Key findings from the Longitudinal Study of Refugees and Returnees from Ukraine

Conference
April 3, 2024
Kyiv

Current situation of refugees from Ukraine: from emergency response and protection to return and (re)integration
Plan

1. Introduction
2. Who are the respondents?
3. Refugees from Ukraine abroad
4. Reasons and trajectories of return
5. Situation upon return to Ukraine
6. Dashboard and outputs
1. Introduction
The journey of a woman, aged 47, who fled with her son from a currently occupied area and eventually returned to Ukraine

21 June, 2022
They bombed us from the first day [of the full-scale war in 2022]. At first, we thought it would end quickly, like in 2014, so we waited. But it didn’t stop, we were in the basements. When they made a “corridor” [humanitarian corridor] for departure, we left.

Everything is fine here, everything is good [in Poland, Warsaw]. We are very grateful. The center where I live [a refugee camp] helps: they give food, bed linen, washing machines, and dryers. [...] It’s hard to plan anything. In the long run, we want to go back home. We hope that everything will be over and we will come back.

26 July, 2022
I need to get my passport made. I also need urgent treatment - I am trying to find a doctor now. I want to see my son. My child is at the front line. Maybe we will return abroad again if I have money for a ticket.

26 August, 2022
I am from Lysychansk and I have nowhere to go. I have only an IDP income for me and my child. If the situation doesn’t worsen [I’ll stay here], where do we go? Lysychansk is occupied, and the housing is damaged. They give me humanitarian aid once a month. They [aid providers] help families with many children mostly [family does not have many children].

30 November, 2022
My son in the military service was wounded. The commandant of the dormitory in Vinnytsya where I lived was against us living in with his injury there. I called the military administration and they booked us a separate room with everything we needed in Kyiv. Other Luhansk residents also live here.

1 September, 2023
I moved out of the collective centre to a rented accommodation.
1. What are the movement trajectories of people displaced from Ukraine by the war? What is the decision-making process to stay vs. move on?

2. What are the specific challenges respondents face in the locations they decide to settle?

3. What are the facilitators and barriers to integration at the local level?

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1. What is the decision-making process of respondents on returning and settling back in Ukraine? What were the predictors of their return upon their arrival?

2. What are the main differences in the situations of those returnees to Ukraine who came back to the pre-war settlements vs. those who returned elsewhere?

3. What are the intentions and future aspirations of those returned?
Methodology

Survey sampling

- Convenience sampling
- Consent collection during border crossing in POL, SVK, HUN, ROM, MDA
- Online campaigns (Viber, Facebook, and Kyivstar)
- Consent collection in train stations

Longitudinal interviews

- Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) in UKR/RUS
- 22 Rounds of data collection (including pilots R1 & R2): data up to December 2023 and January 2024
- R23 ongoing
- Multi-sector questionnaire

Thematic focus

- Thematic outputs: Reasons for return, refugees in Poland, former refugees in Ukraine
- Specific rounds:
  - Save the Children
  - OECD module on diploma recognition
  - IFRC Debt module of questions

Total number of respondents per round

- R1 (Mar-Jun 22): 2089
- R2 (Jul 22): 2911
- R3 (Aug 22): 4098
- R4 (Sep 22): 5613
- R5 (Oct 22): 5850
- R6 (Nov 22): 5130
- R7 (Dec 22): 5115
- R8 (Jan 23): 4776
- R9 (Feb 23): 5370
- R10 (Mar 23): 5479
- R11 (Apr 23): 5549
- R12 (May 23): 5535
- R13 (Jun 23): 5540
- R14 (Jul 23): 5445
- R15 (Aug 23): 5597
- R16 (Aug 23): 5858
- R17 (Sep-Nov 23): 5613
- R18 (Dec 23-Jan 24): 5858
- R19 (Dec 23-Jan 24): 5613

refugees  returnees
2. Who are the respondents?
Demographics

Number of children in the households, % of households

- No children: 33%, 36%, 30%, 22%, 7%, 10%, 6%, 1%
- One child: 60%, 37%, 30%, 23%, 7%, 10%, 6%, 1%
- Two children: 36%, 30%, 22%, 23%, 7%, 10%, 6%, 1%
- Three and more: 30%, 22%, 23%, 7%, 10%, 6%, 1%

Refugees household composition

- Older men: 2%, 12%, 12%, 19%, 41%, 41%, 12%, 2%
- Older women: 4%, 4%, 12%, 12%, 41%, 41%, 12%, 2%
- Men: 2%, 12%, 12%, 19%, 41%, 41%, 12%, 2%
- Women: 4%, 12%, 12%, 19%, 41%, 41%, 12%, 2%
- Children: 19%, 41%, 41%, 12%, 12%, 12%, 12%, 2%

Returnees to Ukraine household composition

- Older men: 2%, 19%, 13%, 18%, 64%
- Older women: 5%, 39%, 18%, 64%
- Men: 2%, 19%, 13%, 18%
- Women: 5%, 39%, 18%
- Children: 17%, 9%

2.6 average household size in Ukraine (2021)
2.8 average household size of refugees (December 2023)
2.9 average household size of returnees to Ukraine (January 2024)
Respondents by country
3. Refugees from Ukraine in host countries
Over time, respondents increasingly tend to rent (Poland) and stay in housing provided by authorities (Germany).

Working-age refugees report higher rates of employment over time.

Employment-to-population ratio of Ukrainian refugees of working age (18-64) over time.

Living arrangements of Ukrainian refugees over time

(n = 1,535)

- Rented accommodation
- Provided by authorities
- Volunteer-provided
- With family/friends
- Employer-provided
- Collective centre
- Provided by NGO
- Hotel or hostel

January 2023: 44% rented accommodation
June 2023: 50% rented accommodation
December 2023: 54% rented accommodation

Remotely in Ukraine or elsewhere, business, freelance: 37% in January, 43% in June, 48% in December
Working in-country: 7% in January, 8% in June, 7% in December
Even as employment rises, refugees abroad continue reporting urgent needs
Ukrainian refugees find themselves in roles below their qualifications.

The proportion of Ukrainian refugees employed in elementary occupations increased almost tenfold.

Poland zoom-in: employment increases, but occupations are mismatched.

Pre-war and current occupation categories of refugees in Poland:

- Elementary occupations: Pre-war 5%, Current 43%
- Managers: Pre-war 3%, Current 14%
- Plant and machine operators and assemblers: Pre-war 3%, Current 6%
- Professionals: Pre-war 16%, Current 35%
- Technicians and associate professionals: Pre-war 7%, Current 3%
- Services and sales workers: Pre-war 24%, Current 17%
- Craft and related trades workers: Pre-war 7%, Current 6%
- Clerical support workers: Pre-war 5%, Current 4%

Increase/decrease:
- Elementary occupations: Increase by 88%
- Managers: Increase by 373%
- Plant and machine operators and assemblers: Increase by 100%
- Professionals: Increase by 119%
- Technicians and associate professionals: Decrease by 57%
- Services and sales workers: Decrease by 21%
- Craft and related trades workers: Decrease by 25%
- Clerical support workers: Decrease by 94%
Poland zoom-in: low income levels bring financial challenges, particularly for single caregivers and households with people with disabilities

19% of the households reported income lower than EUR 200 per person.

12% of households reported receiving financial assistance from family or friends in Ukraine. 5% rely on it as their main source of income, particularly single caregivers of children.

92% of refugees from Ukraine in Poland were unable to save any money last month.
4. Reasons and trajectories of return
Returning to Ukraine, where and why?

The choice of host country abroad is statistically related to the decision to return to Ukraine

Lower probability of return:
- Germany
- Czechia

Higher probability of return:
- Poland
- Romania
- Moldova
- Slovakia

The refugee’s oblast of origin is statistically related to their decision to return to Ukraine

Lower probability of return:
- Khersonska oblast
- Luhanska oblast
- Zaporizka oblast
- Kharkivska oblast
- Donetska oblast

Higher probability of return:
- Mykolaivska oblast
- Volynska oblast
- Zhytomyrska oblast
- Lvivska oblast
- Dnipropetrovska oblast
Personal and emotional reasons for returning are most often reported...

Self-reported reasons for returning to Ukraine*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desire to reunite with family</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homesick</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to old work /unable to work online</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No employment abroad</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of safety</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No accommodation abroad</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>To attend education/school in Ukraine</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to medical treatments and supplies</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check the condition at home</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain/ retrieve documentation</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*multiple choice question

Expressed need for family reunification statistically related to the decision to return to Ukraine
...but socio-economic reasons push towards the decision to return

- Refugees who stayed in collective sites or other temporary housing options are more inclined to return than those who stayed in rented flats or apartments supported by governments.

- Refugees with lower incomes (on average 200 Euro) are more inclined to return than those having slightly higher incomes (330 Euro).

- Refugees employed remotely in Ukraine or being caregivers to children are more inclined to return than those who are employed in their host country.

- Lack of language proficiency statistically related to the decision to return to Ukraine.
5. Former refugees returned to Ukraine
Many former refugees go back to places where they do not feel safe

Safety perception of IDPs (former refugees) and home returnees (former refugees) in the current place of residence, by macro-region of return

Round 20, Dec 23 / Jan 24 (n= 2,208)
Returnees to Ukraine are coming back directly to their home settlements or the same macro-region of their home settlement. Those are predominantly the most war-affected regions of Ukraine (Eastern and Southern).

81% of returnees to Ukraine returned to their home settlements.

19% of returnees to Ukraine returned elsewhere in the country.

Macro-region of origin of IDPs (former refugees) and home returnees (former refugees)

Round 20, Dec 23 / Jan 24 (n= 2,217)
Former refugees who become IDPs also return to frontline oblasts
IDPs (former refugees) have lower income levels and tend to reside in rented accommodation

5,502 UAH  median income per capita for home returnees (former refugees)

5,292 UAH  median income per capita for IDPs (former refugees)

62% of IDPs (former refugees) were residing in rented accommodation, with 99% of them paying both rent and utility bills.
IDPs (former refugees) rely more on social support, especially IDP payments

Sources of income for returnees to Ukraine

Round 20, Dec 23 / Jan 24 (n = 2,217)

Salary
IDPs
74%
IDPs returnees
63%
Home
58%
Remittances
14%
IDPs
34%
IDPs returnees
10%
Home
11%
IDPs
9%
IDPs returnees
6%
Home
Pensions and disability payments
11%
IDPs
32%
IDPs returnees
14%
Home
No secondary income
34%
IDPs
69%
IDPs returnees
11%
Home
Other
7%
IDPs
5%
IDPs returnees
7%
Home
IDPs (former refugees) rely more on social support, especially IDP payments
6. Dashboard and outputs
Outputs and Data

Dashboard
Longitudinal survey results dashboard – Rounds 21-22

Dataset extracts
• Longitudinal frequency tables
• Refugee and returnee data

Outputs
• Longitudinal Factsheet: Round 13 (Ukrainian version)
• Longitudinal Factsheet: Round 14 (Ukrainian version)
• Longitudinal Factsheet: Round 15 (Ukrainian version)
• Longitudinal Factsheet: Round 16 (Ukrainian version)
• Longitudinal Factsheet: Round 17 (Ukrainian version)

Thematic Outputs:
• Longitudinal Brief: Round 18 – Predictors of return to Ukraine (Ukrainian version)
• Longitudinal Brief: Round 19 – Poland zoom-in: Ukrainian Refugees (Ukrainian version)
• Longitudinal Brief: Round 20 – Back to Ukraine, but not home (Ukrainian version)
Donors: Belgian Red Cross, German Red Cross, IFRC, USAID, Save the Children

Partners: UNHCR, JNFP, Canada, OECD, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
For any questions on the Longitudinal Study please contact

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