

# “Social integration of internally displaced persons in Ukraine: Problems and challenges for governing local communities”

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| <b>ARTICLE INFO</b> | Iryna Roshchyk, Yuriy Bilan, Vita Krol and Halyna Mishchuk (2024). Social integration of internally displaced persons in Ukraine: Problems and challenges for governing local communities. <i>Problems and Perspectives in Management</i> , 22(1), 728-740. doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(1).2024.57">10.21511/ppm.22(1).2024.57</a>  |
| <b>DOI</b>          | <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(1).2024.57">http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(1).2024.57</a>   |
| <b>RELEASED ON</b>  | Friday, 29 March 2024   |
| <b>RECEIVED ON</b>  | Thursday, 05 October 2023   |
| <b>ACCEPTED ON</b>  | Wednesday, 22 November 2023   |
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| <b>JOURNAL</b>      | "Problems and Perspectives in Management"   |
| <b>ISSN PRINT</b>   | 1727-7051   |
| <b>ISSN ONLINE</b>  | 1810-5467   |
| <b>PUBLISHER</b>    | LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”  |
| <b>FOUNDER</b>      | LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”  |



NUMBER OF REFERENCES

**53**



NUMBER OF FIGURES

**1**



NUMBER OF TABLES

**3**

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## BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES



LLC "CPC "Business Perspectives"  
Hryhorii Skovoroda lane, 10,  
Sumy, 40022, Ukraine  
[www.businessperspectives.org](http://www.businessperspectives.org)

**Received on:** 5<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023  
**Accepted on:** 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, 2023  
**Published on:** 29<sup>th</sup> of March, 2024

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**Conflict of interest statement:**  
Author(s) reported no conflict of interest

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# SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN UKRAINE: PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FOR GOVERNING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

## Abstract

This study aims to evaluate social integration and obstacles for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in local communities for further improvement of governing local communities regarding the integration of IDPs in new surroundings. The expert sample included 38 representatives of relevant authorities, scientists, NGOs, and volunteer organizations from 11 Ukrainian regions. The survey was conducted using the online questionnaire method via Google Forms. The results show the low participation of IDPs in most political and civil activities in new communities. The level of social integration according to these criteria is, respectively, 3.0 and 3.2 points out of 6 possible. At the same time, the level of economic integration (3.7 points) and integration into cultural and sports initiatives (3.6 points) are comparatively high, which are a feature illustrating the readiness to be involved in some kinds of activities in a new community. A significant result is also the fact that according to most signs of social integration, in the evaluations of experts, there are assessments of the activity of IDPs at a level that exceeds the activity of residents (6 points). Such results indicate the existence of a resource for developing communities due to the use of the potential of IDPs. This is especially characteristic of activities in counteraction to Russian aggression, involvement in grant and project activities, search for opportunities for legal income, and support of social justice principles in labor relations.

## Keywords

internally displaced persons, local communities' governance, social integration, social protection

## JEL Classification

J18, H56, R23, I38, J20

## INTRODUCTION

The problem of forced internal displacement is familiar in scientific research on managing human resources mobility. However, in recent decades, the problem has acquired a critical dimension. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, over the past 10 years (2013 to 2022), the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world has doubled from 33.3 to 71.1 million people (IDMC, 2023). Displaced people in Ukraine form a significant share of these persons. It is difficult to accurately estimate their number: according to the estimates of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, which uses official accounting data, the number of IDPs in Ukraine is 4.9 million, of which more than 3.5 million have moved after February 24, 2022 (Ministry of Social Policy, 2023). In contrast, the International Organisation for Migration publishes data on 6.5 million people (IOM, 2022). Both those and other estimates testify to the huge scale of forced migration. Given the fact that the displacements are caused by the Russian war against Ukraine and therefore have a protracted or irrevers-

ible nature in the future in connection with the loss of housing and the destruction of the territory, a significant problem that arises in the regulation of forced internal migration is the social integration of such people to new communities.

Despite the large number of studies on the social integration of migrants, the vast majority of such studies turned out to be devoted to migration between countries. Such a research focus is understandable, given that external migration involves numerous risks.

However, the growing intensity of forced internal migration draws increasing attention of scientists and practitioners to the problem of social integration of IDPs, where the barriers to successful integration into new communities are also significant, and their successful overcoming is often burdened by the influence of both objective and subjective reasons. The problems of the integration of IDPs in Ukraine became especially acute with the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022. Some IDPs were exposed to such extreme events twice – first as a result of the occupation of parts of the eastern regions in 2014, and later with the outbreak of war in 2022 (Porkuian et al., 2023). In this context, IDPs face numerous personal problems (moral and material) and are forced to adapt to new communities, which requires balanced approaches to the application of mechanisms of inclusive development, improvement of local self-government practices regarding IDPs, which today is reflected in scientific discussions on the problems of IDPs in Ukraine (Alekseyenko et al., 2021; Porkuian et al., 2023; Voznyak et al., 2023).

Concomitantly, the directions of successful integration of IDPs, as well as an unbiased comprehensive assessment of the level of integration and obstacles, remain an understudied issue, which increases the difficulties in solving this problem.

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## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Migratory changes in the composition of the population, which require an appropriate response in the public administration, are one of the most discussed objects of economic science, especially under the conditions of critical changes in the safety of the living environment and work. International law instruments are actively used to regulate negative changes (Alshoubaki & Harris, 2021), and the study of causes covers a comprehensive list of comfort factors (Mishchuk & Grishnova, 2015). The consequences of migration attract no less attention in view of both the negatives and potential benefits associated with migratory changes in the composition of communities. Among the typical areas of such research are changes in the labor market (Al-Dalahmeh & Dajnoki, 2021; Urbański, 2021), especially regarding the employment of highly educated workers (Oliynyk et al., 2022; Attamah et al., 2023), changes in earnings unfavorable for the locals (Kersan-Škabić & Blažević Burić, 2022), and the tax burden associated with changes in social policy (Szymańska, 2022). Such changes are especially noticeable for communities dependent on government financial assistance in forming their budgets (Gavkalova et al., 2022).

In the studies devoted to the public administration of local communities and the impact of internal displacement, considerable attention is paid to violations of community development plans (Khymynets & Holovka, 2023) and social justice for the locals in various manifestations. Typical examples are the study of differences in the ease of starting and running a business, the availability of financial resources (Ashourizadeh et al., 2022), and the implementation of social policy (Vučković & Škuflić, 2021; Yurchyk et al., 2023). Such consequences determine the need to improve community development strategies, considering migration (Gavkalova et al., 2023). Immigration often violates the principles of social justice established in society, especially regarding the distribution of social benefits beyond guaranteed basic rights for all (Mishchuk et al., 2019), leading to ambiguous changes in the socio-cultural environment (Burliai et al., 2023). As a result, such changes often cause restrictive shifts in extra-regional migration governance (Brumat & Feline Freier, 2023) and are embodied in the form of various barriers for migrants (Badalič, 2023; Palmer & Piper, 2023; Sabary & Ključnikov, 2023).

Such consequences are certainly much more vivid in the case of external migration. However, internal displacement has recently become an important moral, political, and economic international topic, often discussed in the academic literature. Among related concepts, the line between IDPs and refugees is often thin, but the differences are significant. They are quite clearly defined by Draper (2023), as according to this approach, IDPs, like refugees, are forcibly displaced from their permanent place of residence. But, unlike refugees, the movement of IDPs takes place within the national borders of their country. IDPs can claim protection from their own government, while refugees cannot claim such protection because they have severed relations with their government. Forced displacement of IDPs is not planned and foreseen but reactive because it is caused by the destruction of stable conditions to implement life plans (Draper, 2023).

The humanitarian status of internally displaced persons is designed to meet urgent needs and protect people forcibly displaced within the borders of one country (UNHCR, 2020). However, despite the guarantee of rights according to status, there is an opinion that, given the long periods, affected people perceive IDP status as an unnecessary and discriminatory tool of differentiation and marginalization, depriving them of social citizenship (Tarkhanova, 2023).

Internal displacement can occur for various reasons. Thus, according to IDMC (2023), 60.9 million people were internally displaced in 2022. Among them, the largest share was internal displacement due to natural disasters (53.5%). The rest (46.5% or 28.3 million people) are internal displacements connected to conflicts and violence. Over the past 3 years, their volume has increased by 20.8 million people, or almost tripled. In particular, the volume of internal displacement in Ukraine is 16.9 million people due to the large-scale invasion since February 24, 2022. Internal displacement can occur not only for critical reasons such as war but also in connection with development projects (such as dams and mines). However, precise estimates of the number of the displaced for these conditionally positive reasons are difficult to make.

In connection with internal displacement, which is reactive, the population has various additional needs and problems related to their satisfaction.

Thus, according to Husieva et al. (2020), IDPs face various challenges related to their survival, physical security, livelihoods, or restricted freedom of movement. Among the biggest problems, the authors name housing, food, medical care, and employment. Perelli-Harris et al. (2023) particularly emphasize housing, employment, and income as critical issues for IDPs. Internal displacement also causes such a vital problem for affected persons as deteriorating mental health (Quirke et al., 2022; Perelli-Harris et al., 2023).

Frederico et al. (2023) argue that displaced persons may experience loss of property and livelihood, separation from family, discrimination, human rights violations, loss of dignity and hope, and social and emotional consequences. Kudelia et al. (2018) single out the problems of low involvement of IDPs in decision-making in the communities where they live, growing level of intolerance, when newcomers become the “first culprits,” turn into a marginalized group excluded from community life, which is an irritant and cause of increased social tension.

The analysis of publications devoted to IDPs allows for the conclusion that the problems and the set of measures used to solve them largely depend on the personal characteristics of IDPs. Ngwu et al. (2023) recommend that such factors as gender, age, availability of children, and presence of emotional or financial assistance from relatives or friends have to be taken into account in the development of social support and adaptation strategies. According to Mykhnenko et al. (2022), it is the individual characteristics of IDPs (gender, basic labor-market cohort, origin location) that should be taken into account in order to understand patterns of displacement and create the necessary conditions for their return. Perelli-Harris et al. (2023) study the reason for displacement, family and network factors, and the economic and housing status of IDPs. In addition, age, education, distance to the line of contact, and density of IDPs are evaluated.

The concept of “social integration” in relation to IDPs does not cause much discussion today. Basically, social integration is understood as a sense of belonging, the inclusion of people in various types of social activities, and social cohesion; as the ability of displaced persons and their host to live

in the same community environment, to tolerate, trust, and support each other, and to live peacefully together (Jayakody et al., 2022). In the process of integration (which is a long-term process), a stage of social adaptation may occur, i.e., a short-term process of overcoming shock, primarily cultural, from entering a different cultural environment to which it is necessary to adapt (Titir, 2016).

Even though the concept of social integration is quite simple and understandable to the scientific community, its assessment is debatable. It does not have an unambiguously adopted approach or, even more so, a set of indicators. Such gaps can be explained by distinct problems of integration that may arise in different communities, demographic groups of IDPs, and different research periods. Therefore, the object of the researchers' interest may significantly differ.

Thus, Kudelia et al. (2018) developed and tested in pilot cities of Ukraine the IDP Integration Index, which measures the possibilities of integration in urban areas according to the following sub-indices: access to urban infrastructure, capacity of city authorities, and interaction. This approach needs to be narrower and assess the integration of the aspects that divided Ukrainian society even before the war, in particular, cultural and other directions of interaction in communities.

Titir (2016) suggests evaluating the success of the integration of IDPs according to the following criteria: access to property compensation mechanisms, access to public services (medicine, education, etc.), means of survival (water, food, housing), and the availability of opportunities for employment and income generation. At the same time, separate indicators are also proposed for assessing the success of the integration of IDPs: the number of conflicts and the strength of tensions between IDPs and the host community, the value of social distance, the socio-demographic and economic well-being of resettled individuals and families, the percentage of IDPs who left the place to which they were resettled. Certain aspects of integration from the given list also draw some attention. In addition, some questions have appeared regarding the possibility of simultaneous use of aggregate indicators (e.g., conflicts with the locals, decisions on further displacement) and partial indicators (employment as a sign of integration in the labor market, etc.).

Some propose measuring the level of integration by the gap in the so-called "subjective well-being" of IDPs and the locals by the level of social well-being or social exclusion. Perelli-Harris et al. (2023) take into account a measure of subjective well-being as an overall life satisfaction based on the widely used question, "How satisfied are you with your life in general?"

Chuiko and Fedorenko (2020) suggest measuring the degree of social integration of IDPs into the local community by two main parameters: social well-being and social exclusion, which aggregate indicators of socio-economic, socio-psychological, cultural-communicative, and socio-political elements. The integration criteria are the lack of motivation to return to the previous place of residence, a high general level of trust in the community, employment (availability of jobs), provision of housing and general satisfaction with housing, a high level of current financial status, informal communication with community representatives, identity with the local population, and great endurance. A similar approach, but more generalized in two dimensions – personal and in relation to connections with the social environment – is given by Mitchneck et al. (2009).

Slobodian (2019) singles out two approaches to recognizing the success of IDP integration. According to the first, integration is considered successful when long-term solutions are reached regarding the integration of IDPs, which are aimed at protection and security, living conditions, access to means of livelihood, solving issues related to housing, land and property, access to documentation, and participation in public life. According to the second approach, the integration measurement consists of comparing the situation of IDPs with the locals, e.g., by the average income per household member. At the same time, integration is complete when the situation of IDPs is commensurate with the situation of the locals, considering differences in socio-economic characteristics.

The set of considered approaches to the analysis of the problem of internal displacement and assessment of the social integration of IDPs, to a certain degree, relates to scientific discussions about what consequences IDPs bring to the community: either negative in the form of an increased burden on local budgets, the need to make changes to the de-

velopment plans of the community, burden on the labor market (Ivlevs & Veliziotis, 2017; Khymynets & Holovka, 2023; Schuettler & Caron, 2020) or positive due to the emergence of a new development resource and economic success of communities (De Luna et al., 2016; Khymynets & Holovka, 2023; Přívara, 2020), including the integration of IDP entrepreneurs into the host society (Almohammad et al., 2021; Kachkar & Djafri, 2022).

On the way to social integration, the leading role belongs to local authorities as the main initiator of ensuring the rights of every resident who has legalized his stay in the community. In this regard, the role of local authorities in ensuring the social responsibility of both local stakeholders of territorial development and IDPs themselves is strengthened. One such aspect is the responsibility of the media, which can present IDPs as victims or as a threat, as highlighted by Amores et al. (2019).

In any case, there is no doubt about the need to assess the social integration (or vice versa – isolation) of IDPs, for which a reliable methodological toolkit, in particular, a system of assessment criteria, has not yet been developed. Regardless of the research ideas and goals, such a methodological approach should be based on the assessment of integration into communities in terms of the observance of fundamental rights and the possibility of using them, as well as beyond fundamental rights – on the assessment of the availability of social and economic assets (which corresponds to the ideas of social justice), the initiative to use such opportunities at a level not lower than the locals use.

Considering the above, the purpose of this study is to assess the current state and obstacles to the social integration of internally displaced persons in local communities, which can serve as a basis for further search for directions for improving local governance in matters of integration of IDPs in a new environment.

Achieving the goal requires testing the following hypotheses:

*H1: Taking into account the long war in Ukraine and the experience of local administration regarding the integration of IDPs, the actual level of their social integration is high.*

*H2: Obstacles in the social integration of IDPs are minor and mainly due to personal reasons.*

## 2. METHOD

An expert survey was conducted in September–October 2023 using the Google Forms service to test the hypotheses. Based on current directions of social integration, as well as tools of social protection and social integration of IDPs, defined in Ukrainian legislation, the study developed a system of criteria for assessing the integration of IDPs. It was tested in a pilot survey conducted before the start of the main survey (August 2023). Based on the experts' recommendations, the questions were adjusted.

To test *H1*, a system of criteria for assessing the social integration of IDPs was defined, which includes 5 component “blocks” of integration:

- political and religious integration;
- economic integration;
- integration into cultural and sports initiatives;
- integration into public life;
- socio-psychological integration.

Political and religious integration reflects the need for the participation of IDPs in the community's political life, development, adoption, and implementation of decisions in the community. Economic integration includes indicators of the material well-being of IDPs, the need for accommodation and security, the level of labor activity, etc. Integration into a community's cultural and sports initiatives includes the need for acceptance by the community and strengthening of the cultural identity of IDPs by the members of the host community. Integration into public life includes the need to create and build the social capital of a community. Socio-psychological integration includes instructions for IDPs' integration, motivation for individual and group activity, and the need for self-actualization.

Each of the criteria that form blocks of questions by component allows for determining the

**Table 1.** Distribution of respondents involved in the survey on social integration of IDPs

| Feature        | Category of respondents   | Number of respondents, persons | Share of respondents, % |
|----------------|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Gender         | Male  | 10                             | 28.9                    |
|                | Female  | 28                             | 71.1                    |
| Age            | under 35 years old  | 8                              | 21.1                    |
|                | 36-59 years old   | 26                             | 68.4                    |
|                | 60 years old and over   | 4                              | 10.5                    |
| Representation | Public social protection bodies or medical institutions   | 4                              | 10.5                    |
|                | National and regional authorities   | 7                              | 18.4                    |
|                | Local governments   | 7                              | 18.4                    |
|                | Scientific and education institutions (involved are only representatives dealing with the problems of IDPs) | 12                             | 31.6                    |
|                | Volunteering or other public organizations  | 8                              | 21.1                    |

systemic impact on the degree of integration of IDPs, which is reflected in the level of social well-being and makes it possible to assess the bilateral consequences of integration both for IDPs and communities.

Expert assessment of the integration level for each manifestation of integration within the selected criteria was carried out on a 6-point scale, where:

- score 1 corresponds to the indicator “the vast majority of IDPs do not take any part in the relevant component of relations, have a significantly lower level of interest compared to residents;”
- score 5 – “the vast majority of IDPs take an active part; the formed civic position corresponds to the level of an active resident;”
- score 6 – “some IDPs demonstrate higher activity than residents.”

This approach is a modification of the Likert scale. It additionally introduced a score of 6 points considering the specifics of the research object: some IDPs demonstrate higher social activity than representatives of local communities, which can be seen from certain integration practices in Ukraine, i.e., activities of relocated businesses, grant activity of relocated universities for the benefit of community development, etc.

In order to test *H2*, an assessment of the problems hindering the social adaptation and integration of IDPs into public life was carried out on a 5-point scale, where:

- score 1 – the problem is insignificant, has isolated manifestations, or is absent;
- score 5 – the problem is extremely urgent and widespread.

Possible obstacles in the process of conducting a pilot survey are defined as: own personal reasons (e.g., psychological); bureaucratic barriers to meeting needs; insufficient promotion of integration of IDPs by territorial communities; discrimination against and disrespect for IDPs.

38 representatives of the authorities, scientists and NGOs specializing in the field, and volunteer organizations from 11 Ukrainian regions were involved in the survey. While organizing the survey, special attention was paid to attracting experts from the regions with the largest number of IDPs. According to the IOM (2023) assessment, such regions as of 2023 are the city of Kyiv and the Kyiv region, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv regions. At the same time, the representatives of Vinnytsia, Zaporizhzhya, Lviv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Kherson, and Chernivtsi regions were also involved, which made it possible to comprehensively assess the problems of social integration of IDPs according to the main directions of their movements. Detailed characteristics of the respondents are given in Table 1.

The received assessments of experts were processed by statistical methods: of a coefficient and average values, to calculate the generalized values of integration according to the criteria determined by the experts and authors of the study; of relative values using a data analysis package available in MS Excel in order to estimate the distribution of expert judgments.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on a comprehensive socio-economic approach to assessing the social integration of IDPs, which requires considering all the main spheres of social interaction, the paper defined 5 blocks of assessment criteria. Their detailing was carried out with the selection of partial components within each block based on consultations with field experts. As a result, the estimates of the level of social integration of IDPs in Ukraine were obtained, which are given in Appendix A.

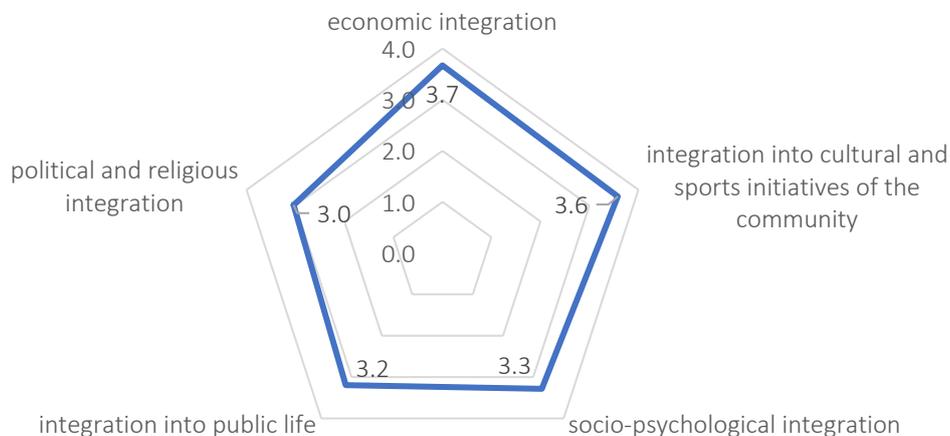
Within the scope of testing *H1*, results were obtained that allow it to be only partially confirmed. In general, the level of integration of IDPs into local communities does not exceed 4.18 points, which is the best partial score in the group of factors of integration into public life. It is also noticeable that 12 out of 25 assessed components are below the average (3.5 points is a simple arithmetic mean from the range of ratings from 1 to 6 points). At the same time, the worst is the level of integration (by the number of factors that received a lower than average rating) in the group of indicators of political and religious integration, integration into public life, and socio-psychological integration.

Concomitantly, the obtained results reveal that the activity of IDPs is highly rated in the vast majority of evaluation areas; the maximum rating of 6 points, which corresponds to a level of activity higher than the average resident of the host community, appears in the range of expert ratings for almost all factors, except for 4, which were evaluated in the blocks of socio-psychological and po-

litical integration. A crucial statistical characteristic of the obtained estimates is that the Standard Deviation and Sample Variance are relatively low for such a composition of experts; as Table 1 shows, the expert group included representatives of various professional and public spheres, with significant age differences, which ensures trust in the estimates as in truly complex and versatile ones, although differences in assessments were predicted. For example, it is known that the representatives of volunteer organizations and authorities have different views on many social processes in Ukraine, which did not allow for very close estimates at the beginning of the survey. However, this result is valuable, as the data presented in Appendix A illustrate a comprehensive assessment of the level of integration of IDPs. In a generalized form, the estimates are shown in Figure 1 according to the integration criteria.

Therefore, the integration into the political and religious life of communities is the lowest, according to experts, which was expected to some extent given the objective differences in political views and the efforts of politicians to strengthen them even in the pre-war period. In addition, the war introduced significant changes and specific barriers to the integration of IDPs, such as limiting their electoral rights (to vote and be elected for local elections), which is highly debatable from a human rights perspective.

From the experts' perspective, IDPs are best integrated into the economic sphere and cultural and sports initiatives; the lag behind full integration at the level of residents (with a maximum score of



**Figure 1.** Average expert assessments of integration of IDPs according to defined criteria, points

5.0 points) is insignificant. At the same time, significant differences between IDPs and the locals are noticeable in three other directions, which requires further attention to clarifying the reasons for isolation in various aspects of the life of local communities.

When assessing the problems that hinder social adaptation and integration of IDPs into public life (within the scope of *H2* verification), the results were processed according to the principle: the level of 3 points was not taken into account as a neutral assessment; levels of 1-2 points are collectively defined as a minor manifestation of the problem, the response to which is not a priority in governing local communities; ratings of 4 and 5 points collectively determine the most crucial problems that need to be solved. The distribution of ratings in the defined intervals is shown in Table 2, in which the dominance of one of the intervals is highlighted in color: light green filling reveals those with minor manifestations of problems, whereas grey filling shows the most acute obstacle to social integration.

36.9% of respondents identified bureaucratic barriers to meeting needs as the most common and urgent problem. 68.4% indicated discrimination of and disrespect for IDPs by the locals as the least urgent problem. 36.8% of respondents attributed their own personal reasons (psychological, etc.) to minor and isolated problems that prevent social adaptation and integration of IDPs into public life. 42.1% of respondents defined the problem of insufficient support for integrating IDPs on the part of territorial communities as irrelevant.

In total, 43.4% of the interviewed experts evaluate the proposed problems that hinder social adaptation and integration of IDPs into the new social environment as insignificant and having isolated manifestations. However, according to experts, the most urgent problem hindering social adaptation and integration of IDPs into public life is the presence of bureaucratic barriers that prevent the satisfaction of needs.

Thus, *H2* is also partially confirmed: obstacles to the social integration of IDPs are predominantly insignificant in most possible directions of their occurrence. Concomitantly, the obstacle in the form of personal reasons (psychological, moral, ethical, and other factors of personal non-acceptance of new communities) turned out to be insufficiently significant to consider it an essential barrier to the integration of the majority of IDPs.

Earlier studies aimed to study aspects of labor migration (Přivara & Trnovský, 2021), rural-urban migration (Bodjongo et al., 2021), and forced migration due to war (Nikolaiets et al., 2023). A clear pattern can be traced from the previously cited studies – an emphasis on the consequences and manifestations of isolation in the groups of IDPs themselves (Kupenko et al., 2023). Such studies are mainly limited to analyzing the possibilities of improving the social protection of IDPs.

Most of the measures taken so far have been immediate response measures that have been unsystematic and not intended to provide long-term solutions to the problem of internal displacement.

**Table 2.** Assessment of the level of problems hindering social adaptation and integration of IDPs into public life, % of the number of respondents

| Problem hindering social adaptation and integration of IDPs into a new social environment | Level of problem manifestation                                |      |      |      |  |
|---|---|------|------|------|--|
|   | 1 - the problem is insignificant, has isolated manifestations | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5 - the problem is current, widespread |
| Own personal reasons (psychological, etc.)  | 18.4  | 18.4 | 36.8 | 18.4 | 7.9                                    |
| Total indicators  | 36.8  |      |      |      | 26.3                                   |
| Bureaucratic barriers to meeting needs  | 15.8  | 10.5 | 36.8 | 23.7 | 13.2                                   |
| Total indicators  | 26.3  |      |      |      | 36.9                                   |
| Insufficient support for the integration of IDPs on the part of territorial communities   | 13.2  | 28.9 | 31.6 | 23.7 | 2.6                                    |
| Total indicators  | 42.1  |      |      |      | 26.3                                   |
| Discrimination against and disrespect for IDPs  | 26.3  | 42.1 | 10.5 | 15.8 | 5.3                                    |
| Total indicators  | 68.4  |      |      |      | 21.1                                   |
| % of experts' ratings   | 18.4  | 25   | 28.9 | 20.4 | 7.2                                    |
| Total indicators  | 43.4  |      |      |      | 27.6                                   |

At the same time, long-term solutions aimed at providing housing, employment, and social integration of displaced people, realizing the positive potential of forced internal migration, taking into account the characteristics of individual regions and international experience, which will ensure adaptation and socio-economic development, will soon become a priority direction of the policy regarding internally displaced persons.

Local authorities should collaborate with state authorities and civil society organizations to integrate IDPs successfully. This includes outlining the urgent needs of IDPs, legal support, help in solving psychological problems, creating opportunities for life and work, and easy integration with the local population. Communities should consider IDPs as an additional resource for their

socio-economic development, which will be possible if all the conditions of IDPs and their desire to integrate are met. Integration of IDPs into new communities, assessment of factors by which it is possible to measure how successfully IDPs have integrated, equalized in rights and opportunities with residents, feel involved in the new environment, and involved in decision-making regarding the community development is still an understudied aspect.

According to the results of this study, the assessment of the current state and obstacles to the social integration of internally displaced persons into local communities can become the basis for further search for directions for improving local governance in terms of integrating IDPs into a new environment.

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## CONCLUSION

The study aimed to assess the current state and barriers to social integration of IDPs, which should be taken into account to improve local communities' administration. The survey results indicate the predominantly insufficient social integration of IDPs (primarily in matters of political integration and participation in public initiatives, as well as socio-psychological integration). Among the positive results, it is worth mentioning the presence of high expert evaluations in many directions of social integration; the level of 6 points, which exceeds the average level of the activities of residents, is reflected in the evaluations. Such results indicate a high potential for developing communities, provided that the potential of IDPs is properly used and conditions are created for their interest in a permanent residence. The main obstacle that should be considered in developing programs and strategies for strengthening the social integration of IDPs is the presence of bureaucratic barriers to meeting needs. Some of them can be eliminated with appropriate legislative changes (such as limiting the electoral rights of IDPs). However, most of them depend on the initiatives of local authorities. They can be resolved under the condition of timely monitoring and provision of the needs of IDPs, such as providing support in documenting data on destroyed houses, helping with placement of children in kindergartens and schools, etc.

The results generally indicate insufficient attention to the social integration of IDPs in both scientific and applied aspects. Periodic comprehensive assessments of the satisfaction of needs and the level of integration of IDPs into local communities will significantly reduce the severity of the problem and strengthen community development resources through the use of displaced persons' human and social capital.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study is funded by the National Research Foundation of Ukraine under project No.2021.01/0343 “Ensuring social protection of ATO/JFO participants and social integration of IDP under the condition of increasing threats to social security.”

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## APPENDIX A

**Table A1.** Assessments of social integration of IDPs

| No.  | Criteria and components of integration   | Mean | min | max | Standard Deviation | Sample Variance |
|--|--|------|-----|-----|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Political and religious integration</b>                               |  |      |     |     |                    |                 |
| 1  | They actively monitor political events at the community level, participate in discussions and debates, including in social media.  | 3.08 | 1   | 6   | 1.44               | 2.07            |
| 2  | They show respect for representatives of different faiths and develop a tolerant attitude (at least in their own cultural and everyday space).   | 3.53 | 1   | 6   | 1.25               | 1.55            |
| 3  | They actively participate in initiatives to ensure equality of rights and freedoms in the community to eradicate discriminatory practices.   | 3.00 | 1   | 5   | 1.27               | 1.62            |
| 4  | They are actively involved in decision-making at the local level and development of local policies.  | 2.55 | 1   | 6   | 1.18               | 1.39            |
| <b>Economic integration</b>  |  |      |     |     |                    |                 |
| 5  | They are actively looking for work and other legal ways of earning income.   | 3.74 | 1   | 6   | 1.31               | 1.71            |
| 6  | In labor relations, they act on the principles of equal rights and fair competition and spread them in their environment.  | 3.84 | 1   | 6   | 1.17               | 1.38            |
| 7  | They make efforts to protect consumer rights.  | 3.34 | 1   | 6   | 1.19               | 1.42            |
| 8  | Managers of relocated enterprises and organizations receive the same attitude from the authorities and the population as local business entities; they respect the outlook and values of the locals, fully integrating into new conditions.  | 3.63 | 1   | 6   | 1.24               | 1.54            |
| 9  | Relocated businesses and IDPs receive income and participate in forming local budgets on the same principles as local businesses and the population, without any pressure or preferences in their activities.  | 3.61 | 1   | 6   | 1.33               | 1.76            |
| 10   | They are actively involved in grant and project activities for the self-actualization and development of the local community.  | 3.87 | 1   | 6   | 1.40               | 1.96            |
| 11   | They make efforts to create a new business, implement business projects, and attract investments to the community.   | 3.68 | 1   | 6   | 1.47               | 2.17            |
| <b>Integration into cultural and sports initiatives of the community</b> |  |      |     |     |                    |                 |
| 12   | They are involved in significant cultural events in the community, artistic (theatrical, musical, visual) projects, take an active part in their organization, holding or attendance.  | 3.58 | 1   | 6   | 1.22               | 1.49            |
| 13   | They support local initiatives to develop a healthy lifestyle and sports (bicycle races, marathons, etc.).   | 3.58 | 1   | 6   | 1.24               | 1.55            |
| <b>Integration into public life</b>                                      |  |      |     |     |                    |                 |
| 14   | They are involved in supporting the activities of NGOs (including on the issues of IDPs) and volunteer activities.   | 3.79 | 1   | 6   | 1.26               | 1.58            |
| 15   | They actively participate in local initiatives for the improvement of the territory.   | 2.95 | 1   | 6   | 1.21               | 1.46            |
| 16   | They support environmental initiatives aimed at environmental safety, animal protection and preservation of the natural ecosystem.   | 2.79 | 1   | 6   | 1.21               | 1.47            |
| 17   | They refuse to consume certain goods and services for political or environmental reasons (e.g., damage to the community's environment, uneconomical use of resources).   | 2.71 | 1   | 6   | 1.47               | 2.16            |
| 18   | They are willing to advocate for community interests, sign petitions, and submit and/or support community budget projects.   | 2.84 | 1   | 6   | 1.46               | 2.14            |
| 19   | They are ready to participate in human rights projects and/or initiatives, actively defend their rights and the rights of the residents of the host community, get involved in public control initiatives, and make efforts to fairly resolve controversial situations regarding the protection of rights and freedoms.                | 3.11 | 1   | 6   | 1.48               | 2.20            |
| 20   | They take an active part in supporting the Armed Forces and countering russian aggression in available forms (opposing russian propaganda ideas, spreading patriotic ideas and participating in fundraising for the needs of the Armed Forces and supporting the rehabilitation of wounded soldiers released from civilian captivity). | 4.18 | 1   | 6   | 1.39               | 1.94            |
| <b>Socio-psychological integration</b>                                   |  |      |     |     |                    |                 |
| 21   | They try to steadily enter a new social space and form stable friendships and a positive environment with life values, which prevents further displacement.  | 3.50 | 1   | 5   | 1.11               | 1.23            |
| 22   | They tolerate gender and age differences and are ready to support relevant public initiatives.   | 3.68 | 1   | 6   | 1.30               | 1.68            |
| 23   | They show trust in authorities and participate in public councils and activities of local social communities.  | 2.95 | 1   | 6   | 1.23               | 1.51            |
| 24   | They show trust in the community and feel supported, which allows self-realization.  | 3.13 | 1   | 5   | 1.12               | 1.25            |
| 25   | They join psychological recovery initiatives and share best practices.   | 3.16 | 1   | 5   | 1.08               | 1.16            |