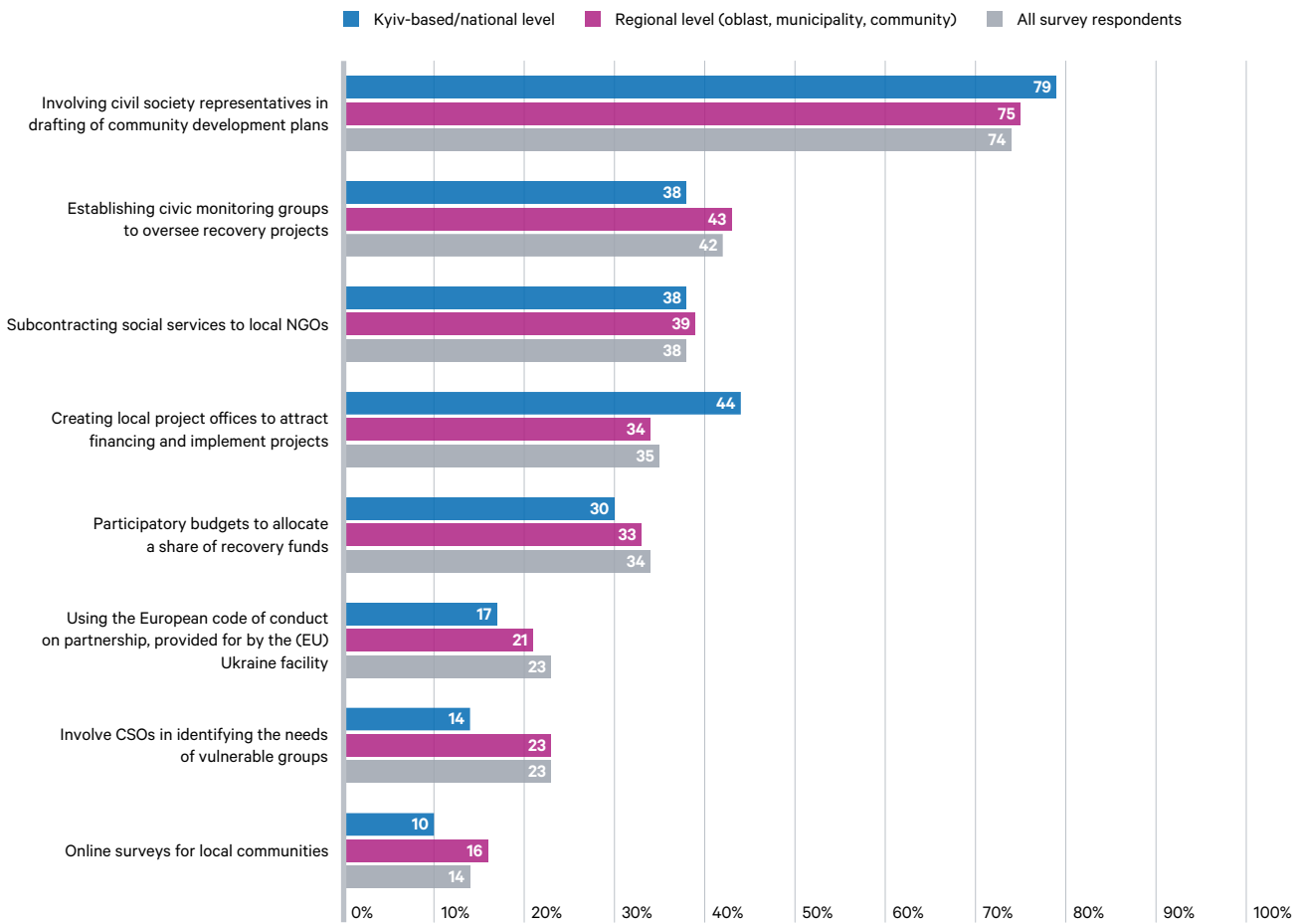


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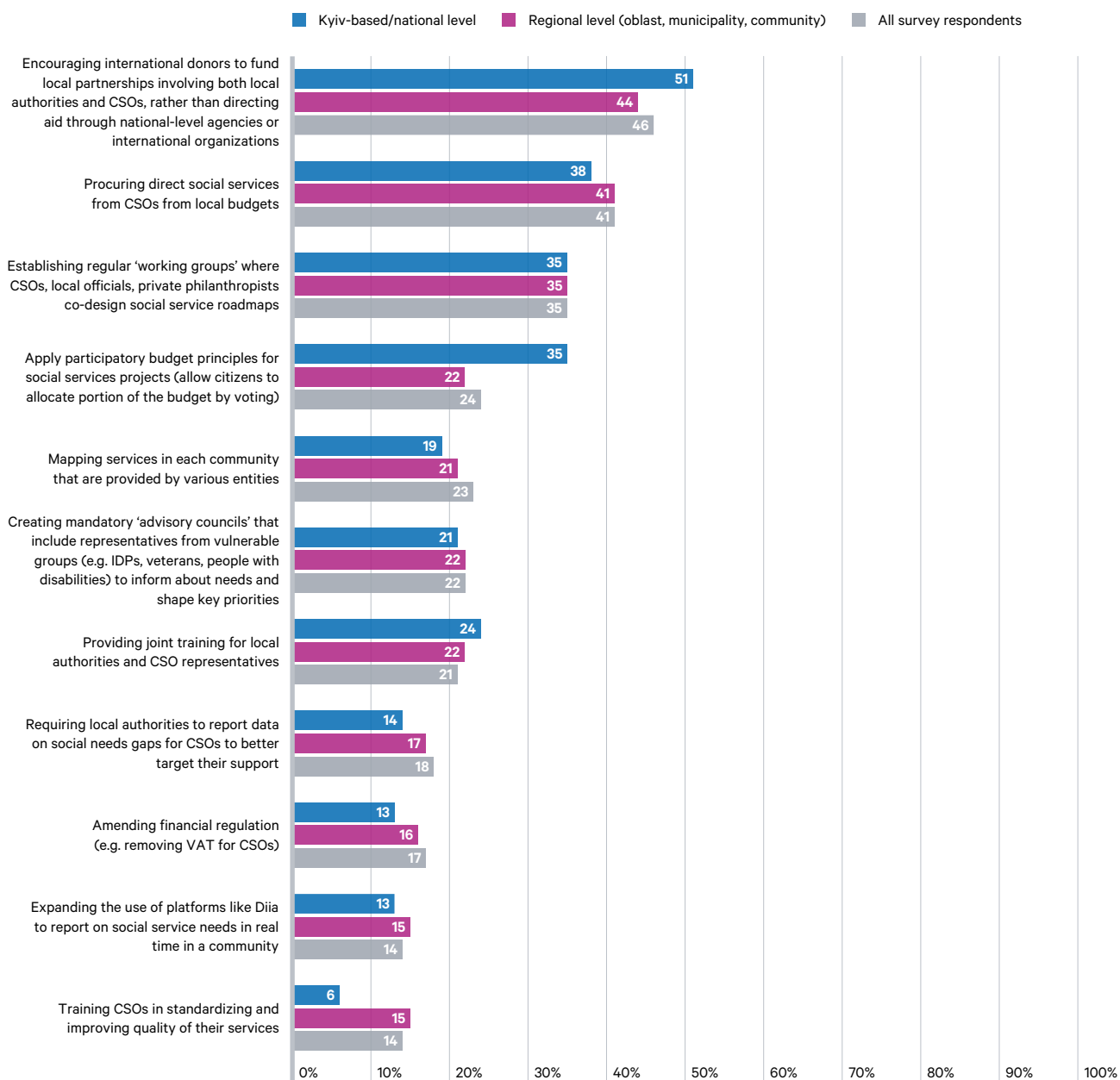
**Question 16.** What three models of effective engagement of civil society in recovery would you propose at present (under martial law) at national level? [choose three]



**Question 17.** What three models of effective engagement of civil society in recovery would you propose at present (under martial law) at local level? [choose three]

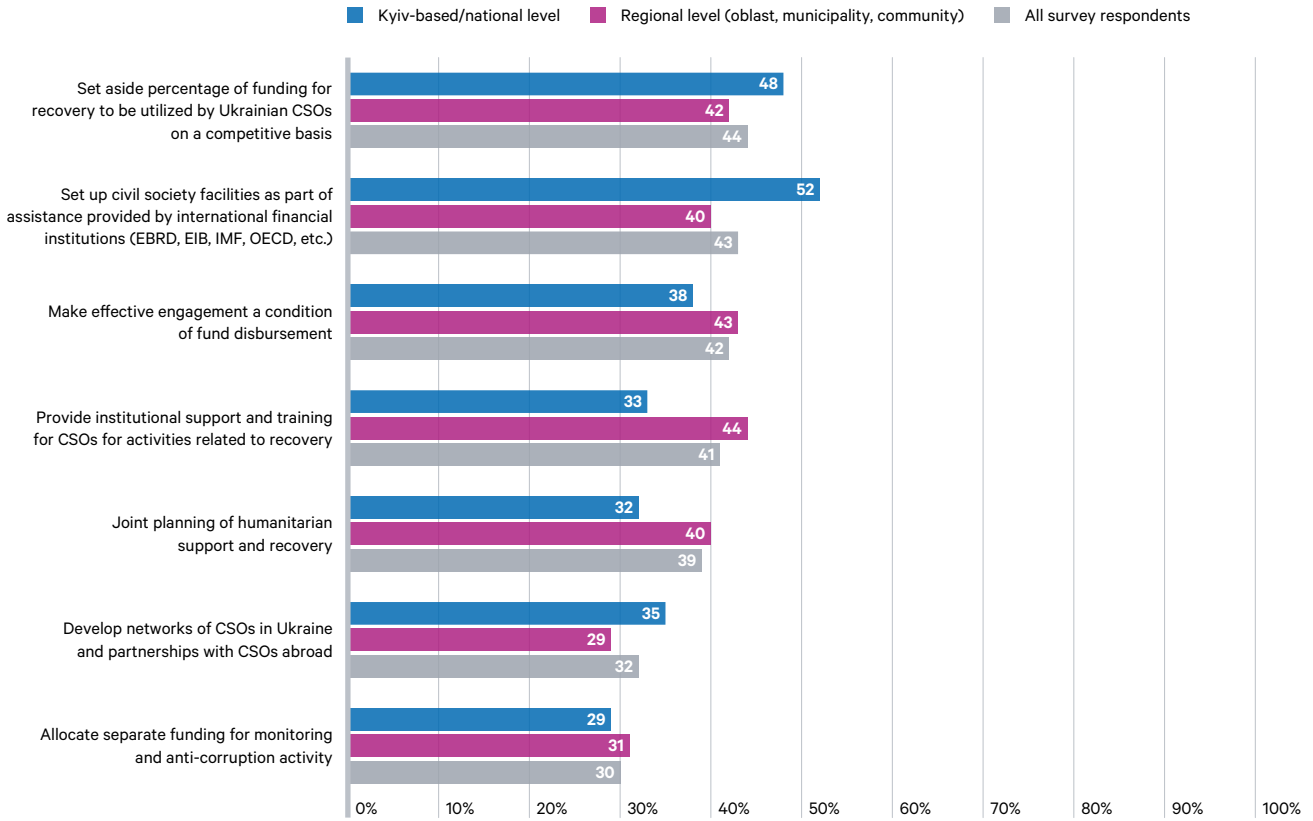


**Question 18.** In your view, which of the following actions would most effectively improve collaboration between civil society and local authorities for social service delivery in the long term? [choose three]

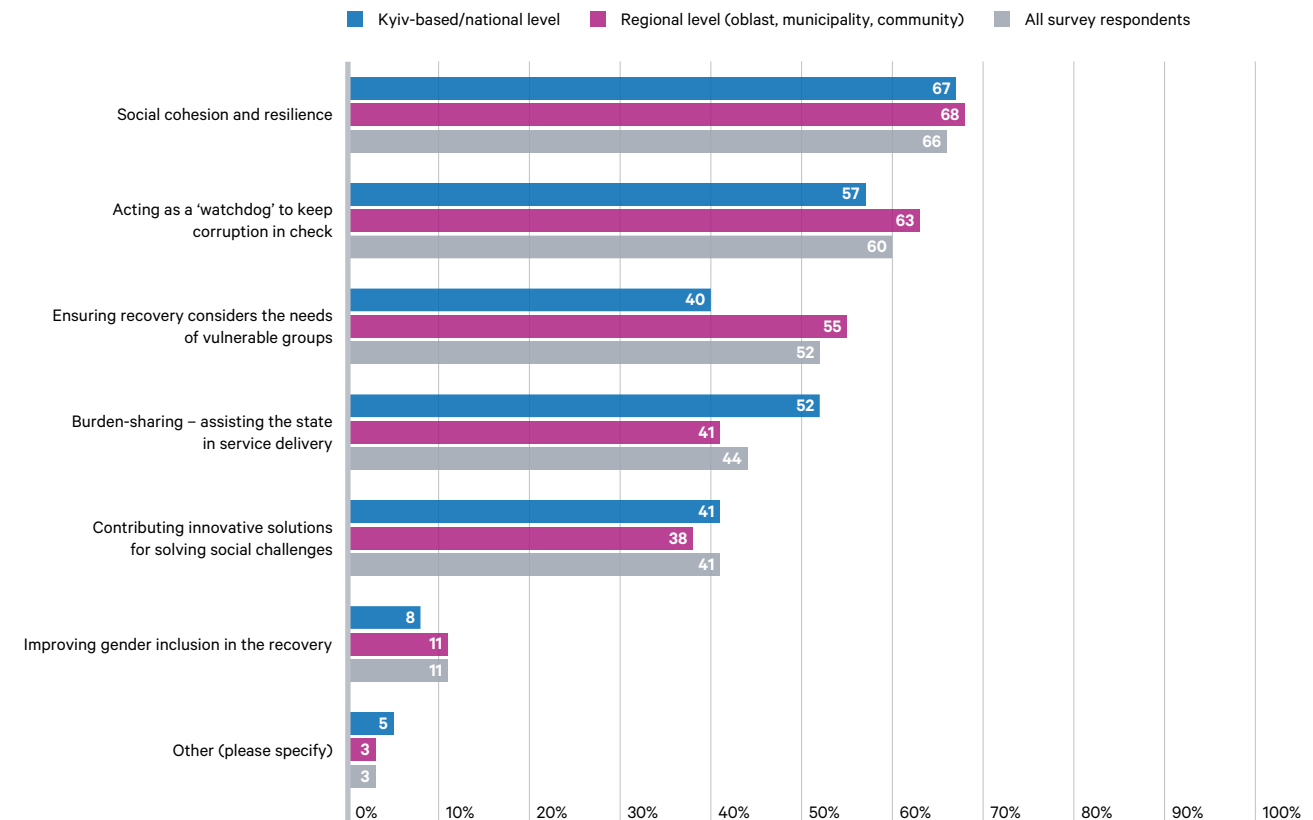


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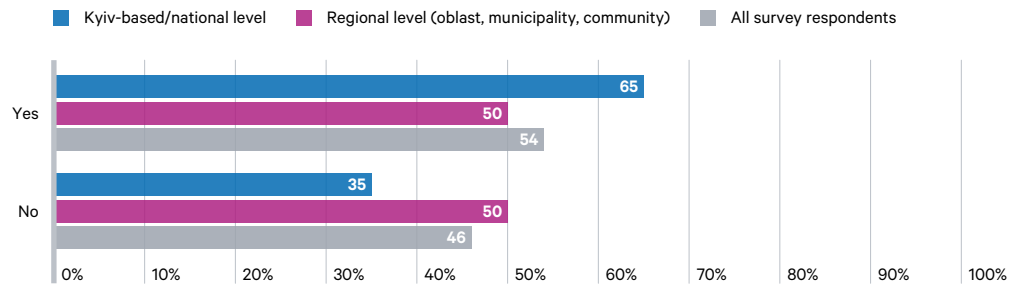
**Question 19. How could external funders facilitate civil society engagement? [choose three]**



**Question 20. What is the main value added of civil society engagement in Ukraine's recovery? [choose three]**

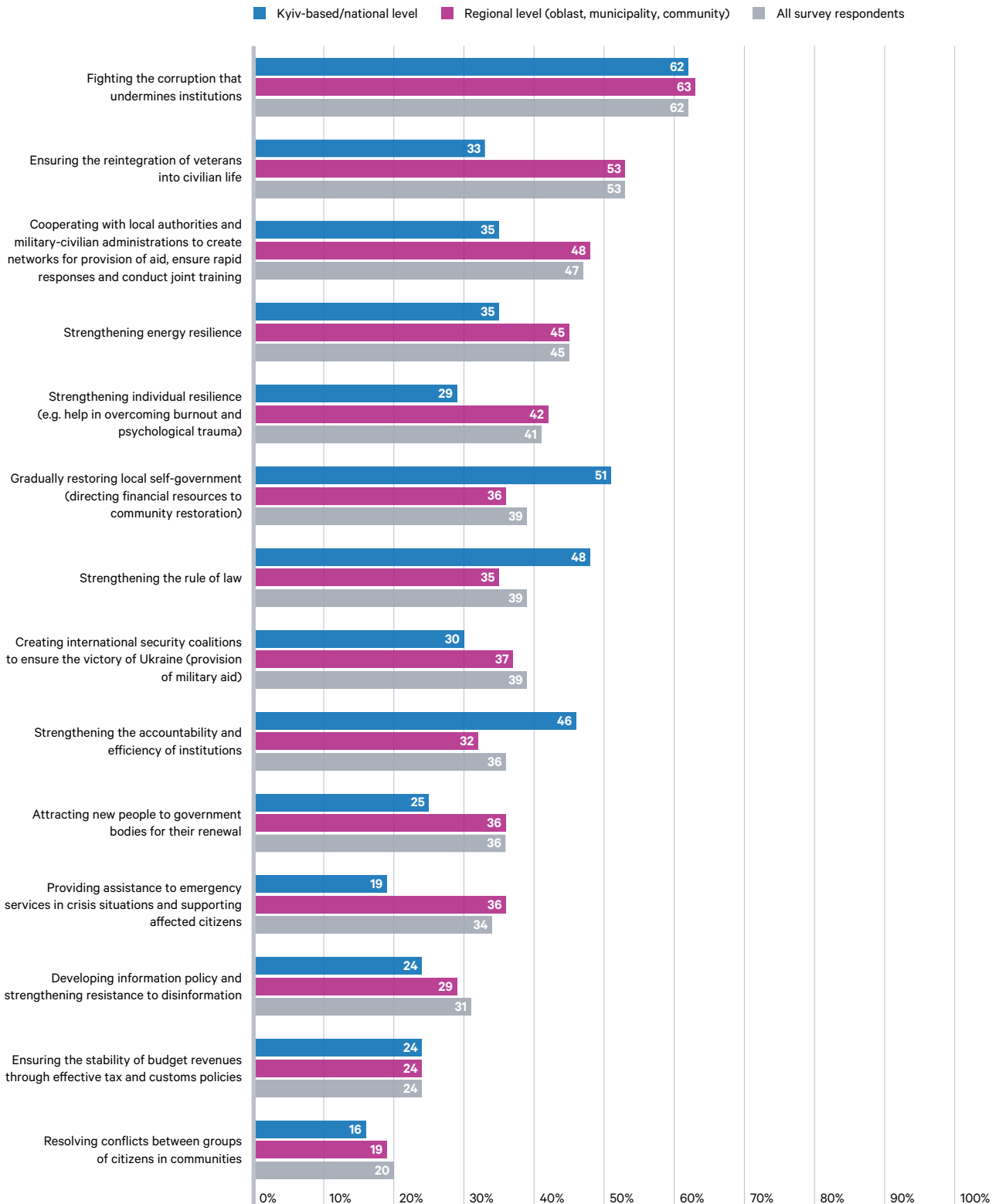


**Question 21.** Do you see certain risks and challenges related to CSOs' engagement in recovery processes?

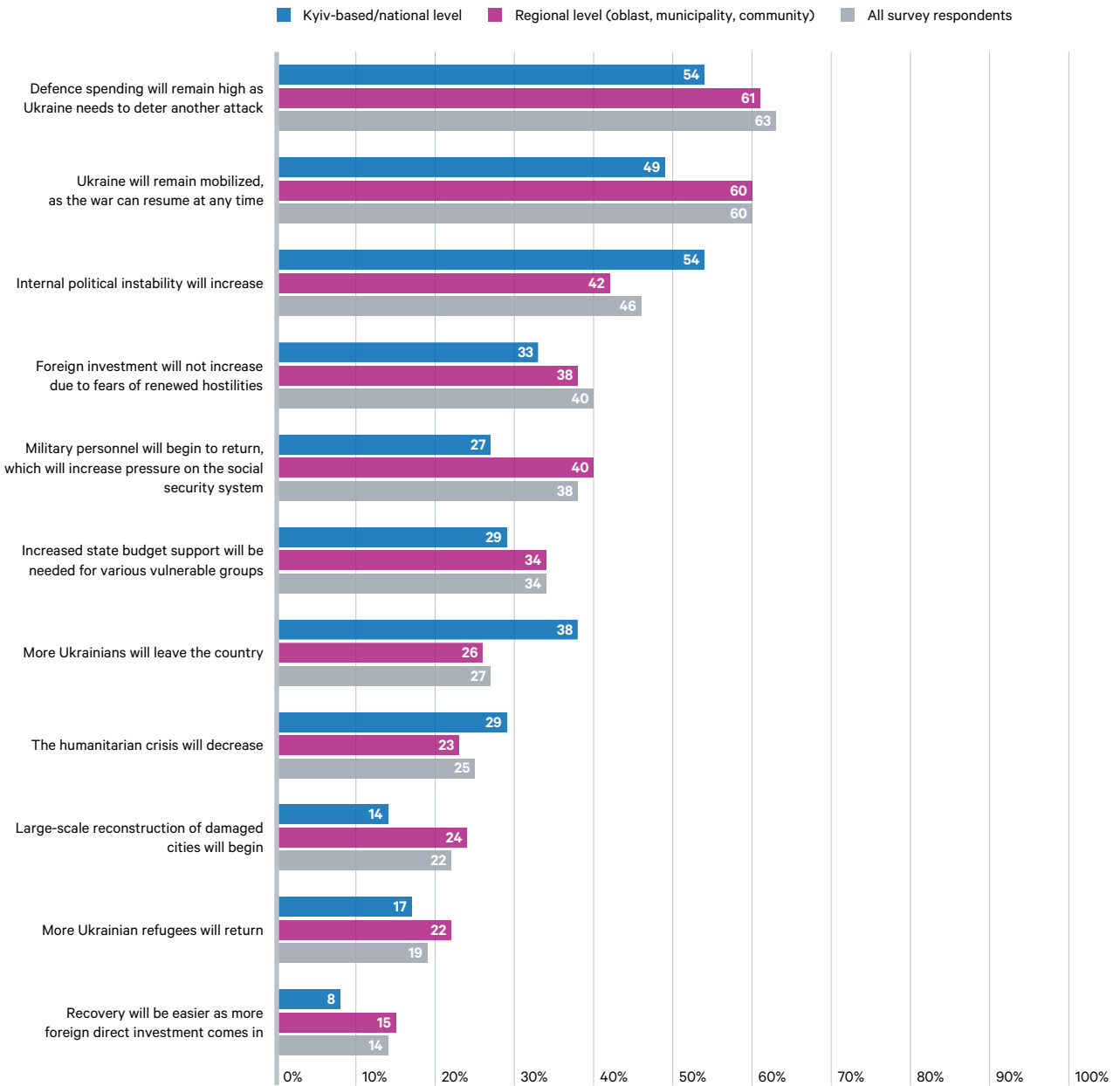


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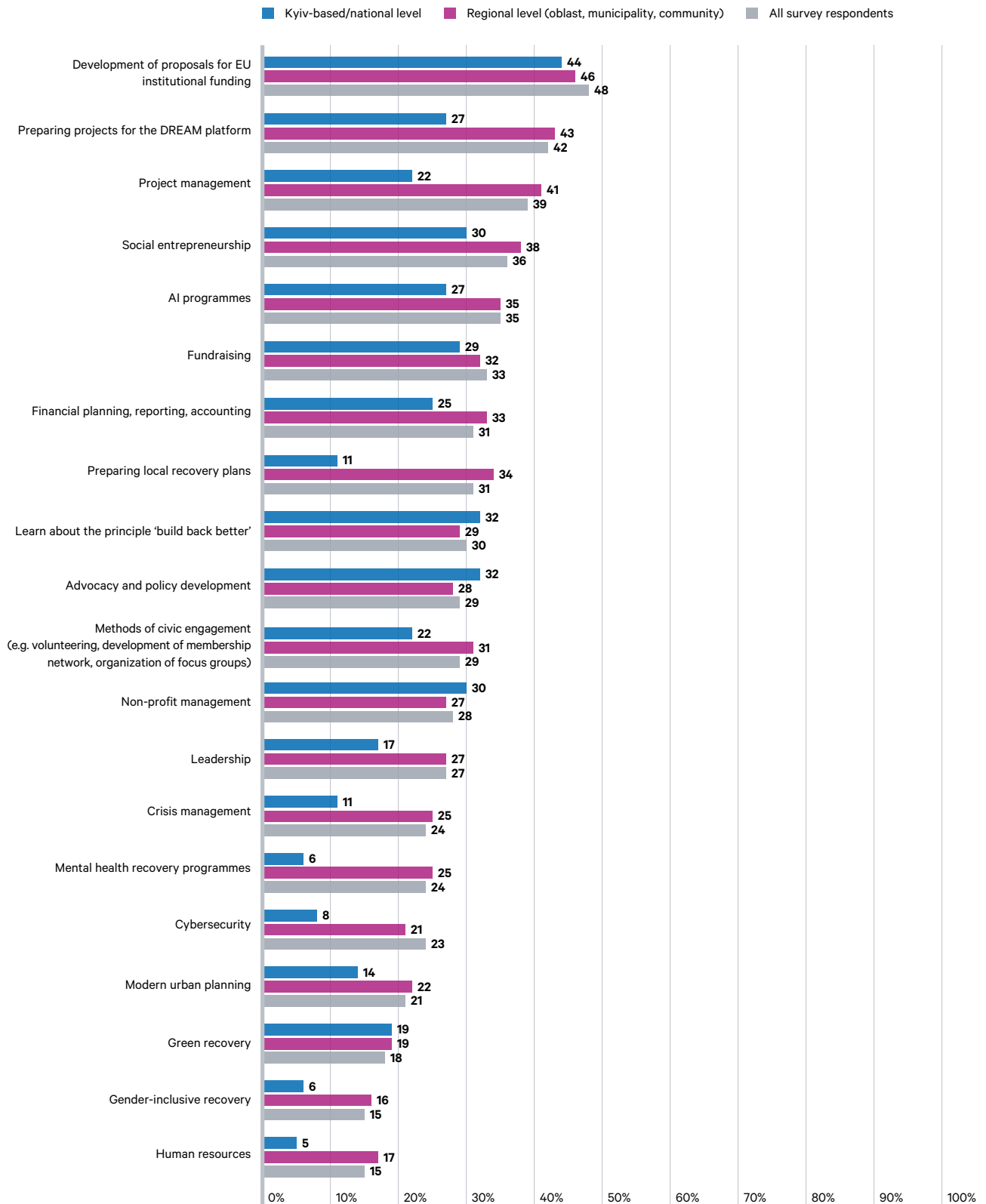
**Question 22. Which elements of societal resilience should be prioritized during wartime? [multiple choice]**



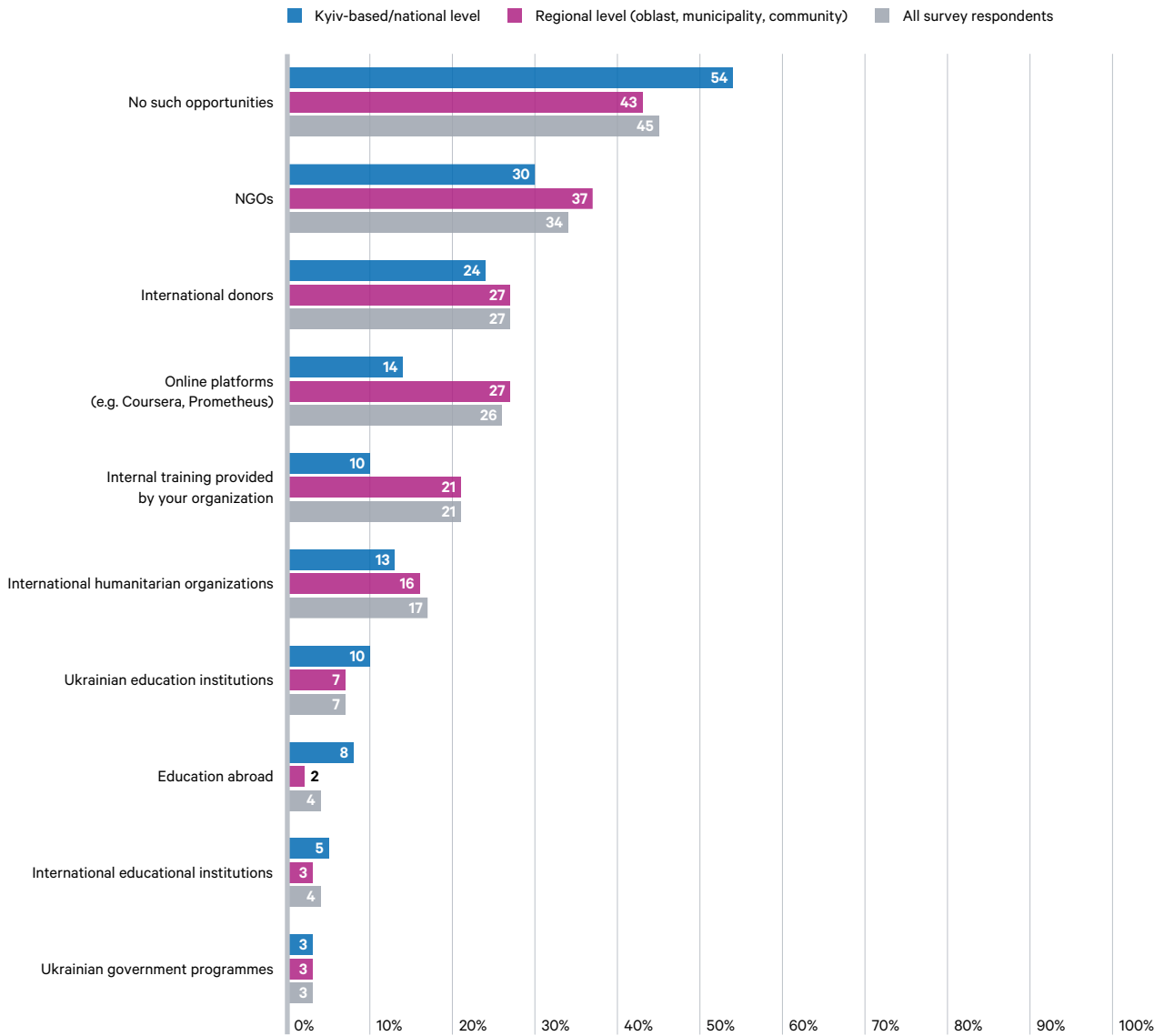
**Question 23.** What are the implications of a ceasefire on recovery (without a final peaceful settlement) for the internal situation in Ukraine? [multiple choice]



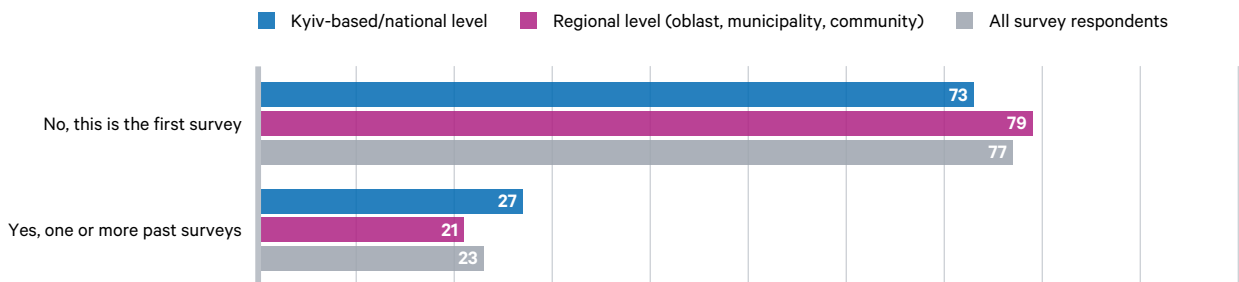
**Question 24.** What kind of training and skills (either personal or organizational) do you require for implementing recovery projects? [multiple choice]



**Question 25.** Have you or members of your organization had the opportunity to upskill to manage recovery projects? If NO, please select the appropriate option. If YES, please indicate who offered this training [multiple choice]



**Question 26.** Did you participate in one or more of the previous Chatham House surveys about civil society's involvement in Ukraine's recovery process?



## About the authors

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Cover image: Teenagers from the village of Prybuzke in Mykolaiv oblast take part in activities as part of an annual meeting of the UActive network, March 2026.

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