



INTEREST AND CAPACITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE SOCIAL SERVICES

**Report on the results
of sociological research**



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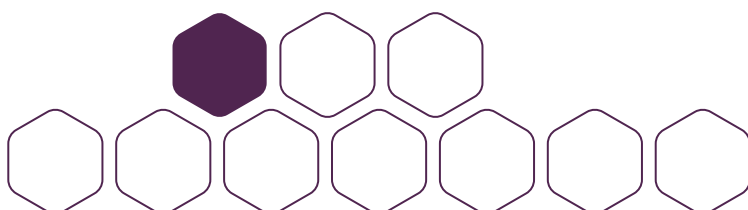
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GLOSSARY

- ATC** – Amalgamated Territorial Community
- CAS** – Center for Administrative Services
- CEA** – Central Executive Authorities
- CF** – Charitable foundation
- CFS** – Child and Family Service
- CO** – Charitable organization
- Combatant – participant of the fighting, soldier
- CSO** – Civil society organization
- CSS** – Center for Social Services
- DLC** – Difficult life circumstances
- HIV** – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- IDP** – Internally displaced persons
- ICC** – Information and Computing Center
- IE** – Individual entrepreneur
- IOM** – International Organization for Migration
- ISAR** – Initiative Center to Support Social Action
- LSG** – Local self-government
- LU** – Law of Ukraine
- MSP** – Ministry of Social Policy
- NGO** – Non-governmental organization
- NHSU** – National Health Service of Ukraine
- NSSU** – National Social Service of Ukraine
- OCHA** – United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- OMA** – Oblast Military Administration
- OSA** – Oblast State Administration
- PIT** – Personal income tax
- RA** – Regulatory Acts
- Register** – Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services
- SCS** – State Construction Standards
- SE** – State Enterprise
- SWS** – Social work specialist
- TC** – Territorial Community
- UNDP** – United Nations Development Program
- UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- UNICEF** – United Nations Children’s Fund
- UNO** – United Nations Organization
- VAT** – Value-added tax

METHODOLOGY

The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, at ISAR Ednannia's request, conducted research on interest and capacity of civil society organizations to provide social services from November 2023 to April 2024.

This research defined social services under Article 1 of the LU «On Social Services» as actions aimed at preventing difficult life circumstances, overcoming such circumstances or minimizing their negative consequences for individuals/families affected by them. The list of services and their brief description is provided in the Classification of Social Services¹

The objectives of the research were as follows:

- identifying the main stakeholders and providers of the social services market;
- describing the mechanisms for determining the cost and standards of social services provision, controlling their quality and client satisfaction, obtaining funding and other procedural aspects in terms of legislation and its practical implementation;
- analyzing the readiness and capacity of CSOs to provide social services, including those funded from the state or local budgets, in particular, about their experience of cooperation with the state and LSGs;
- assessing the attitude of central executive authorities and local self-governments towards commissioning social services from CSOs;
- characterizing existing options for CSOs to receive funding for social services provision from the state or local budgets or from donors, as well as existing options for strengthening the capacity of CSOs;
- identifying existing social services provided by CSOs to veterans and their families, IDPs, and civilians affected by the war;
- identifying problematic areas in CSOs' provision of social services and describing the desired changes to the regulatory framework.

The research included three components: analysis of open sources, focus groups with CSOs, and in-depth interviews with representatives of oblast state (military) administrations, territorial communities, and donor organizations active in the social services sector. The analysis of open sources involved reviewing regulatory acts governing various aspects of social service provision in Ukraine, prior empirical studies on the topic, and other relevant documents. After that, three focus group discussions were held on Zoom with CSOs providing social support, social prevention or social services. One FGD involved representatives of all Ukrainian or international CSOs, while the other two were held with participants from regional CSOs. Besides, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted: 5 interviews with representatives of donor organizations that cooperate with or offer grants to CSOs providing social services, five interviews with employees of social protection departments of OSA/OMA, and five more interviews with representatives of LSGs or municipal institutions in territorial communities that provide social services.

The study covered OSAs/OMAs and territorial communities in Vinnytsia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, and Chernihiv oblasts. Regional CSOs were also mainly represented by respondents from these five oblasts.



SUMMARY

Key stakeholders and providers of the social services market

As of December 6, 2023, 525 CSOs² were listed in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services³ (out of 3491 providers). The share of CSOs among all providers in the Register is 15%. Approximately 0.3% of NGOs and 0.6% of charitable organizations are registered as social service providers in the Register. Still, not all of the registered CSOs are active. The analysis of focus groups, in-depth interviews, published quantitative studies, and texts related to CSOs' involvement in social service provision shows low involvement. According to the results of quantitative surveys of active CSOs, only 12% of organizations are included in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services, and 8% point out that providing social services is one of the priorities of their activities. Only about 3% of respondents indicated that the provision of social services is one of the sources of funding for their organization. 10% of active CSOs believe they should promote social service provision as a funding area. By contrast, 59% of CSOs consider it reasonable for them to develop international grants as a source of funding for their activities.

The literature analysis shows that even in the most urbanized and economically developed communities, the share of CSOs' funding for social services is about 15% of the funds allocated for public sector providers. Most CSOs that do promote themselves as social service providers are located and operate in oblast centers. Only 126 communities (or 8.6%) out of 1471 territorial communities of Ukraine have at least one registered CSO provider. The situation varies from oblast to oblast: in such areas as Kyiv, Ternopil, Kharkiv, and Lviv oblasts, between 15% and 18% of communities have registered CSO providers, while on the other hand, in Cherkasy, Sumy, and Poltava oblasts, only 1.5% to 3% of communities have such providers. The absence of a CSO provider listed in the Register is typical for Ukrainian communities. Registration of a CSO provider is not a guarantee that it will provide services in the community. Only one in four CSOs in the Register provides social services and receives funds for it. 71% of CSO registrations as social service providers occur in the oblast centers of Ukraine.

Respondents mentioned that many donors in Ukraine are currently engaged in social and humanitarian support. UN agencies are active: International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, OCHA and others. The following organizations were also mentioned in this context: GIZ (Germany), Cordaid (Netherlands), HelpAge International, USAID, German Ministry of Social Policy, International Public Health Alliance, International Renaissance Foundation, UNAIDS, DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, Government of Canada, Save the Children, Mercy Corps Ukraine, ACTED (France), IREX, Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council, Polish Humanitarian Action, Healthright International, EU4CSOs EmpowerUA project of the European Union. Importantly, not all donors and projects that organize assistance to people in difficult life circumstances or contribute to enhancing the capacity of CSOs and communities

² The term «CSOs» here refers to organizations registered in compliance with Ukrainian legislation that belong to one of the following categories: public organization, charitable organization, public union, enterprise, organization or union of public associations, religious organization, public association, trade union, body of self-organization of the population, association – whose activities are not related to exercising power and generating profit for the purpose of its distribution.

³ State Enterprise «Information and Computing Center» – SE ICC. The dashboard is in test mode.



to provide such aid cooperate with registered social service providers or procure services standardized following Ukrainian legislation.

State stakeholders and providers of the social services market are represented primarily by the Ministry of Social Policy and its subordinate National Social Service of Ukraine at the national level, departments of social protection of the population of oblast state (military) administrations at the regional level, and relevant units of rayon state administrations and executive committees of LSGs at the local level. All the stakeholders listed above can establish state/municipal institutions for the provision of social services, which are funded from the respective budget: social welfare centers (at the level of regions or communities), centers for social services, territorial centers for social services, orphanages, shelters, rehabilitation centers, etc. At the community level, the social service delivery system can be organized in many different ways depending on the needs and capacities of each community.

Mechanisms for social service provision by CSOs

By law⁴, LSGs are required to regularly **assess the population's needs** for social services (in a limited format under martial law) to plan, organize and finance their provision properly. According to the results of this and other empirical studies^{5 6}, such activities are not carried out in many communities or are carried out in a formal/simplified or informal manner. Among the reasons given are low interest of community leadership (partly due to them prioritizing other tasks or realizing the limited funds available to meet the needs of the population for social services), lack of social protection staff who could be involved in the assessment, and in some cases lack proper training. Such assessments could be conducted by CSOs that have trained specialists. Still, again, the barriers include the low financial capacity of communities (to pay for the services of CSOs or to use the results of the assessment for the development of this area) and/or lack of understanding of the importance of the problem and unwillingness to deal with it. As a result, LSGs in such communities cannot effectively delegate the provision of social services to CSOs.

Both state/municipal and non-governmental providers that wish to receive budget funding or provide paid services need to **determine the cost of social services**. There are regulatory acts⁷, that describe the calculation algorithm. The study has demonstrated that OSAs/OMAs, LSGs and municipal social service providers do not see any particular difficulties in using this algorithm, while CSOs face problems. First, the calculation methodology can be challenging for an inexperienced person. Secondly, the total cost of CSO services may be higher than the servi-

⁴ Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine of April 19, 2023 No. 130-N «On Approval of the Procedure for Determining the Needs of the Population of an Administrative Territorial Unit / Territorial Community for Social Services».



⁵ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.



⁶ *Development of social services during the war. Right to Protection CF.*



⁷ Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine of December 07, 2015 No. 1186 «On Approval of the Methodological Recommendations for Calculating the Cost of Social Services».



ces of municipal institutions due to rent for premises and other expenses that public/municipal sector providers do not cover. Thirdly, the salaries calculated under the current legislation are too low for CSO professionals who can receive decent remuneration from international organizations or businesses. Donors' requirements for budgeting are more understandable for CSOs: they usually request to specify the resources needed to achieve the task, their quantity and price, without the need to calculate the cost of providing a social service to one recipient per person-hour or estimate the time required to provide it. A common problem for budgetary and donor funding of CSOs is the difficulty of obtaining adequate compensation for the organization's administrative expenses.

The research demonstrated that CSOs prefer non-governmental **funding** of their social service provision activities, primarily donor grants. They also receive funds through donations from the public, businesses, and social entrepreneurship. However, some communities occasionally finance CSO services from the state and local budgets: social services commissioning, public procurement, and community project competitions within local programs or participatory budgets. Some communities have local programs to support NGOs. Although there is no precise quantitative data on the prevalence of such support, an analysis of the literature and qualitative data indicates that it is not a typical situation for communities. The legislation also enshrines state support for all Ukrainian NGOs of persons with disabilities and veterans. Recent initiatives that have just started being implemented include tenders for resilience building services funded by the state budget and the possibility of concluding a direct contract with the Fund for Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities to provide social and psychological support to military personnel. However, all the above practices are still not very common.

The legislation defines many **requirements for social service providers**⁸, including their mandatory entry into the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services⁹ and compliance of their services with national standards¹⁰. The main difficulty for CSOs in ensuring compliance with the state requirements for social service providers is the availability and proper equipment of premises for work, particularly ensuring accessibility. Additionally, it may be financially difficult for CSOs to maintain a specified number of staff. Some respondents noted that the national standards are designed to make it easier for state or municipal institutions to ensure compliance with them than for CSOs. Finally, the standards themselves have limitations: they do not cover all social services, are sometimes unrealistic in their application to specific categories of people, or are not flexible enough.

As for the requirement to enter the **Register**, some CSOs neglect it, if they do not plan to receive budget funding. Thus, their activities as social service providers are carried out outside the legal framework. Donors also do not always require such registration, especially when providing social services that only partially meet or do not meet the definition of social services according to Ukrainian legislation. Representatives of executive authorities and local self-governments generally speak positively about the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services, seeing it as a way to confirm the compliance of a provider with the requirements of the law, an analytical

⁸ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of March 03, 2020 No. 185 «On Approval of the Criteria for the Activities of Social Service Providers» (as amended).

⁹ State Enterprise «Information and Computing Center» – SE ICC.

¹⁰ National standards for the provision of social services.



tool for analyzing the needs of the population and opportunities to cover them, and an opportunity for recipients to choose the best provider. Instead, CSOs mention that the Register is not technically ready for operation and lacks user support.

Legislation¹¹ obliges social service providers to monitor **service provision and quality assessment** (the latter is not conducted during martial law). Both municipal and non-governmental providers report that they comply with the legislation requirements and provide the necessary information to local social welfare departments. Moreover, the former and the latter usually have internal quality control mechanisms and practices. CSOs pay special attention to this, noting that the algorithm defined by regulatory legal acts is too superficial and focused on quantitative rather than qualitative work indicators. Cooperation with donors demanding to control the quality of services also encourages CSOs to implement monitoring and evaluation practices in their activities.

Attitudes of CEA and LSGs towards commissioning social services from CSOs

The key factors in the attitude of CEA and LSGs towards commissioning social services from CSOs are insufficient supply from CSOs, doubts about the potential of CSOs to provide social services in a stable and qualified manner, and the priority of preserving funding for municipal providers. Stability is one of the key words-requirements used by government representatives when discussing the potential of CSOs' engagement in social service provision. At the same time, representatives of CEA and LSGs understand that municipal providers cannot provide the entire range of services in communities and cooperation with CSOs is necessary, but only if it is possible to monitor and control their work and regularly train CSO employees (professional development). Representatives of LSGs in different oblasts indicate insufficient CSOs to offer social services in their regions. The level of engagement of CSOs is also affected by geographical disproportions of their activity: they primarily work in oblast centers. The LSGs have concerns about the capacity of CSOs to provide specific comprehensive social services in a stable, qualified manner and over a long period.

The perception of CSOs' capacity can be divided into four components: 1) availability of qualified personnel, 2) ability to provide services in a stable manner over a long period, 3) availability of financial resources, 4) ability to comply with medical, hygienic and other standards of service provision. The community leaders' desire to preserve existing communal facilities and staff occasionally affects the level of CSO engagement, given the community's limited budget for social services. Some participants of our study indicated that even if there is a proposal from a stable, experienced CSO that has proven its ability to provide social services, its chances of getting an assignment from the LSG are not very high due to the subjective attitudes of the officials and lack of skills/experience in such procurement. However, our study and published literature contain many examples of the successful performance of CSOs in the social services provision in communities. The respondents mentioned the following CSOs as examples of successful activities: Lviv Center for Social Services and Rehabilitation «Dzherelo»; Ukrainian Child Rights Network; «Pani Patronesa» (assistance to victims of gender-based violence); Caritas (active in many oblasts of Ukraine); NGO «Ukrainian Union of Persons with Disabilities»; «Source of Hope»; «Ray of Hope»; «Right to Protection»; «Parostok». As for the examples of successful activities of CSOs in

¹¹ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of June 1, 2020 No. 449 «On Approval of the Procedure for Monitoring the Provision and Evaluation of the Quality of Social Services» (as amended).



the field of social services that are cited in the published literature, we can mention the project «Jointly. Social Services for Families in the Community»; the activities of the CF «Hope»; CF «Everything is possible»; CO «100% Life». Of course, this list is illustrative and is not meant to be exhaustive (hundreds of CSOs provide social services in Ukraine) or representative. However, it demonstrates that despite the generally low involvement of CSOs in the social services sector, there are many successful examples of non-governmental and charitable organizations activities in this area.

The attitude of CSOs towards the provision of social services at the expense of the state or local budgets

The financial conditions offered by LSGs for social service provision are often not satisfactory for CSOs. Apart from the low payment for social services offered by LSGs, according to CSO representatives, the problem also lies in the complexity of administering such activities. One of the factors that negatively affect the willingness of CSOs to provide social services for budgetary funds is the fact that receiving funds through the treasury is difficult. Social services have low priority when prioritizing payments through the treasury, which can lead to very long waiting periods for CSOs to receive funds. Furthermore, CSO respondents point out that working with the treasury requires highly qualified accountants, and there are cases when accountants who cooperate with CSOs refuse to engage with projects that require work with the treasury. An additional barrier for CSOs is that the services provided under the social services commissioning are covered by local budgets upon completion, which means that CSOs have to provide services at their own expense for a particular (rather long) period. The absence of the mechanism of LSGs providing advance payments for social services discourages CSOs from participating in social services commissioning tenders.

The attitude of CSOs towards the provision of social services at the expense of donors

CSOs rather prefer providing social services at the expense of donors than conducting activities funded by LSGs or the state. One of the main reasons for this is the financial support of social services provision by the donor, which, according to the respondents, is adequate and allows paying competitive remuneration to the specialists engaged by CSOs. In the case of activities funded by the budget, it is much more challenging to motivate specialists financially due to the low rates offered by the state and, as a result, by the LSGs. An essential advantage of working for donor funds for CSOs is a more transparent, straightforward, and predictable project administration and reporting of the work done. Respondents state that communication with donors is also more accessible and more efficient than with LSGs. The disadvantage of donor-funded social services is that they are project-based activities, and funding ends after a certain period, thus affecting the sustainability of service delivery. It is the limited timeframe of donor projects that can interrupt successful cooperation between CSOs and the state (or LSGs) when each uses its advantages in providing social services: the state (or LSG) provides a material asset that it has (premises), the CSO provides the work of specialists funded by the donor. But when the project ends, this cooperation stops. It is worth noting that the model of collaboration when the LSG provides its benefits (premises, discounts on utilities, etc.) and the CSO gives adequate remuneration to qualified employees at the donor's expense deserves detailed study and piloting. However, such projects can be successful if planned sufficiently in a long-term (2-3 years) perspective. As for the shortcomings of cooperation

with donors in the provision of social services, CSO representatives report a certain formalism of tasks and a great deal of attention to quantitative project indicators (targets).

The capacity of CSOs to provide social services

The analysis of literature and interviews shows that the capacity of CSOs to provide social services is relatively low. However, it greatly depends on the type of services. Lack of ownership over the necessary material assets (most often, premises) dramatically reduces the capacity of CSOs to provide social services. The situation is aggravated because even if CSOs own (or rent) premises to deliver social services, they cannot receive discounts on utility services. On the other hand, the vast majority of CSOs simply cannot afford to purchase premises, unlike private providers, who can see this real estate as an investment and have start-up resources and sufficient time to wait for the return on their investment, and municipal providers, who use community-owned premises. It is difficult for most CSOs to make a «phase transition» and crystallize as a stable provider of, for example, residential care services, which would have premises at their disposal, the necessary permanent staff, etc. However, they still have a niche to fill. The analysis of literature, research results, and experts' opinions shows that discussing the abstract capacity of CSOs to provide social services may be a very strong and unproductive generalization. The research shows that there is a segmentation of types of services: municipal enterprises are more capable of providing more organizationally complex services (those which require material resources), while CSOs are better able to provide other services. The analysis of the survey participants' replies and the Register's data indicates that CSOs are more suitable for such services as informing, consulting, mediation, representation of interests, social adaptation, social integration, reintegration, psychological assistance, and social prevention. CSOs can also successfully provide psychological help, which is not a separate service according to the Classifier but may be a part of other comprehensive services (particularly resilience building services). CSOs can effectively address the issue of domestic violence, specifically assisting victims. Municipal structures have better capacities to provide long-term and residential social services, which require working on the ground permanently, as this implies the availability of premises and facilities for beneficiaries, as well as constant supervision, control, and monitoring.

Experts point out that finding specific niches of specialization for CSO representatives and municipal providers would be optimal. This, of course, requires a very detailed comprehensive mapping of the needs and capacities of Ukrainian communities, the capacities of CSOs and donors, and planning, at least for the medium term. This would allow for a synergistic effect, where different types of providers complement each other in what they are strongest in.

According to the data of the Register, a significantly higher share of CSOs provides in-kind assistance, social prevention services and support for inclusive education. Still, much fewer organizations are engaged in care (daycare, palliative care, inpatient and/or home care). According to the Register, let's compare only CSOs and state/municipal social service providers. CSOs are significantly ahead of the latter in terms of the share of offers of social prevention, social rehabilitation, in-kind assistance, mediation, physical support of persons with disabilities, shelter, care and upbringing of children in family-like conditions, short-term and assisted accommodation, support during inclusive education, sign language interpretation and temporary respite for persons taking care of children/persons with disabilities. Instead, among state and municipal providers, there is a higher share of those who offer care and personal assistant services. It is important to mention that at the current stage of the Register implementation, it is impossible to determine precisely whether registered providers provide social services and, if so, to what extent.

The capacity of LSGs to provide and procure social services

The social services sector is affected by the problem that permeates all activities of LSGs in Ukraine – the significant disparity in the financial and managerial capacity of communities in Ukraine. Large communities with sufficient budgets and an adequate number of qualified managers can effectively manage the provision of social services. Communities with fewer resources do a worse job. An analysis of the literature and expert opinions points to a systemic problem that has emerged due to the delegation of social services almost entirely to the communities after decentralization. Published studies show that most communities cannot provide all essential social services to their residents. The reason cited in the literature is the same as the one identified in our research – the financial inability of communities to perform the functions assigned to them under decentralization. Some respondents believe this problem is fundamental and can become chronic if new, larger, more capable communities are not created.

The year 2024 adds a new problem for communities: the reduction of tax revenues they used to receive as personal income tax from the military. The financial situation and the migration of the population due to the war exacerbate the staffing problem: communities cannot retain the required number of employees.

Apart from financial and staffing problems, communities' ability to provide social services is directly affected by their leadership's priorities: according to the survey results, there are cases when even the leadership of financially capable communities does not allocate sufficient funding for social services.

Problematic aspects of the normative regulation and practice of social services provision

The research participants often indicated that the situation in which all responsibility for the organization of social services is assigned by law to local authorities, and there is no mechanism for controlling the leadership of communities hurts the development of this sector. The absence of a mechanism for controlling the leadership of LSGs also means that services may not be provided in full according to the real needs of residents. This, in turn, automatically reduces the involvement of CSOs in delivering social services. The respondents believe that in addition to the mechanism of control over the provision of social services in the community, there should be a mechanism of accountability of the community leadership for failure to provide such services. Some respondents pointed out that there is no mechanism for the state to control not only the fact of assessing the needs for social services in the community or budgeting for social services but also the quality of those services provided in communities (by municipal providers or CSOs).

Published research and interviews conducted as part of the research point to the problem of bureaucratization of social services and the lack of a working mechanism for data exchange between the structural units of the Department of Social Protection, the State Tax Service of Ukraine and the Pension Fund of Ukraine. Paperwork between different structures greatly complicates and slows down the performance of social service providers. Having a digital tool that would link databases of service recipients from various government agencies is a critical need for specialists involved in social services.

Users face the problem of not being able to apply for a social service online, even though this possibility is legally enshrined in a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers.

Additionally, experts emphasize that approving a service's provision is lengthy and involves

many stages. The respondents of our survey who represent CSOs also point out that there are many complicated (and often impossible) conditions to start providing social services to a person, even if they need them immediately. Moreover, this is true for various service recipients, from homeless people to war veterans.

The study participants also criticize the current state and degree of usefulness of the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services, pointing out that it is not fully integrated into the process of providing social services both legally and practically.

The research respondents representing CSOs pointed to the problematic tax policy of the state towards civic and charitable organizations. As examples of problems, the participants mentioned the lack of tax benefits for NGOs (for instance, when purchasing equipment for social services); changes in the legislation, according to which an NGO becomes a VAT payer if it assists more than 1 million UAH per year; challenges in distinguishing between humanitarian and charitable assistance and reporting on its provision to beneficiaries.

There are serious problems related to informing potential beneficiaries about the possibility of receiving social services.

The participants of our study also emphasize the need for a legislative review of the cost of providing social services, believing that the current parameters are shallow and inadequate for the current situation.

Practitioners and researchers of social services have recently proposed changing the system of social services procurement in Ukraine. Following the example of healthcare services, a single entity should be created that would have the authority and budget to procure social services throughout the country. The respondents of our research point to the fundamental imperfection of the legislation, which prevents the recipient of social services from choosing their provider and makes it impossible to implement the principle of «money follows the client» (which could be implemented in the case if a «sole procurer» is created). They point out that community leadership, not the recipient of services, determines who will provide what services and whether they will be provided. The likelihood of receiving quality social services depends on the community's capacity and its leadership's interest in organizing service provision.

Key findings

The level of actual involvement of CSOs in providing social services at the expense of LSGs or the state is low. The provision of social services at the expense of the local or state budget is rarely considered by the non-governmental sector as a promising source of funding for the organization: preference is given to receiving grants from international donors.

There are several reasons for this situation:

- **Systemic problems of the state and LSGs complicate the emergence of an attractive competitive market for social services, where municipal providers, CSOs and private providers would operate equally.**

The critical systemic problem is the cost of social services set by the state and the limited budgets of communities, which does not allow for providing social services to the required extent and the involvement of CSOs as providers. Another fundamental problem is that the entire responsibility for organizing the provision of social services lies with LSGs. At the same time, there are no effective mechanisms to monitor the delivery and quality of social services in communities. This puts residents of different communities in unequal conditions: the scope and quality of services that citizens can receive depend on the priorities of the community leadership and available budgetary resources.

- **There is a high threshold for CSOs to enter this activity.**

The activity often requires the availability of material assets, the ability to maintain a staff of qualified employees, the availability of own funds for conducting activities, if there is no advance funding, and many other conditions.

- **Cooperation with LSGs is less attractive, if there is an alternative to implementing projects with donor funds.**

Donor-funded projects are more accessible to administer and allow for paying competitive salaries to employees.

- **Inability and sometimes unwillingness of local government leaders to procure social services from CSOs.**

Even if a professional and experienced CSO service provider in the community takes the initiative, the LSGs themselves may, for subjective reasons, block its participation in the provision of social services at the expense of the local budget. There is also a factor of prioritization of funding and support for the providers that report to the community leadership.

- **Objective obstacles that LSGs face when engaging CSOs in the provision of social services are the low supply from the CSO market and their unstable performance in this market.**

For example, a CSO can successfully implement donor-funded projects and fulfil social services commissioning from local authorities for several years. However, if donor support disappears, the CSO cannot keep its employees full-time and cannot offer the same quality of social services to local authorities as earlier.

Depending on the type of social service, CSOs' involvement and ability to provide it in the mid-term vary greatly. Therefore, it would be productive to analyse the niches in providing social services that can be occupied by CSO providers, private providers, and municipal providers. Experts point out that it would be optimal to find specific niches of specialization for CSOs and municipal providers. This would allow a synergistic effect, where different types of providers complement each other in what they are good at.

Although the design of this study does not allow an assessment of the share of CSOs providing social services that fully comply with the legislation regulating these activities, the results indicate that public sector providers face problems with implementing requirements and standards in practice.

Among the reasons for this, CSOs mention:

- limited own resources;
- significant bureaucratic burden imposed by the legislation on the provider;
- mismatch of standards with the needs of some clients;
- CSOs' lack of understanding of the necessity of specific requirements for social service providers;
- complexity of simultaneous compliance with the requirements of donors and the state.

Even though the legislation imposes equal standards for state, municipal, and non-governmental social service providers, CSOs face the fact that municipal providers are more advantageous in certain aspects: they have premises and can count on stable funding, making it easier to align their activities with the RAs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For state authorities

1. Reconsider the fundamental principle that social services have almost entirely become the responsibility of community leadership, and their funding largely depends on local budgets and priorities of community leadership, which creates significant inequality in the ability of citizens to receive social services.
2. Increase the level of engagement of the central government in financing and procuring services (either through a sole procurer mechanism like the NHSU or through a subvention mechanism, as in the case of educational services).
3. Legislatively and operationally, control should be strengthened over assessing social service needs, the provision, and the quality of social services in communities. Ensure there are working mechanisms to hold community leaders accountable for failure to provide social services to residents. Revise the functions of the NSSU to control the provision of social services: for example, allowing it to impose fines or other sanctions for non-provision or poor quality of social services. Ensure equality of community residents in receiving quality social services.
4. Legally oblige communities to include expenditures on social services in the community budget.
5. Implement legislative changes allowing beneficiaries to choose a social service provider and try to implement the principle of «money following the recipient of services».
6. Review the cost of social services. Remuneration conditions stipulated by the current legislation do not encourage CSOs and private providers to operate in this market, and the low cost of providing social services is a fundamental problem for the sector.
7. Reduce the level of bureaucratization in the social services provision process, reduce the paperwork burden on service providers, and speed up the decision-making process for starting social services provision to beneficiaries.
8. Change the priority of payments for social services through the treasury and simplify accounting procedures that CSOs must undergo when providing social services at the expense of LSGs.
9. Stimulate the spread of mechanisms for procuring social services from CSOs that provide for advance payments by LSGs.
10. Study the potential for changing the regulatory framework to allow for longer-term contracts to provide social services (more than one budget year). Develop methodological recommendations for LSGs on how to contract CSOs so that there are no several-month breaks in providing social services after the end of the calendar year.
11. Optimize the timeframe for local governments to conduct social services procurement procedures by law (there are indications that such procedures can take 3-6 months).
12. Conduct informational and methodological work for community leaders on which structures and individuals should be responsible for providing social services.
13. Enhance the digitalization of the service delivery process on the recipient's side (option to apply through Diia, etc.) and on the providers' side (ensuring fast digital acquisition of information from the Tax Service, Pension Fund, etc.).
14. Conduct an audit of communities' needs and capacities for providing social services. «Map» communities that need assistance from the state, CSOs, and donors. Coordinate the optimal use of the state's, oblasts', communities', CSOs', and donors' financial and human resources to assist communities with the most unmet social service needs.
15. Identify the types of social services that CSOs most successfully provide and coordinate the activities of CSOs and donors to scale up such projects.

For community leaders and local executive authorities

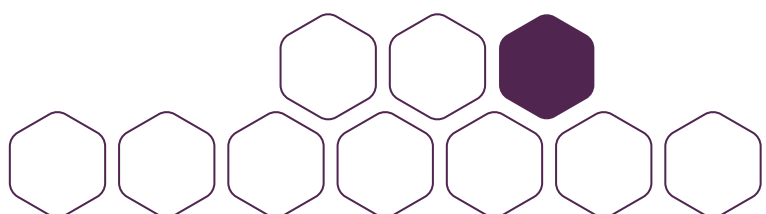
1. Intensify efforts to assess the needs for social services in communities.
2. Intensify informing the population of communities about the social services they are eligible to receive under the law.
3. Participate in the search for proposals from CSOs and donors to engage them in providing social services in the communities that need them most; intensify the exchange of information between the regional executive authorities and community leaders on the challenges communities face in providing social services.
4. Conduct an audit of the material assets of communities (premises, transport, etc.) that LSGs can offer as their contribution to the implementation of CSO projects at donors' expense. Develop symbiotic projects where participants (CSOs, donors, LSGs) who contribute various assets to project implementation.
5. Monitor the timeliness of payments to CSOs for social services that have already been provided. It is not uncommon to experience long delays in payment for services already provided, and it demotivates CSO employees and reduces the likelihood of CSO participation in subsequent projects funded by communities.

For CSOs

1. Create a proposal from CSOs to provide social services, which is not sufficient now. Expand the geographical coverage of CSOs' activities, primarily in communities outside oblast centers.
2. Look for opportunities to cooperate with LSGs, allowing each participant to use their advantages in providing social services: LSG provides available material assets (e.g., premises), and CSO provides the services of specialists funded by the donor or other sources.

For donors

1. Make social service projects more long-term than they are at present.
2. They should more actively coordinate their projects with central and oblast executive authorities to identify communities that most need assistance in providing social services.
3. Allocate a certain amount for the administrative expenses of the grantee organization.
4. Ease the double bureaucratic obligations of CSOs to the donor as grantees and to the state as registered social service providers (avoid duplication of reporting where possible).



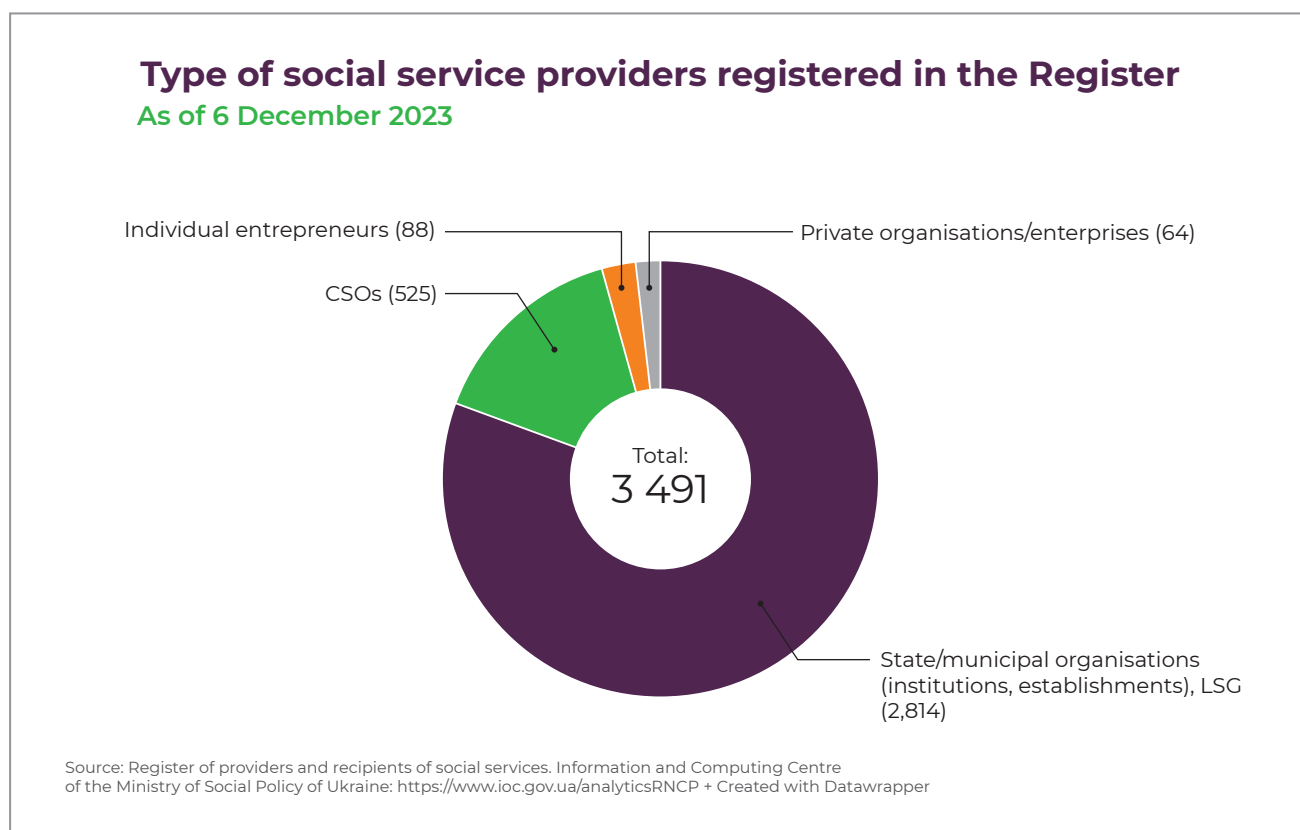
KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROVIDERS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES MARKET

Statistical information on CSOs providing social services

As of December 6, 2023, according to the dashboard¹² of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, there were 525 providers registered in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services, whose organizational and legal form allows them to be classified as civil society organizations (total number of providers – 3491). We considered the following organizational and legal forms of registered providers: charitable organizations, public organizations, public unions, public associations, trade unions and other similar organizations. Thus, the share of CSOs among all providers in the Register is 15%.

It should be noted that the dashboard is in test mode. A visual check of the data shows that some organizations are listed in the Register under the wrong organizational and legal form (or do not have information in the respective box). In addition, there are some inconsistencies in the geographical distribution of providers. The dashboard also does not allow for a reliable separation of state and municipal social service providers for analysis. For example, the category «Branch (other separate subdivision)» includes the former and the latter.

Figure 1.



¹² State Enterprise «Information and Computing Center» – SE ICC.



301 service providers (57%) were registered as NGOs, and 185 service providers (35%) were registered as charitable organizations.

According to the SSSU, as of January 1, 2023, there were 102,087 registered NGOs and 29,246 COs in Ukraine.¹³ Accordingly, only 0.3% of CSOs and 0.6% of COs are listed in the Register as social service providers. However, not all registered CSOs and COs are active.

Other organizational and legal forms, such as public unions, enterprises, organizations and unions of public associations, religious organizations, public associations, trade unions, self-organization bodies, and associations, are less frequently listed in the Register.

■ The level of CSO involvement in social services provision

The analysis of the focus groups, in-depth interviews, published quantitative studies and texts related to CSOs' involvement in social services provision shows that this involvement is low. The authors of the study «**Civil Society of Ukraine in the Context of War**»¹⁴ (November-December 2023) note:

«More than half (53%) of the surveyed CSOs indicated that they provide social services to individuals/families experiencing difficult life circumstances or belonging to vulnerable groups. At the same time, according to the survey results, only 12% of organizations are included in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services, which allows them to apply for funding from the budget. 8% of CSOs in the survey answered that providing social services is one of the priorities of their activities.

A tiny share of CSOs that took part in the research – about 3% – indicated that the provision of social services is one of the sources of funding for their organization.»¹⁵



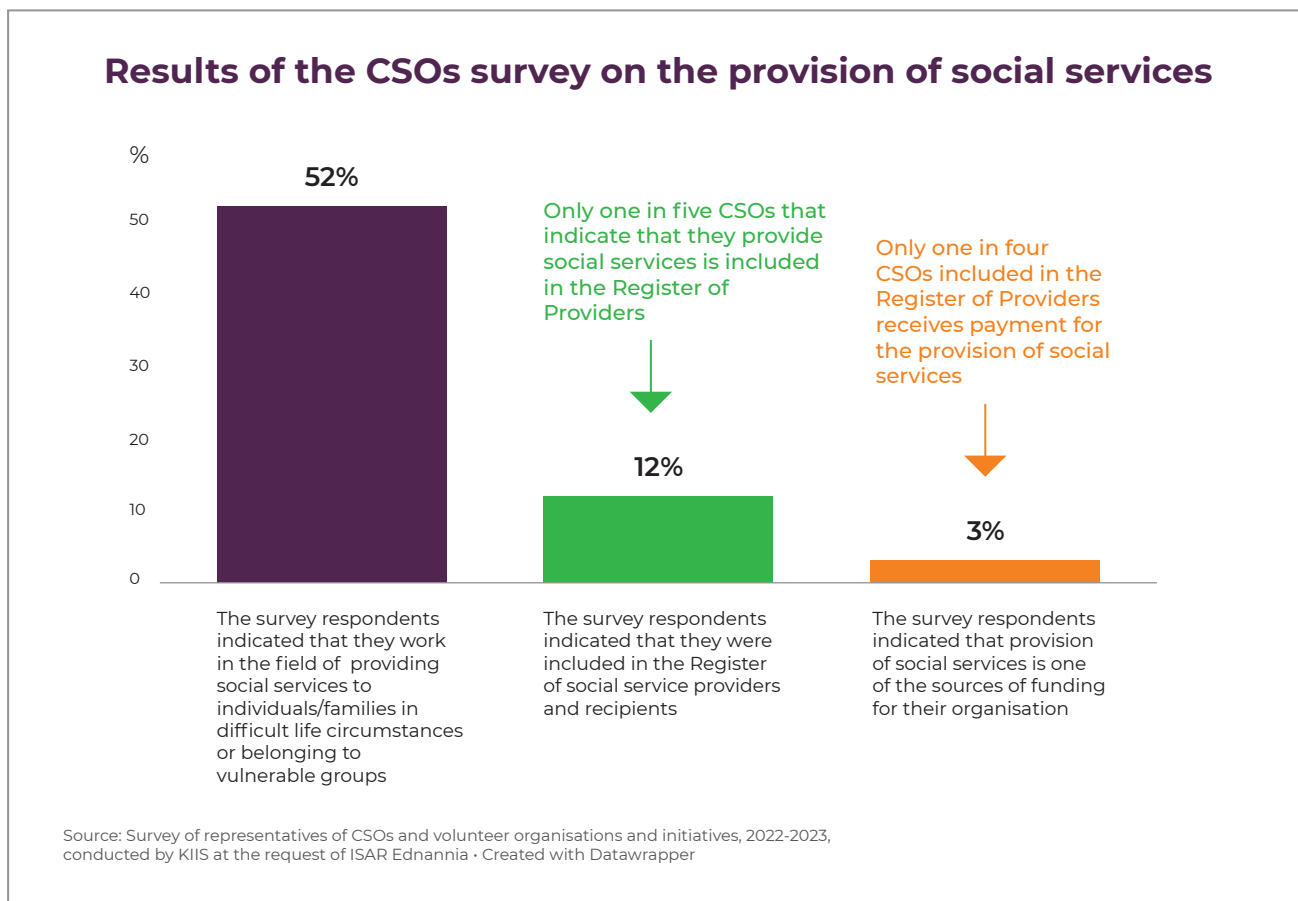
¹³ The number of registered legal entities by organizational and legal forms of business, broken down by the gender of the head. Archive of 2022.

¹⁴ Civil society of Ukraine in the context of war: report on comprehensive sociological research. February 2024. _

¹⁵ Civil society of Ukraine in the context of war: report on comprehensive sociological research. February 2024.



Figure 2.



However, only 12.1% of CSOs that participated in the 2022 research believed that after the start of a full-scale war, social services should be the area of funding for their organization that should be developed¹⁶. By contrast, 60.4% of surveyed NGOs and COs believed that it made sense for them to develop international grants as a funding area for their activities (59% in 2023). In the research of 2023, the share of CSOs that believed that they should develop such a funding area as social services provision became even smaller – 10% (the difference compared to 2022 is statistically significant)¹⁷.

It should be noted that both surveys included only CSOs that are functioning and implementing projects, not just the ones registered with the justice authorities.

The researchers ask why such a large share of CSOs in the survey indicate that they provide social services, but such a small share is included in the Register and receives funds for these services. The authors believe that most CSOs are likely to help people in difficult life circumstances on an ad hoc basis – provide humanitarian aid, help IDPs, etc. and carry out this work at donors' expense. At the same time, CSOs rarely provide social services systematically over a long period and receive funding from LSGs for this¹⁸.

¹⁶ «Civil society of Ukraine in the context of war -2022» – report on research findings.

¹⁷ Civil society of Ukraine in the context of war: report on comprehensive sociological research. February 2024. _

¹⁸ Civil society of Ukraine in the context of war: report on comprehensive sociological research. February 2024.



A survey of 156 communities conducted by the All-Ukrainian Association of ATCs in 2023¹⁹ showed that only 21% of communities (33 responses) have CSOs working in social protection and cohesion and being partners of local authorities.

In our opinion, the most detailed and informative analysis of CSO involvement in the provision of social services in communities is presented in the paper **«Legislation Regulating the Provision of Social Services in Ukraine and Ways to Improve It»**²⁰ (published in 2021). The authors analyse the situation in such communities as Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia, Mariupol, Kramatorsk, and Dnipro in 2019-2021. It is worth noting that the research results in such communities set the «upper bar» for the potential for CSO participation in the provision of social services. Firstly, these are large, capable and economically developed communities with enough specialists to organize social services commissioning competitions and other forms of CSO engagement; secondly, the most prominent and capable CSOs that can provide high-quality social services are concentrated in such large cities. Obviously, in small rural communities, the rates of CSO engagement may be even lower. But, as the study has shown, even in these five urban communities, CSO participation in social services leaves much to be desired: only one community out of five held social services commissioning competitions in 2019-2021. Let's consider other funding mechanisms (participatory budgets, social project competitions, etc.). The authors estimate that the share of CSOs in the funding pool for social services is still meagre: they received about 15% of the funds allocated to public sector providers²¹.

The low level of use of the social services commissioning mechanism by LSGs, and, accordingly, a low level of CSO involvement in the provision of social services, was also reported in the study **«Social Services Commissioning: Opportunities for Implementation in Ukraine»** conducted by the **NGO CrimeaSOS** in 2020²². Based on the results of processing responses to official requests to local governments, it turned out that only 23 out of 64 administrative-territorial units (36%) use social services commissioning (36%).

The authors of the study **«Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs»**²³ (2023) also concluded that the involvement of CSOs (and private providers) in the provision of social services in communities is not widespread. Although the legislation allows this practice, most of the communities covered by the study did not mention it often²⁴. Participants of the focus groups and in-depth interviews of our research also consider the level of CSO involvement in the provision of social services to be low.



¹⁹ Rostyslav Kis', Olesia Balian. *Legislation regulating the provision of social services in Ukraine and ways to improve it. Analytical report. Published in 2021.*



²¹ Rostyslav Kis', Olesia Balian. *Legislation regulating the provision of social services in Ukraine and ways to improve it. Analytical report. Published in 2021.*



²² *Social services commissioning: opportunities for implementation in Ukraine.* – Kyiv: NGO «CrimeaSOS», 2020. – 192 p. _



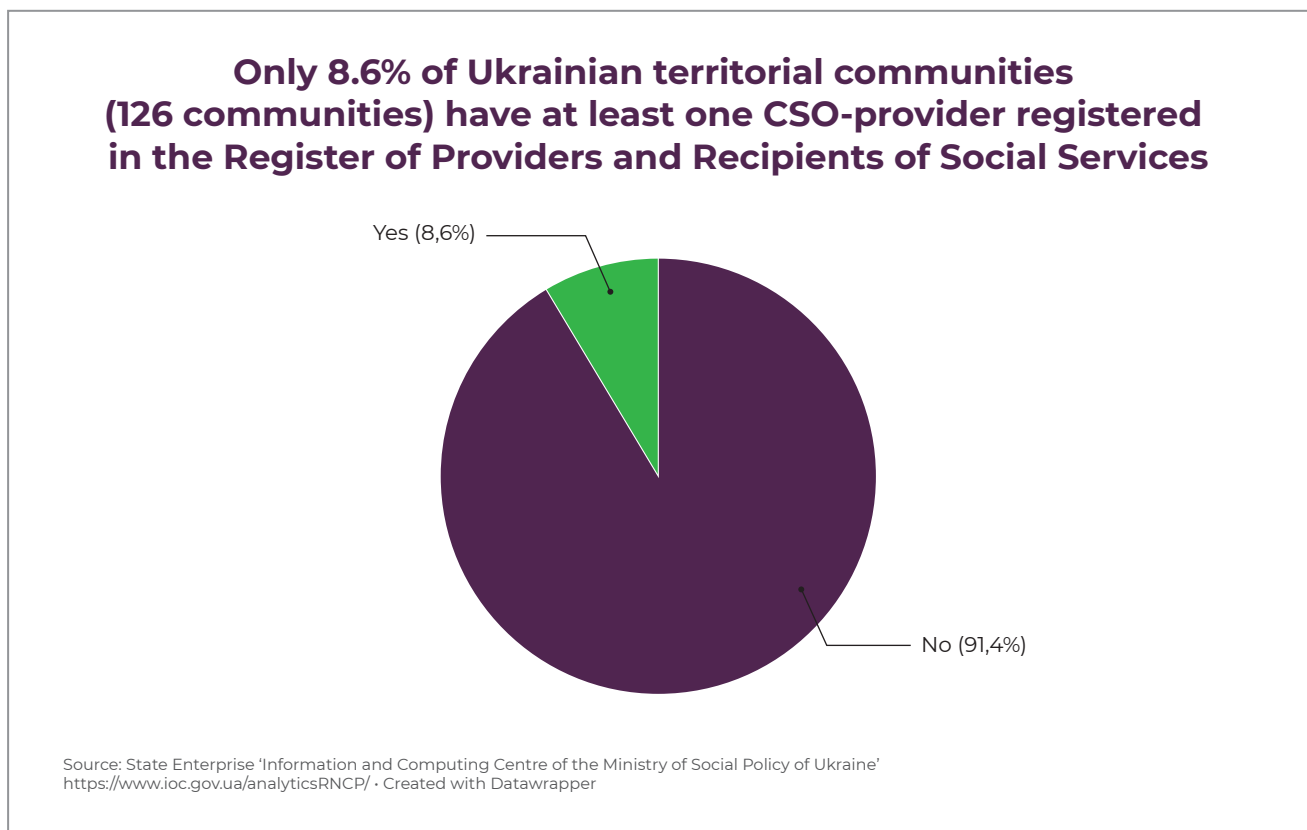
²³ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs. Published in January 2024.*

²⁴ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs. Published in January 2024.*

■ Level of supply of CSOs as providers of social services and geographical features of their distribution

Most CSOs that offer themselves as social service providers are based and operate in oblast centers. We analyzed the Register of Providers of Social Services²⁵ data to assess the actual supply of CSOs at the community level. We considered such organisational and legal forms of registered providers as «charitable organization», «civic organization», «civic union», «public associations, trade unions, charitable organizations and other similar organizations»²⁶. The analysis demonstrated that out of 1471 territorial communities in Ukraine, only 126 communities (or 8.6%) have at least one CSO provider.

Figure 3.



The situation varies from oblast to oblast: in Kyiv, Ternopil, Kharkiv, and Lviv oblasts, 15 to 18% of communities have registered CSO providers, while in Cherkasy, Sumy, and Poltava oblasts, only 1.5% to 3% of communities have such providers.

As the figure and map show, it is typical for Ukrainian communities to have no CSO provider registered in the Register.

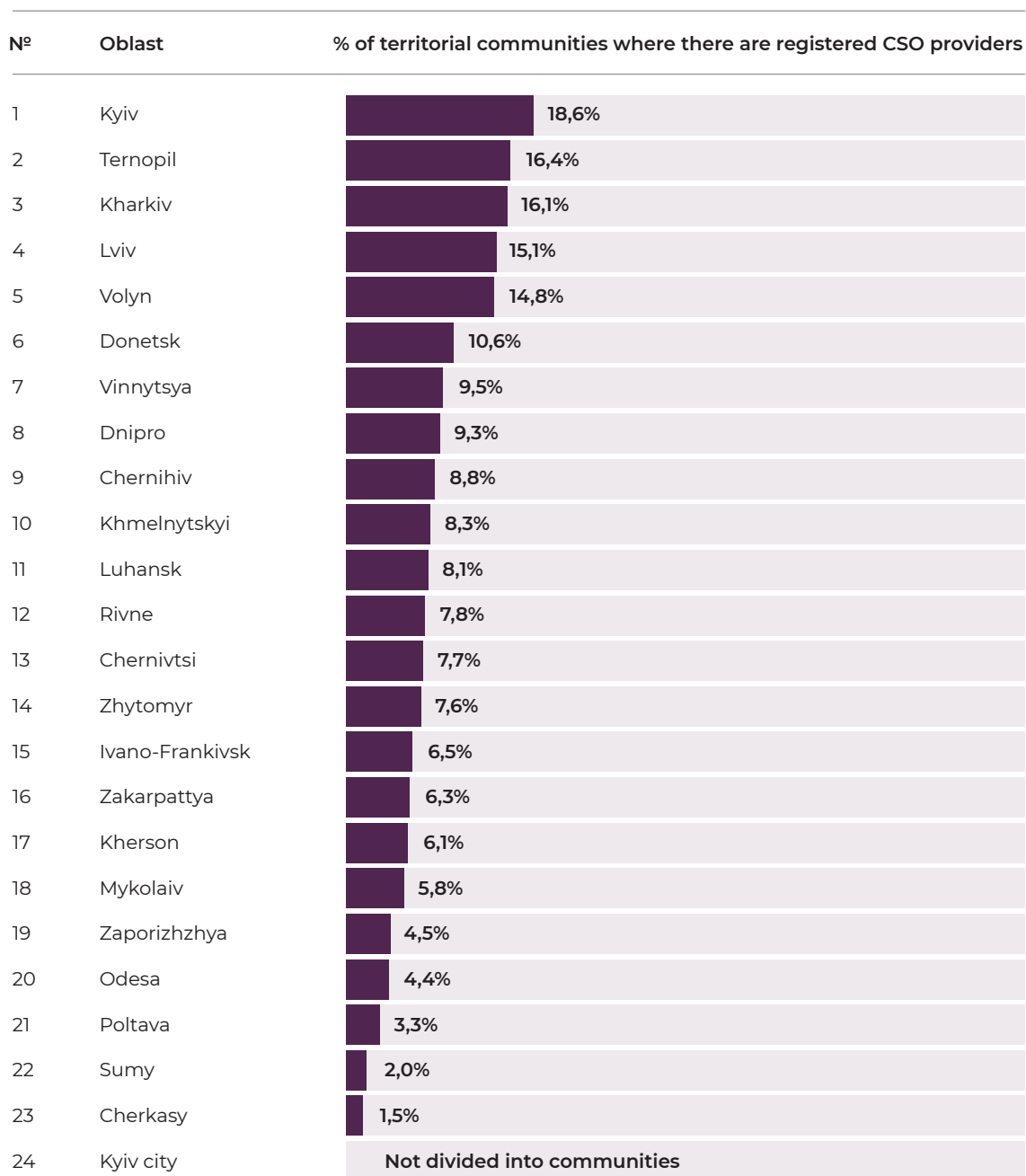
²⁵ SE «ICC of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine»

²⁶ From here on, we will refer to all of these organizational and legal forms as «CSO providers».



Figure 4.

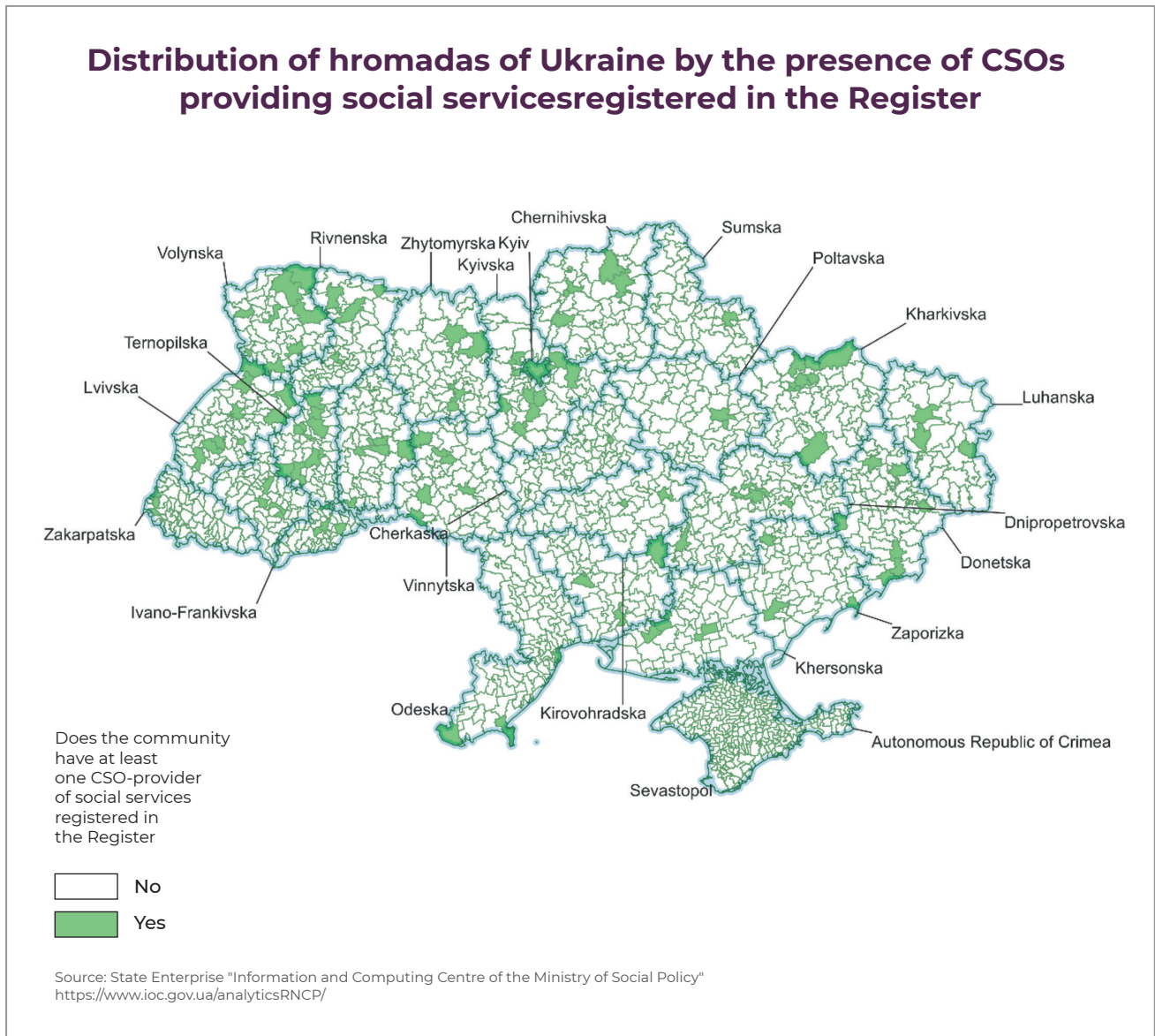
In all oblasts of Ukraine, less than 20% of territorial communities have a CSO social service provider registered in the Register



Data not available for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

Source: State Enterprise 'Information and Computing Centre of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine'
<https://www.ioc.gov.ua/analyticsRNCP/> · Created with Datawrapper

Map 1.



Indeed, registering a CSO provider does not guarantee that it will provide services in communities. Unfortunately, according to the results of the study «**Civil Society of Ukraine in the Context of War**»²⁷ (November-December 2023), only about 25% of CSOs listed in the Register provide social services at the expense of the state or LSGs and receive payments for this. Only one in four CSOs listed in the Register delivers social services and receives funds.

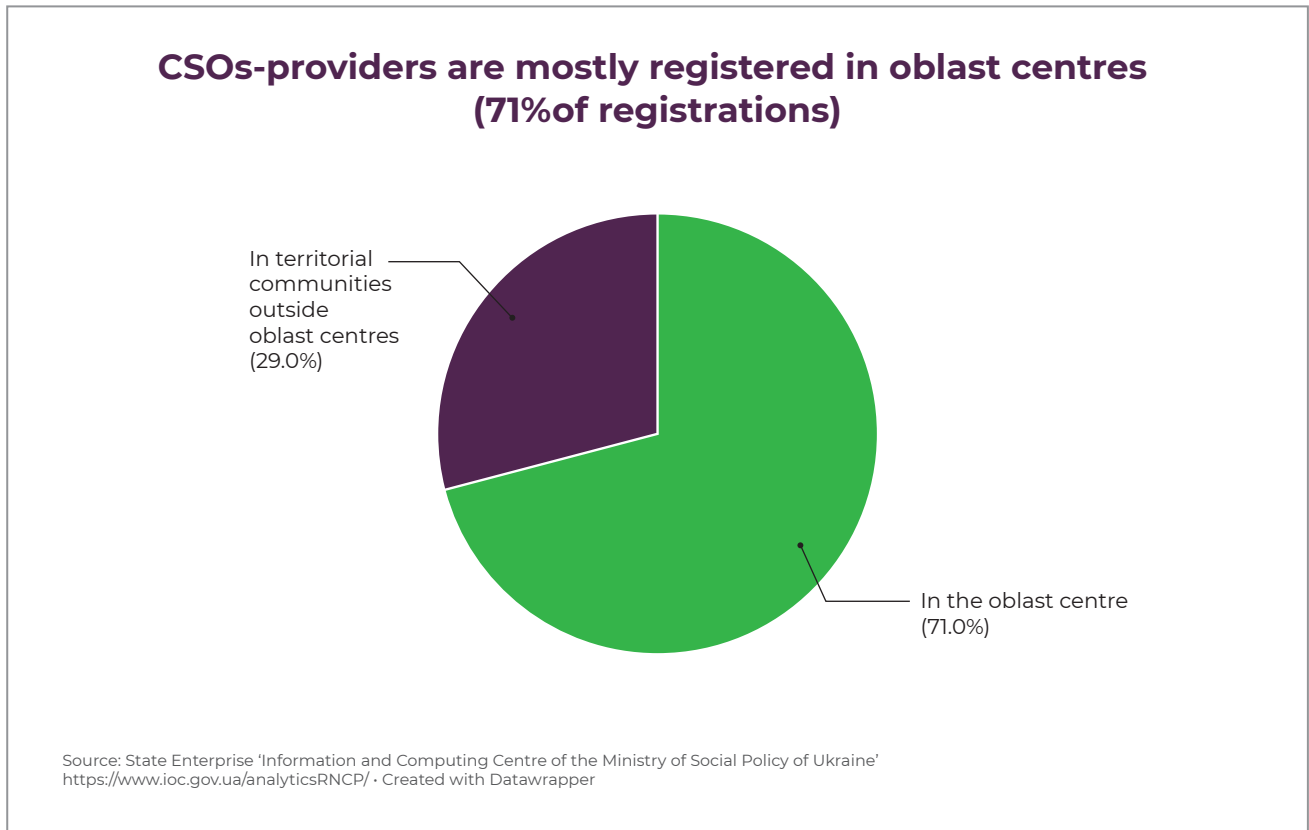
Out of 565 registrations of CSOs-providers in Register²⁸, 399, or 71%, are from Ukraine's oblast centers.

²⁷ *Civil society of Ukraine in the context of war: report on comprehensive sociological research. February 2024.*

²⁸ *As of 4 April 2024.*

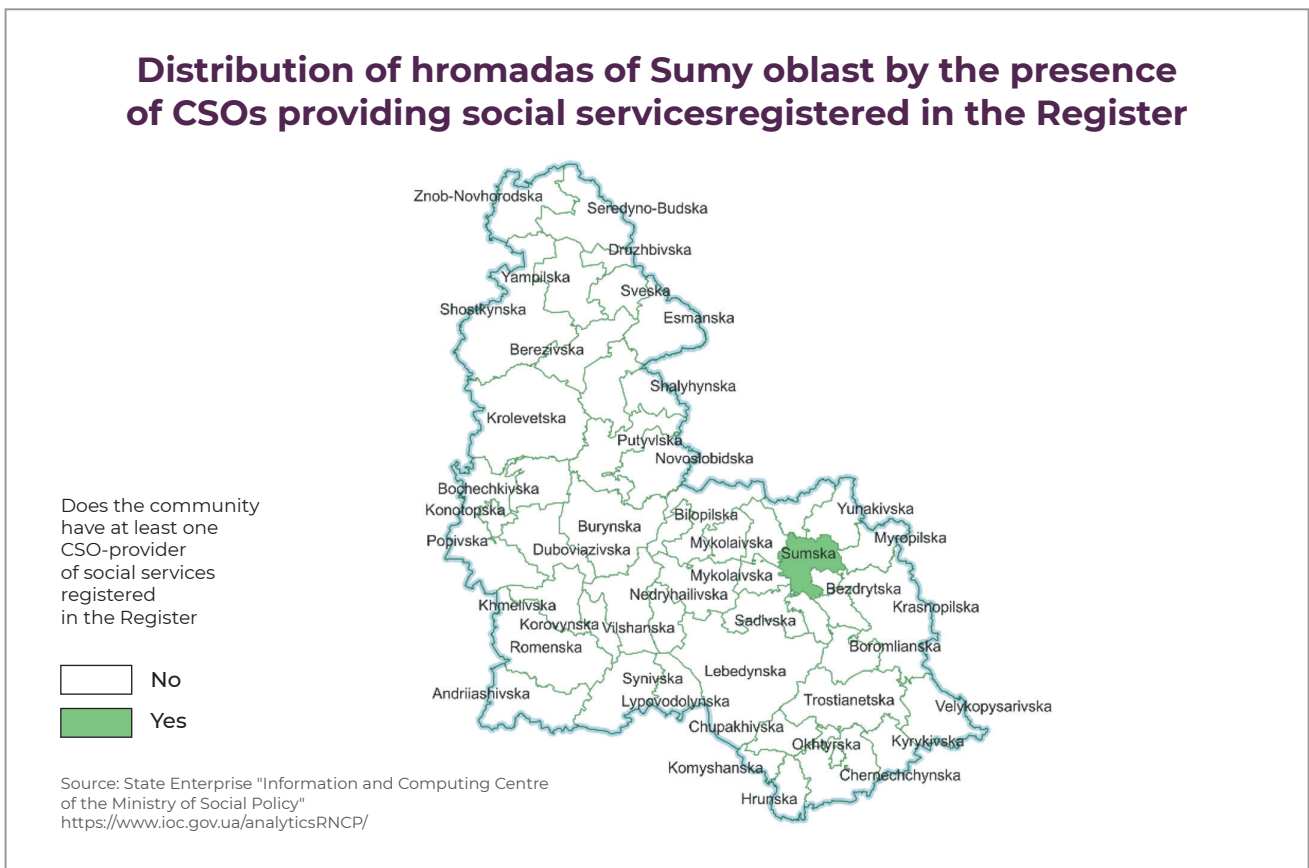


Figure 5.



There are oblasts, such as Sumy, where providers are registered only in the community of the oblast center.

Map 2.

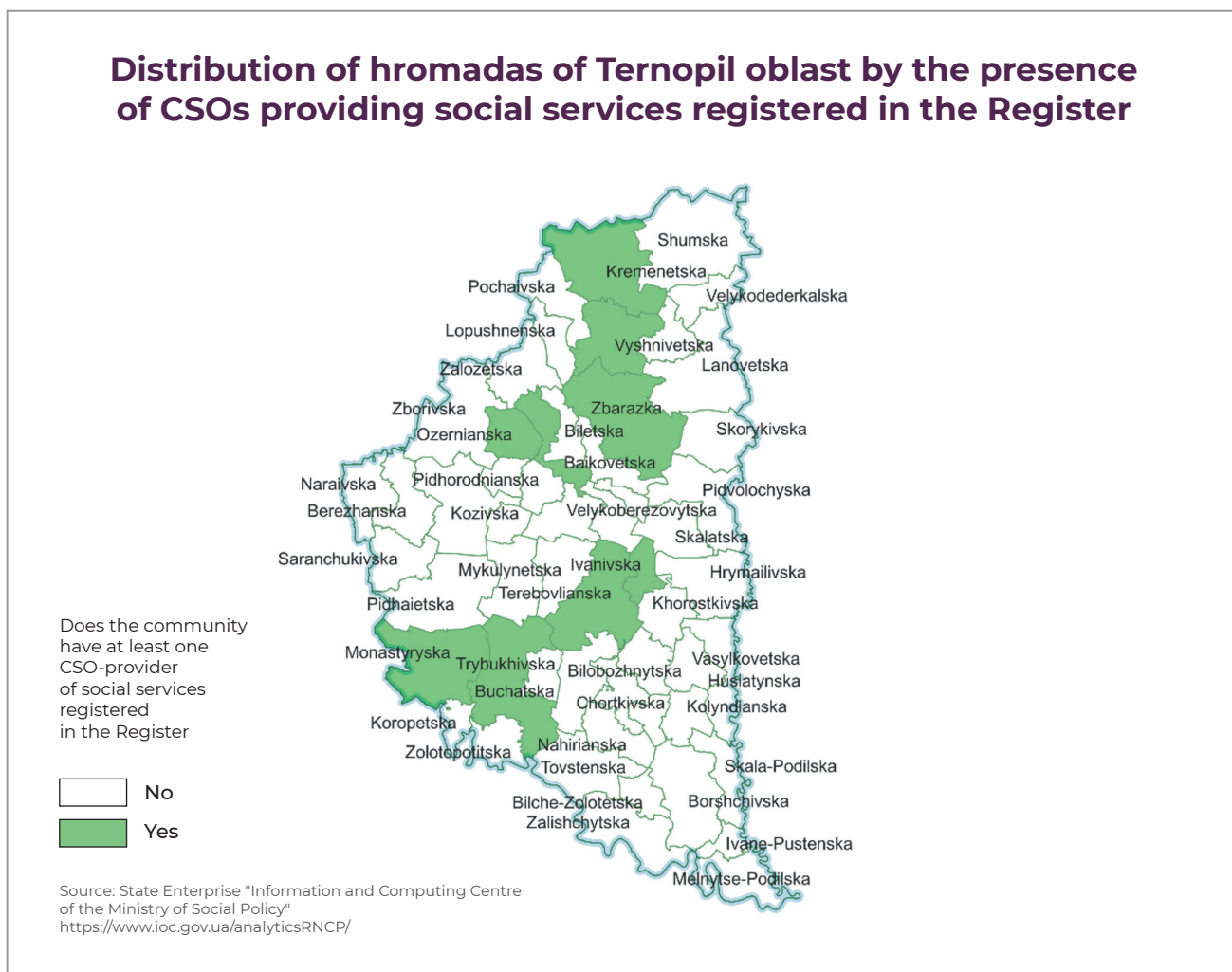


The example of Sumy oblast particularly raises concerns because even before the adoption of the current law on social services in this region, the social services commissioning mechanism was actively implemented in 2017-2018. Still, this process has not become sustainable, and there has been no expansion of CSOs to the oblast communities (at least at the level of registration in the Register):

«The mechanism of social services commissioning over the past year (2017 – Ed.) has shown that it is effective and efficient. It needs to be implemented in ATCs; it is relevant for them because ATCs are now establishing their executive bodies, budgets, and workplaces. And there are two ways to fulfil the state task: to expand the staff and allocate money for it or to use this money to purchase services.»²⁹

Of course, there are also more successful examples, such as Ternopil oblast, where CSOs are registered to provide social services in the oblast center and other towns. However, even in such oblasts, a small share of communities has a registered CSO provider.

Map 3.



²⁹ The mechanism of social services commissioning in Sumy oblast proved to be effective. Published on April 2, 2018.



■ Social services provided by CSOs to veterans and their families, IDPs and civilians affected by war

The survey participants representing CSOs listed the social services that their organizations provide to veterans and their families, internally displaced persons and civilians affected by war³⁰:

- Informing;
- Counselling;
- Social prevention;
- Social support;
- Emergency (crisis) intervention;
- Social adaptation;
- Social integration and reintegration;
- In-kind assistance;
- Care services;
- Transportation services.

Besides, the following services are provided: psychosocial support, recreational activities, and document restoration.

The authors of the study **«Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs»**³¹ (conducted in 2023), based on the results of information collection in 16 communities, described joint projects and activities that some LSGs implemented together with veterans' NGOs:

«...establishing a psychological assistance centre for male and female veterans and their family members, conducting psychological assistance training to create veteran support groups, providing used rehabilitation equipment for temporary free use, purchasing gifts for children of servicemen and servicewomen. In one of the communities, a community building center was created on the basis of its volunteer centre that helped IDPs and veterans, and various events, including ones focused on veterans, are held in public spaces».

Representatives of some communities in the study mentioned above noted that veterans' NGOs could help provide psychological and legal assistance to male and female veterans and inform community residents about proper interaction with this category of people and the families of the deceased. Some communities are interested in purchasing social services for veterans from NGOs.

As for the needs of veterans and their family members, IDPs and civilians affected by the war, their range is wide, depends on their individual life situation and goes beyond the list of social services defined by the law.

³⁰ Research participants indicated this information in the questionnaire they filled out before or after participating in the focus group discussion, without separating services for the veteran community from services for civilians. This list does not reflect all social services available for these categories of clients, as our study is not representative of Ukrainian CSOs.

³¹ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.



■ Needs of veterans and their family members

Participants in focus groups and in-depth interviews believe that female and male veterans and their family members primarily need psychological assistance (including on a peer-to-peer basis), rehabilitation, social adaptation, legal counselling, housing, paperwork, sometimes home care (e.g., assistance in firewood cutting), social support (including during employment), in-kind and financial assistance, advocacy, and health improvement.

«First of all, though, as a point of entry, it is informing as a start. [...] Psychological support is in great demand. And then there are everyday issues. That is, providing housing, rehabilitation, employment, treatment, and so on, based on the person's condition. If they are wounded, especially if they have missing limbs, then they may need home care and assistance as wheelchair users, etc. It also includes solving their domestic issues and many other things, as well as providing them with firewood. Therefore, it is not quite a social service, but still.» – representative of a municipal institution providing social services.

The authors of the **«Study of Approaches to the Provision of Public Services for Veterans: State Policy Trends, List and Models of Service Delivery through CASs»³²** (conducted in 2023) provide a ranking of the veteran community's needs for services (public/administrative, not social, but can be part of the activities within the framework of social service provision). The first place is occupied by obtaining the status of combat participant, which gives access to other services and benefits intended for veterans.

«To identify the most relevant services for the veteran community, we contacted representatives of the CASs where the 'Single Window' or 'I am a veteran' service has been introduced and where active work with veterans and their families is already being conducted. [...] As a result, the most popular service was the service for obtaining the status of combatant (a person with a disability because of war or family members of deceased defenders of Ukraine). The second was employment/self-employment, the third – was educational services, the fourth – was psychological and medical services, the fifth – was housing issues and free legal aid, and the sixth – was benefits (state/local)».

■ Needs of IDPs and war-affected civilians

The research participants believe that the needs of IDPs and war-affected civilians include in-kind assistance, psychological support, legal support, physical support for people with limited mobility, accommodation (including supported accommodation or inpatient care for people with special needs), counselling, employment, home care, and others.

«We have almost 18 thousand IDPs registered in our community. Well, they do need all of the social services that exist. But their needs go beyond social services, as we all know. That's why we try to help them with everything they come to us with.» – representative of a municipal institution providing social services

³² Study of Approaches to the Provision of Public Services for Veterans: State Policy Trends, List and Models of Service Delivery through CASs. Published on February 24, 2024.



Donors and projects working in the field of social services

According to the survey participants, many donors in Ukraine work in the social sector. One respondent even noted that, in her opinion, all donors are involved in the provision of social services:

«... all donors work, to some extent, within the social services framework. Those that are available in Ukraine. Because the directions of all donors in Ukraine are mostly humanitarian, they are indicated in the humanitarian plan. Social services are also a way to provide humanitarian aid. So, you can list all the donors in Ukraine. Social services are a way to improve people's lives. Each donor aims at improving people's lives» – representative of a regional CSO.

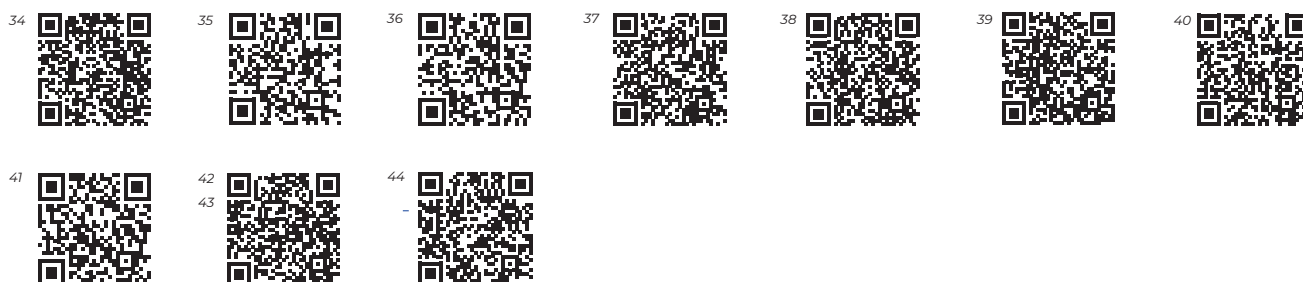
Respondents noted that the UN agencies are very active in the social and humanitarian sphere, engaging implementation partners in the provision of social services:

«Besides, after the outbreak of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in Mykolaiv oblast and Ukraine in general, we started quite actively cooperating with international partners. We have cooperation with all UN agencies: UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, World Food Program, cooperation with OCHA, a humanitarian organization that coordinates the work between partners. Additionally, with their implementation partners, UNHCR has partners that they use to carry out this work, such as the Right to Protection NGO, the Right to Protection CF, and the 10th of April NGO. So why am I listing them like this? Because each of these agencies has a mobile team that provides social services. And they work on the territory of the entire oblast, in different territorial communities.» – OMA representative.

Respondents also mentioned GIZ (Germany), Cordaid (Netherlands), HelpAge International, USAID, German Ministry, International Public Health Alliance, UNAIDS, DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, Government of Canada, Save the Children, Mercy Corps Ukraine, ACTED (France), IREX, Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council and Polish Humanitarian Action³³.

Some of these organizations fund and/or implement projects that mainly provide humanitarian (in-kind) assistance, sometimes medical and psychosocial support, and with local partner organizations' participation. These projects are only partially related to social services. These organizations include Cordaid³⁴, Norwegian Refugee Council³⁵, Polish Humanitarian Action³⁶, DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal³⁷, Save the Children³⁸, Mercy Corps Ukraine³⁹, Danish Refugee Council⁴⁰, USAID⁴¹, Alliance for Public Health^{42 43}, UNAIDS⁴⁴.

³³ This list of international organizations and donors is based on the information provided by the research participants and is not exhaustive.



Other organizations fund and/or implement projects explicitly focused on social services and their providers. For example:

- Over the past few years, GIZ has implemented projects on psychosocial support in Ukraine (creation and development of psychosocial support structures within local civil society initiatives and professional skills) and improvement of social and healthcare services in eastern Ukraine (procurement of equipment, professional consulting support, and training for community-based institutions in cooperation with NGOs)⁴⁵.
- HelpAge International cooperates with the Right to Protection CF and the Care for the Elderly in Ukraine CO with donor support from USAID and the European Commission to provide homecare services, in-kind assistance, and create safe gathering places in communities for older people⁴⁶.
- Other USAID projects include «Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Assisting Vulnerable Groups in Ukraine» (2004-2024), implemented by the International Organization for Migration. As part of the project, a competition was announced to support initiatives explicitly aimed at providing social services to the population of IDP host communities and restoring/expanding social infrastructure affected by hostilities (recipients – LSGs represented by initiative groups that unite all segments of the population, including CSOs)⁴⁷.
- The German government and UNICEF launched the project «TOGETHER. Social Services for Families in Communities», which provides social services and protection for children and their families. As part of the project, UNICEF cooperates with the government, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, volunteers, and the private sector⁴⁸.
- IREX is implementing the Veterans Reintegration Program⁴⁹, which aims at improving the quality and accessibility of services for Ukraine’s veterans, especially for the most vulnerable groups. It focuses on supporting veterans’ employment, providing vocational skills training, and ensuring quality psychosocial and physical rehabilitation services. Another program, connecting through Youth Action (CYLA)⁵⁰, aims at strengthening the capacity of Ukrainian youth to reduce the vulnerability of internally displaced persons (IDPs), resolve conflicts and promote integration to prevent further fractures in society. IREX also grants local CSOs as part of the Ukrainian Rapid Response Fund⁵¹ to address immediate needs, including food or medical distribution, first aid training, and transportation of vulnerable populations.

Some donors fund a wide range of activities that may also include providing social services. For example:

- The Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives in 2023 supported small projects (mainly CSOs, although LSGs, government agencies, and international organizations could also apply) that align with the Government of Canada’s international assistance priorities, such as the priority «Human Dignity, including Health, Education and Nutrition,» which is potentially relevant to the provision of social services⁵².
- In 2024, the French humanitarian organization ACTED announced a competition in Vinnytsia, Odesa, Chernihiv oblasts for women’s and other CSOs, municipal and state institutions that have the potential to create a ‘Day Care Centre’ for children or other categories of people in need of care⁵³.



In general, donor projects in social services can be divided into those that focus on CSOs operating in the legal field as social service providers (they are a minority) and those that focus on a broader range of CSOs. Thematically, we can distinguish between projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations and projects aimed at helping vulnerable groups.

The respondent representing Healthright International and the CF «Ukrainian Foundation for Public Health» (UFPH), which it founded, mentioned partnership with CSOs as a format of interaction. The Ukrainian Foundation for Public Health cooperates with other NGOs in the format of referral of its beneficiaries to receive social services.

It should be emphasized that many donor projects aimed at helping people in difficult life circumstances involve activities that go beyond the framework of Ukrainian legislation on the provision of social services. For example, a representative of the International Renaissance Foundation describes the objectives of the Civic Resilience program aimed at supporting veteran and volunteer communities this way:

«The entire program is built around building a systemic approach, which includes, among other things, favorable legislation and the availability of public funding from taxpayers' money that can be directed to the needs of integration, adaptation, resilience, and social cohesion. Ensure that people who need services more than others or need specific services can receive them in an open and non-discriminatory manner that is favorable to them. So that CSOs could, as I have already said, provide this comprehensive approach, which includes piloting certain services that are available but do not work the way they should.»

Another example is the UNDP project «Supporting the Government of Ukraine in the Development and Implementation of Policies to Ensure the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with a Focus on Rehabilitation» and another organization project aimed at people affected by explosive remnants of war. It is assumed that grantees must be registered in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services. At the same time, the activities of the first project include «developing and piloting at the local level models of rehabilitation and adaptation of persons with disabilities caused by the war»⁵⁴, and the second project involves work following an international standard since no Ukrainian equivalent has been developed.

Some projects involve funding for CSO providers that work following the requirements of Ukrainian legislation and provide standardized social services. For example, the EU4CSOs EmpowerUA subgrant competition stipulates that project proposals will include identifying the needs for social services of the population in the community where the activity is planned to be implemented and providing social services following state standards⁵⁵.

Similarly, projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of CSOs and communities to provide social services do not always require their participants to be registered social service providers. For example, in a call for proposals announced by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Ukraine to promote social service delivery at the community level by strengthening their capacity to provide quality social services⁵⁶, CSOs' compliance with the legal requirements for social service providers is not a condition for participation.



State stakeholders and providers of the social services market

According to Article 11 of the LU «On Social Services»⁵⁷, the authorized bodies of the social services system include:

- The central executive body is the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine.
- The Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and local state administrations (oblast and rayon level).
- Executive bodies of city councils of cities of regional significance and councils of amalgamated territorial communities.

The Ministry of Social Policy ensures the formation of the state policy in the sphere of social protection of the population, provides regulatory, organizational, methodological and information support, creates the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services, and performs monitoring, controlling and coordinating functions at the national level. The Ministry coordinates the activities of such services as the National Social Service of Ukraine⁵⁸ and the State Service of Ukraine for Children⁵⁹.

Oblast and Kyiv state (military) administrations implement state policy in the field of social services provision at the regional level, summaries the results of social service needs assessments conducted in communities, approve, finance, and implement regional social protection programs, perform monitoring, control, and coordination functions, and maintain the Register at the regional level.

Rayon state administrations and executive bodies of local councils determine the population's needs for social services, identify people in difficult life circumstances, ensure the provision of basic social services, maintain the Register at the local level, and approve, finance, and implement local social protection programs.

These bodies' powers include organizing social workers' professional development and monitoring compliance with the law. At the same time, the powers of regional and local institutions also involve informing the population about social services, ensuring the rights of recipients and interaction between social service providers, monitoring the targeted use of funds and quality assessment.

To fulfil the abovementioned tasks, local state administrations and self-governments



⁵⁸ *The functions of the National Social Service are as follows: implementation of policy, social protection of the population and protection of children's rights; exercising state control over the provision of social support and protection of children's rights; methodological support and coordination of actions of authorities and local self-government bodies to ensure children's rights, conduct social work, provide basic social services and social support in accordance with the needs of residents of territorial communities.*

⁵⁹ *The main tasks of the Service are to implement the state policy in the field of child protection; monitor compliance with the requirements of the legislation in the field of child protection; coordinate the provision of social support and social services to families with children, children under guardianship or custody, foster families, families of foster caregivers, family-type children's homes, and adoptive parents; coordinate and provide methodological support to entities providing social support to families with children.*

establish structural units responsible for social protection (departments, offices, divisions)⁶⁰. For example, territorial communities are advised to establish units for social protection and a separate service for children within the structure of the executive body of the local council (regardless of the number of residents) and to ensure their interaction with ASC administrators and other structural units⁶¹.

Also, all of the bodies mentioned above may establish state/municipal institutions for the provision of social services, the activities of which are financed from the relevant budget: social service centers (at the level of oblasts or communities), social service centers, territorial social service centers, boarding schools, shelters, rehabilitation centers, etc.

For example, a representative of the Department of Social Protection of the Population of Mykolaiv Oblast describes the system of social services in Mykolaiv OMA as follows:

«The department generally coordinates activities related to the provision of social services in the Mykolaiv oblast. I would also note that the department is responsible for the methodological function of supporting social service providers. We also work with them by providing them with assistance. We coordinate their work directly about the provision of social services. I would like to say that we currently have 37 social service providers in the region, which were directly established by territorial communities. Besides, we also have oblast institutions that are providers of social services; we have 12 such providers, including an orphanage, a psychoneurological orphanage, a senior facility, an oblast centre for social and psychological rehabilitation, and an oblast centre for social and psychological assistance. As for the providers in the territorial communities, we have a territorial centre for social services, a centre for social services and a centre for providing social services. We also cooperate separately with international partners to engage non-governmental service providers and NGOs that work in the region and represent the interests of certain categories. [...] We closely cooperate with the General Department of the National Social Service Service, which, accordingly, controls them, and with the oblast centre of social services, which also provides training for relevant social work specialists, social workers, and advanced training.» – representative of the OMA

Empirical research («**Development of Social Services during the War**»⁶², conducted in 2022-2023) shows that the actual organization of social services in communities is structured very differently, depending on their needs and capacities:

«In some communities, a structural unit – a department of social protection of the population – has been created, while in others, such a department is in

⁶⁰ The Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine of July 31, 2023, No. 263-N «On Approval of Methodological Recommendations for the Development of Regulations on Structural Units for Social Protection of the Population of Local State Administrations and Organization of Territorial Community Activities in the Fields of Social Protection of the Population and Protection of Children's Rights» describes the recommended structure and powers of social protection units within local state administrations and local governments.

⁶² Development of social services during the war. Prepared by advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF.



the process of liquidation. There are communities where a social development department has been established at the city council's executive committee, but there is no structural unit of the social protection department. The situation with municipal institutions – territorial centers for social services – is identical: in some communities, they have been established, while in others, they have not. Only an authorized person – a social worker – provides social services. In some communities, there is a social protection department, a territorial center for social services, and a center for the provision of social services, while in others, there may be only a social protection department within the executive committee of the city council.»⁶³

Participants in focus groups and in-depth interviews confirm that the situation in communities may differ depending on their capacity (financial and human resources):

«But let's take a community that is a bit poorer, much poorer, where people are also in need. They have the same needs, but it is unrealistic to afford to create not even a sector but a social protection department. Because it will consume the entire budget for their apparatus. [...] For example, they may have a joint department of education, medicine, culture, other things and social protection instead of having a separate department of social protection.» – OMA representative

MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL SERVICES PROVISION BY CSOS: LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND PRACTICAL DIMENSION

Identification of the community's need for social services

■ Legislative framework

The needs for social services are determined by the Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine of April 19, 2023, No. 130-N «On Approval of the Procedure for Determining the Needs of the Population of an Administrative-Territorial Unit/Territorial Community for Social Services»⁶⁴.

According to this order, to determine the needs of the population for social services, a local self-government or district state administration (in Kyiv and Sevastopol) should create a working group, which may include, in addition to representatives of the authorities and local self-government, representatives of CSOs and other stakeholders. The population's needs in social services for the medium term are determined once every three years and annually for the short term.

⁶³ *Development of social services during the war. Prepared by advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF.*



To collect the necessary data during the **medium-term** social survey, the local social protection authority sends an information request to local governments, enterprises, institutions, organizations and social facilities or obtains it from state electronic information resources. By doing so, data are collected on the socio-demographic situation and the number of vulnerable groups, social service providers and their resources, availability of social services for vulnerable groups, organizational capacity of the territorial community to provide social services to the population, etc. In addition, surveys, interviews, and focus groups are conducted to determine community residents' awareness and need for social services. To organize and conduct surveys, interviews, focus groups and other data collection activities, experts in social work, sociology, social services, and representatives of scientific institutions are involved.

Additionally, the local social protection authority annually determines the population's needs for social services and plans measures to provide them **in the short term**. In particular, for each social service, the number of individuals/families whose need for social services is unmet is determined, and the community's organizational capacity to provide social services is assessed.

During the state of emergency or martial law on the territory of Ukraine or its separate areas, a **monthly analysis** is carried out to ensure that people are provided with social services on an emergency (crisis) basis. Information is collected on 1) the number of persons who applied for social services on an emergency (crisis) basis and persons/families who received applications/notifications about the need for social services; 2) the number of persons/families who received social services on an emergency (crisis) basis.

■ Practical dimension

■ Assessment of needs for social services in communities

The respondents – representatives of LSGs and municipal institutions that provide social services – claim that they assess community needs for social services by the current legislation. At the same time, some representatives of social protection departments of OSAs/OMAs, municipal institutions at the oblast level, and CSOs claim that some communities do not conduct needs assessments or treat them formally («they often spin data out of thin air»). A representative of one of the OMAs informed that the Department of Social Protection, which she represents, does not even know how many communities in the oblast conduct needs assessments.

«The assessment of the needs of the entire population, or the population segments, is not conducted. The state does not go like this: we will cover this share ourselves and let the NGOs do this one. [...] If NGOs or donor organizations do a needs assessment and some kind of territorial assessment, the state does not even have this approach. You know a certain number of people who live on the territory. But the state is not interested in the needs of these people.» – representative of a regional CSO

Other empirical research confirms that social service needs assessment is not always done in communities. This is pointed out by the authors of the study **«Development of Social Services during the War»**⁶⁵ (2022-2023), which was conducted in Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv and Chernivtsi oblasts at the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023. The authors emphasize that if a community

⁶⁵ *Development of social services during the war. Prepared by advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF.*



does not determine the needs of its population for social services, it violates the law and cannot properly plan the provision of services on its own or purchase them from other providers, approve tariffs for social services, and risks inefficient use of local budget funds. The problem in this context is the lack of a mechanism to hold accountable those whose actions or inaction failed to conduct a social service needs assessment in the community.

Another empirical research, **«Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs»**⁶⁶ (2023), makes the following observation, which generally confirms and complements what was said by participants in focus groups and in-depth interviews:

«But we have also noticed that some communities treat service needs assessment as a formality. This is mainly not a manifestation of the lack of understanding of the importance of this assessment by the representatives of local authorities but is primarily due to the limited resources of communities and the prioritization of service provision here and now. [...] These factors often lead to the needs assessment being carried out in a simplified manner. That is, by sending information requests to social service providers about the number of services provided and the number of people receiving them and collecting basic available socio-demographic information about community residents. [...] Representatives and senior officials of some LSGs confirmed that sometimes communities underestimate the scope of needs of the population's needs for social services and other types of assistance or formulate them to be realistically met with available resources when assessing the population's needs for social services and other [...] In addition to a simplified approach to needs assessment, we have noticed that needs assessment and the identification of individuals and families in need and/or in DLC in communities is often quite informal.»

Another study **«Legislation Regulating the Provision of Social Services in Ukraine and Ways to Improve It»**⁶⁷ (published in 2021) provides observations on how the results of social service needs assessments in Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia, Kramatorsk, Mariupol, and Dnipro were made public in 2020. The authors emphasize that such information is published irregularly, is incomplete and fragmented, and does not take into account non-governmental sector providers:

«The analysis of data on the covered/unmet needs for social services in communities shows that such information is mostly not regularly published by local authorities on official resources, and the small part of the information that is available is not comprehensive and mostly does not take into account the data of non-governmental sector providers. Information on those service recipients who had grounds to receive services but did not receive them due to the lack of services in the institution or overcrowding is usually absent. The records reflect the data on people who received services or sought counselling. The disaggregation of statistical information by each standard is also not used by all providers. In general, official statistics are rarely summarized in a single report for the community, and mostly remain and are presented on the official pages of city councils/relevant departments in the form of reports of individual institutions.»

⁶⁶ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.



⁶⁷ Rostyslav Kis', Olesia Balian. *Legislation regulating the provision of social services in Ukraine and ways to improve it*. Analytical report. Published in 2021.



■ Barriers to conducting needs assessments in some communities

Among the reasons why community needs assessments are not carried out properly, respondents point to the lack of interest of the territorial community leadership in social protection, the lack or poor training of people who should be involved in such assessments, and security risks/depopulation of territories because of hostilities.

«They did not conduct a needs assessment. They do not rely on it. They either say that there are no funds or that it's nonsense to provide something to people experiencing homelessness. Well, this is a worldview thing.» – OMA representative.

«They try to do the needs assessment. They are just not able to cover the area that was assigned to them, and they are unable to do it properly. I mean, they will do it, they will report. But I understand that they have not dug as deeply as they should have.» – OMA representative.

The authors of the study **«Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs»**⁶⁸ (2023) also indicate a physical shortage of personnel as a reason for not conducting needs assessments in some communities.

■ Ways to conduct an assessment of needs

Representatives of municipal institutions that provide social services in communities describe the procedure for assessing the need for social services in accordance with the order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. However, even though the order recommends involving professionals in social work, sociology, social services, and representatives of scientific institutions in conducting surveys and other data collection activities, none of the respondents reported engaging external specialists.

«Well, a working group is created at the community level. Then, statistical information is collected or analyzed, and certain development trends are identified. A forecast is made of how these trends will develop. A survey is conducted: a survey of community residents, a survey of subjects, i.e. professionals. As a result of all this, the existing needs are identified. Among these needs, priority areas are identified. And it is determined what we will develop this year, next year, and so on.» – representative of a municipal institution providing social services.

«We take our data and cooperate with the Department of Social Policy, the Child and Family Service, and other service providers. And then we submit all this information to the social policy department (of the city council – Ed.)» – representative of a municipal institution providing social services.

In the opinion of one of the respondents from the OMA representatives, the passport of the territorial community, which is usually created during the formation of the community, can

⁶⁸ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.



also be a primary source of information on the community's needs for social services. The passport, in addition to the total population, may indicate the number of people falling into vulnerable categories: people with disabilities, large families, etc⁶⁹. However, when it comes to reality, this information is not always indicated or may not be updated for a long time⁷⁰, which is also confirmed by the observations of the authors of this report and a brief review of the passports of some territorial communities.

«If the head of the territorial community has analyzed which categories live on the territory of his/her territorial community, then I think it is clear that there is an assessment of the relevant needs because we understand that, like, we have a certain number of people who fall into a certain category, a certain number of people with disabilities, a certain number of elderly people. Next, when we talk about developing programs, which are also included in every support program, I mean, social institution, on the territory of each territorial community, we understand that some activities are developed for a reason, activities are designed for a specific category of citizens who need social services, because funding is provided only where there is a need, respectively.» – representative of the OMA.

There were also reports of assessing community needs for social services as a part of the pilot project «Improving the system of social work and social service provision in 6 target oblasts⁷¹ by analyzing the state of organization and provision of social services in the territorial communities of these oblasts, identifying providers and determining needs for digitalization of processes», implemented by the NGO «League of Social Workers»⁷² and funded by UNDP⁷³.

One of the respondents, who represents a community with a well-developed social protection system, said that in making decisions, the community leadership is also guided by observation and a general understanding of the situation:

«Life itself tells us the needs. For example, the war breaks out. We realize that a lot of people suffer from psychological, gender, and socially determined violence. From the very first days of the war, we started to see guys who... had their psyche destroyed in the early days, with no arms, no legs, and so on. And we realized that we needed to create a center for psychological assistance at the Center for Social Services. [...] Then the war continues, we see that there is no end in sight, and there is a need for crisis rooms.» – representative of an LSG.

⁶⁹ However, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of April 8, 2015 No. 214 «On Approval of the Methodology for the Formation of Capable Territorial Communities», namely, the community passport template, does not require such information.

⁷⁰ Why do ATCs need community passports? Published on December 25, 2018.

⁷¹ Chernihiv, Poltava, Mykolaiv, Chernivtsi, Sumy, and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts (Kharkiv in another source).

⁷² Projects of the NGO «League of Social Workers».

⁷³ Supporting families, promoting people's resilience, and developing social services are priorities of social policy, – Uliana Tokareva. Published on July 5, 2023.



■ Social services most in demand in communities

The respondents representing LSGs and municipal institutions that provide social services named the services that are in most demand in the communities⁷⁴. It should be noted that in each community, the respondents mainly named different services, as they based their answers on the services that are required among those already implemented (each TC may have a broader or narrower list). The demand was determined by the number of potential service recipients and the extent to which the beneficiaries (albeit few) needed it. In their opinion, the most demanded services regarding the number of beneficiaries are in-kind assistance, home care, social prevention and informing. It was also noted that people in difficult life circumstances often need financial support, employment and help in finding housing (these are not considered as separate social services). One of the respondents said that the following services had been implemented in their community and are in great demand among beneficiaries: daycare and social rehabilitation for persons (children) with disabilities, social support for families in difficult life circumstances, social taxi and support during inclusive education. Although the number of people covered by these services is minor, these services have a great positive impact.

The authors of the research **«Development of Social Services in Time of War»**⁷⁵ (2022-2023), based on the results of a non-representative survey of 90 recipients of social services in 13 communities in Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv and Chernivtsi oblasts, indicate that in-kind assistance (food, sanitation and personal hygiene products, clothing, footwear and other essentials), as well as information, counselling, social adaptation and shelter are in most significant demand. Respondents frequently mentioned that they needed more humanitarian aid and affordable housing.

The full-scale invasion has affected the needs of communities: first, the number of people with disabilities living alone has significantly increased, as their relatives have evacuated abroad; second, the number of families of active and deceased military personnel, as well as orphans who lost one or both parents during the war, has significantly grown.

Calculation of the cost of social services

■ Legislative framework

The cost of social services is determined by the Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine of December 07, 2015 No. 1186 «On Approval of the Methodological Recommendations for Calculating the Cost of Social Services»⁷⁶, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of June 01, 2020 No. 428 «On Approval of the Procedure for Regulating Tariffs for Social Services»⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Given the small number of communities that participated in the research, it is not possible to extrapolate these findings to all communities.

⁷⁵ Development of social services during the war. Prepared by advocacy analysts of the CF «Right to Protection».



and Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of June 1, 2020 No. 429 «On Approval of the Procedure for Establishing Differentiated Fees for the Provision of Social Services»⁷⁸.

Estimating the cost of social services is necessary for both state/municipal and NGO providers who wish to receive budget funding or provide paid services.

The methodological recommendations contain formulas for calculating the cost of a social service, including a list of typical categories of expenses. When determining the cost of a social service, the cost of providing such a service to one recipient for one person-hour, the time it takes to provide it, and the number of recipients are considered. It is recommended to independently determine the amounts of individual categories and/or items of expenditures based on the cost of labor, goods, works and services in the respective administrative-territorial unit.

■ Practical dimension

■ Calculating the cost of social services according to the methodology of the Ministry of Social Policy

Municipal institutions that provide social services are guided by methodological recommendations of the Ministry of Social Policy and resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to determine the cost of social services and tariffs for social services. Respondents who represented OMAs, LSGs and municipal providers did not see any particular difficulties in calculating. If necessary, the social protection departments of the OMAs provide methodological training to the staff of the LSGs, advising them on how to calculate the cost of social services according to the law.

«There are specific formulas that take into account direct and indirect costs. They include salaries, utilities, and all the costs involved in providing the service. And then, in fact, as a result of this, we have a price for the service. It is calculated in the equivalent of a person-hour. [...] Therefore, the calculation is not that difficult.» – representative of an OMA.

On the other hand, CSOs face difficulties when calculating the cost of social services according to the Ministry of Social Policy methodology. Firstly, the methodology can be complicated and incomprehensible for a person who encounters it for the first time, even if there are methodological explanations and videos.

«For me, it is tough. I'm not a financier, not an accountant, but I have to calculate the cost of equipment, water, rent, paper, and cars. You have to exclude all the other specialists in the office and rely on the social worker who provides the social service. Then, calculate how much time they will spend according to the state standard per person. Well, I'm telling you that I tried to figure it all out for several weeks, and I couldn't. I realized that I would not even be able to explain it properly to our financiers, so we, unfortunately, gave up on it.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

Secondly, the overall cost of services provided by CSOs may be higher than services provided by municipal institutions, as the former have to rent premises, pay the total cost of utilities or



purchase goods. In contrast, the latter do not have these expenses or spend less. Therefore, if a CSO intends to receive funding from the state or local budgets, it sometimes has to cut costs significantly to fit into a pre-determined funding limit calculated for a municipal institution.

«You do realize that as for calculating the cost, if we take the resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers and orders of the Ministry of Social Policy, this law 'On Social Services,' it sets... it sets the provision of services within a specific framework. And it is effective, again, only when you have everything. When you have purchased goods, when you have premises, you don't need to rent them. Because very often NGOs provide services not on their premises, but on rented ones.» – donor representative.

«Well, I've already mentioned that the real cost of people's work and the corresponding service is much higher than the state calculates. And sometimes, when people from the state see our calculations, we submit them, and they look at them and say it's too much. It's way too much. But they don't understand what the service consists of. It does not only directly include what the beneficiary receives. There are also rent and many different expenditure items that one service is divided into. [...] We also had to cut the cost to a minimum to fit into the program, which already had a budget. That is, it had a calculation for a specific program.» – representative of a regional CSO.

Third, the Ministry of Social Policy's methodology suggests calculating wages based on the salaries and other remuneration terms provided by the current legislation. However, wages calculated based on such a tariff scale are meagre. In addition, they are not competitive with the rates international organizations offer for the same work.

«It is very complicated, and the numbers are unrealistic. They are not realistic at all. Imagine the process, for example, of a civil society organization with experts who have united and are ready to provide. In that case, they have an intellectual resource or whatever they should have. The specialists are already trained. So, for that amount of money, no one will provide this service unless at least 2-3 tariffs are added on top, for sure.» – representative of a regional CSO.

«If we refer to psychologists, the price of involving a good psychologist or psychotherapist in a project has greatly increased after large international organizations stepped in and changed this procedure. I am not saying that this is a disadvantage. Let people, specialists, have the opportunity to receive decent remuneration for their work. But now we cannot, in my opinion, rely on, for example, the state average salary of a psychologist or a specialist in schools or similar public institutions. Because when people have specialized education and are involved in international projects, they are not ready to accept the rates we offer.» – representative of an international/national CSO

Given above, CSO representatives do not see any possibility of significantly reducing the price of social services for state institutions and local self-government bodies, except when part of the costs is covered by CSOs themselves or another funding source. Reducing prices may result in deterioration of the quality of services or severe financial risks for CSOs, given inflation and the need to reserve funds in case of force majeure.

«Look, we are not commercial organizations. We set a real price. And even if it can be reduced, I think by no more than 10%. And I would not advise my colleagues or other colleagues to do that because dumping such services in the market is not how we should go. People who work for the state for the bare minimum, the minimum wage, cannot provide quality services. If we want to imitate services, we can reduce prices. If we want to provide services for the real cost, as they cost, then we should not reduce anything.» – representative of a regional CSO.

«Because we are covering inflation, especially now, and we cannot even imagine what it will be like in six months. That is, when we budget now if we budget even less, then you can find yourself in a situation where you cannot pay for anything with this money. That's one side of it. On the other hand, the categories of people we work with always involve constant risks and unexpected situations. That is, it can involve severe health problems, especially when we consider assisted living. Of course, if it's assisted living, we provide support in all matters. And what if someone, God forbid, requires an operation or something like that, and it's not even in the budget? That is, NGOs have a huge burden of administrative but unpredictable expenses. And it is complicated to ask for these funds even from donors.» – representative of a regional CSO

■ Calculating the cost of social services for donor funding

The calculation of the cost of social services provision for donor organizations is based on a different principle and is generally more accessible for CSOs. Potential grantees fill out forms provided by the donor, in which they describe what resources they will attract to achieve their goals and how much it will cost.

«Our activities are much broader, so we don't aim at determining the cost of one particular service, right? And this is different from how it works in the public sector, right? It is different. We have forms they submit to explain how they will carry out their activities. The number of staff involved, the equipment, the expected results. Here, the logical approach works more: the number of people who will be served, who will receive the service, and the costs that are planned for this service, right? We look at the necessary staff and the number of clients who can receive the service. Thus, we can either support it or not. This is a completely different approach than in the public sector. That is why organizations are not eager to apply to the public sector; they have slightly different calculation requirements. And most organizations do not know these calculation methods.» – donor representative.

According to representatives of donor organizations, funding applications are evaluated in terms of both their validity and economic feasibility, as well as the average price level on the market.

«But first of all, grantees come to us with certain proposals, and our program managers, who have sectoral expertise, specifically in a particular area of social services, and our financial managers assess how relevant this proposal is. Plus, we receive more than one application. For example, we may receive 100 applications, and 90 have a certain level of comparability. That is, they are not identical, obviously, but they are comparable. And then ten more are either significantly lower or significantly higher. At least the figures raise questions.

That is, there is always an opportunity to check with market indicators, indicators used by the state.»

■ Problem of administrative costs

Representatives of regional and national/international CSOs mentioned the problem of obtaining funding to cover administrative expenses, such as the work of a lawyer or accountant or certain technical things, such as proper software to protect sensitive data. According to the Ministry of Social Policy methodology, the share of administrative costs in the budget for providing a social service cannot exceed 15%. According to CSO representatives, donors are also mainly reluctant to finance this budget item, although these funds are vital for ensuring the stable functioning of organizations. At the same time, this problem is not typical for municipal social service providers, who know they can count on long-term funding, including payment of salaries to their staff.

«I think there are typical challenges, and in fact, a typical challenge is administrative costs that no budgets want to cover. In any case, whether you work with donors, with business, or with other sources of income, one of the top issues is the issue of administrative costs. There are organizations that are sympathetic to this issue and even provide for certain items for the team, because all projects are implemented by people. But, in general, this is the most common challenge: understanding that a project, the purchase of certain materials, for example, the organization of a distribution, will not distribute the materials by itself. And especially, if it doesn't involve paying project managers and people directly involved in the distribution, it is, say, legal services, the work of an accountant. These people are in the back office; they are necessary for the project to be implemented correctly and by the norms, but they are not direct participants in the service. [...] Therefore, these things always remain a big issue and require additional efforts to ensure the team, stability of its work and basic tools for its work.» – representative of an international/national CSO

Ways to obtain funding for social service provision

■ Legislative framework

According to the current legislation, there are several ways to finance social services of CSOs from the state budget:

- **Social services commissioning** is a way of organizing social services when the community enters into agreements with independent suppliers to perform specific tasks based on the population's needs. Contractors are selected on a competitive basis. Funding is provided after the actual provision of social services as reimbursement for their cost.
- **Pre-threshold public procurement.** The winner is selected not by a tender commission but using so-called electronic «reductions» on authorized electronic platforms when the highest price for the goods sold is first announced. The rates are reduced until the first buyer agrees to this rate, and so the goods are sold to this buyer. Non-price evaluation criteria account for up to 30% of all evaluation parameters. Qualification requirements may be set, and non-price criteria may be taken into account.
- **Above-threshold public procurement.** Main procedures: open competitions (tenders); competitive dialogue (when the contracting authority cannot determine the type of **services**

required or at least three tender proposals have been rejected); negotiation procedure (no competition; natural disasters or other urgent needs; tenders have been canceled twice).

- **Support of CSOs' activities for implementing local programs/subsidies from the state and local budgets, trust funds, and state and local target programs.** This does not include direct funding of services but rather funding of events or support of the organization's activities. The activities financed this way must align with the activities envisaged by the relevant local program. This method is mainly used for one-time or short-term events. Procedures are usually non-competitive.
- **Competitions of civil society organizations' programs (projects):** rating and evaluation of competitive proposals that meet the priorities of state and local programs. For example:
 - **Local «participatory budgets»** are electronic competitions (at particular points or in the form of public consultations) for public projects in the areas defined for the budget year that have collected a certain number of signatures from community residents.
 - **Competitive bidding for resilience building services**^{79 80}: legal entities or individual entrepreneurs included in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services assemble a team of social managers, psychologists and social work specialists and, after passing the competitive selection, start providing a comprehensive resilience building service in a room prepared and provided by the community. Every month, the provider reports on the work performed and receives the appropriate payment from the budget (from the Fund for Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities). The territorial community can also attract other sources of funding (charitable donations, etc.).
 - **Agreement with the Fund for Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities on the provision of social support services for military units**^{81 82}: The Fund will directly purchase social services from providers of such services – legal entities, individual entrepreneurs, public and charitable organizations that meet the criteria of a social service provider and some additional criteria regarding the number and qualifications of employees, etc. The Fund will make payment under the contract and per the services provided at the expense of the state budget.
 - **Other forms: public-private partnerships, social entrepreneurship, indirect financing from local budgets, etc.**

⁷⁹ Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. *Building resilience*.

⁸⁰ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1049 of October 03, 2023 «On the Implementation of a Pilot Project on the Introduction of a Comprehensive Social Service for Resilience Building» (as amended).

⁸¹ Social support for military personnel and their families: The government supported the pilot project. Published on October 3, 2023.

⁸² Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of October 3, 2023 No. 1050 «On the Implementation of a Pilot Project on the Introduction of a Contractual Form of Provision of Social Services for Social Support of Servicemen and Members of Their Families in Military Units of the Armed Forces».



■ Practical dimension

The survey participants listed several ways to obtain funding for social services that CSOs can use (and do use in their practice). The most common way is non-budgetary funding, primarily receiving funds from donors. Other options for obtaining funds other than from the state and local budgets are:

- Citizen donations/fundraising;
- Cooperation with business:

«It was either the companies that sort of took a social responsibility, and they supported some direction of our activity, or it was a group of businessmen who supported us with their joint efforts, who made charitable contributions.» – representative of a regional CSO.

«Some may give products for free; others may give them at completely different prices than they are presented in stores.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

- Social entrepreneurship:

«We founded an enterprise where women work, bake cookies and sell them. The profits from the activity are redirected to the shelter, which is supported with these funds. But this is a very, very small share. That is, for the most part, this social business is for women to grow, to be employed and to have their income, rather than for the organization to have income.» – representative of a regional CSO

The research participants confirm that CSOs also obtain funding from the state and local budgets (not only territorial communities but also oblast budgets) in the ways defined by law. These methods include:

- Social order:

«The local community opens a tender and determines the services it wants to receive according to the standard. It determines the range, requirements for providers, place of delivery. And the estimated budget as well. This imposes a rather serious requirement for preparation from the community, which is a disadvantage. In any case, everything is transferred from the Department of Social Protection to the responsibility of a particular CAS, the actual provider who knows the problem from the inside and can define the terms of such a tender. After the tender is held, a commission is convened to determine the winner. [...] It usually takes about 2.5-3 months for the decision to be made, from when the tender is announced to when the services are provided. It is not very flexible; it is a rigid method of providing services. Nevertheless, local communities use it.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

- Public procurement (e.g., funding through an annual tender procedure as reimbursement of salaries and related expenses from LSGs based on a cooperation agreement):

«Why is it used more often? Because it is more convenient for the local deputies, using this method is more profitable and familiar. Because it's the

same way they buy asphalt and light bulbs for street lamps. So, everything is the same here. As in the previous case, the local community sets the requirements. The requirements are put into an online database for reduction. [...] That is, the priority here is pricing. Accordingly, all other effects are relegated to the background, if we discuss pricing. That is the experience of the provider, its interaction and positive feedback. [...] Accordingly, the competition also takes place in this case. It is faster because it is electronic. Funds are also provided, a report on the performed work is submitted as a result of the tender, and the respective remuneration is paid.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

«We have experience procuring services at the expense of the social protection program of the city authorities, and these were city funds. The disadvantage is that, first of all, nobody needs it. [...] You see, officials did not want to do anything themselves. I was preparing documents, submissions, and calculations. I was present on budget committees. I understand that it was supposed to be carried out by some social protection agency, some representative of social protection, and not by a representative of a CSO from whom these services were then purchased.» – representative of a regional CSO

- Tenders for public projects in the framework of local programs / socio-cultural projects:

«The third method is socio-cultural projects. It is a little different because the local community does not say what it will buy or how it will buy it. And it's easier for the community. Because they are not involved in the actual bid process or its preparation, they simply announce a common pot of money intended for these social and cultural projects. That is, proposals for an open tender can be included in this pool, for example, re-equipping a playground and creating a ramp for people with disabilities near a school. At the same time, it is a social service. By the way, the ministry denied that such a practice exists. Still, I proved it by simply providing links to announcements of specific local communities that have purchased services this way, up to 450 thousand per recipient. That's why it's easier for the local community. They don't talk about anything, they don't worry about anything, and in fact, all the proposals are prepared by the providers themselves. There is a commission, of course, but it determines the winner according to the priority, whether the community needs it or not, whether the mayor is in the mood to do it or not, so they decide on the winner.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

- Tender as part of the local participatory budget:

«They are more common in the community. Similarly to the previous option, there is no specific order for a service, meaning that there are important cultural, historical, civilizational, economic, and other projects, including social ones, to which social services should be attributed. Accordingly, if an organization sufficiently substantiates its proposal, it can receive these funds and report on their provision.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

- Local programs to support NGOs (for example, in the form of paying for most of the utilities by the city council);
- State support for national NGOs of persons with disabilities and veterans;

- Competition for the provision of resilience building services (experimental project that starts to be implemented):

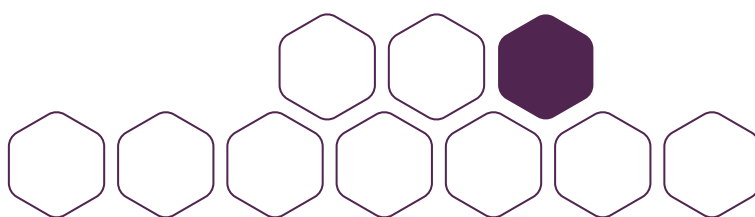
«This means that resilience centers are places, where people can receive a full range of social services, i.e. on the principle of a single entry, a single window for receiving social services. This is, in my opinion, a pretty good idea and a great example of what can be done similarly to CASs, as for documents, to bring all providers together in one place, and this would speed up the provision of such social services.» – representative of an OMA.

- Agreement with the Fund for Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities to provide social and psychological support to military personnel (starting to be implemented):

«Resolution 1050, social and psychological support for the military, reflects the progressive method we discussed earlier, i.e., we are talking about direct contracts with the provider.

That is, the provider comes directly to an agreement, a contract with the Social Insurance Fund for Persons with Disabilities and receives reimbursement of its expenses for providing services without competition, simply based on the contract and submitted documents. There is even a tariff approved in this resolution. It is 317 UAH for one hour of social and psychological support and adaptation of service members, and this tariff has already been approved in the contract with the contracting party. Accordingly, the number of contracted hours is reimbursed at this price.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

The respondents who represent OSA/OMA inform that the procurement of social services from CSOs at the expense of local budgets is or has been carried out in the oblast, but it is not a very common practice. The study «**Legislation Regulating the Provision of Social Services in Ukraine and Ways to Improve It**»⁸³ (published in 2021) provides similar observations on the financing of social activities in Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia, Kramatorsk, Mariupol, and Dnipro for 2019 – the first half of 2021. Social services commissioning during this period was practiced in only one of the five communities, social project competitions – in three of the five communities, and participatory budgeting – in one community. The authors note the unfair distribution of budget funding between municipal and non-governmental providers: the amount of budget funds allocated to non-governmental providers was only about 15% of the amount of funds for municipal providers and was allocated mainly for social activities. In contrast, municipal institutions received funding specifically for the provision of social services.



⁸³ Rostyslav Kis', Olesia Balian. *Legislation regulating the provision of social services in Ukraine and ways to improve it. Analytical report. Published in 2021.*



Requirements for social service providers from the non-governmental sector

■ Legislative framework

According to Article 13 of the Law of Ukraine «On Social Services»⁸⁴, all social service providers conduct their activities by the legislation on social services based on constituent and other documents that define the list of social services and categories of persons to whom such services are provided, as long as they comply with the Criteria for the activities of social service providers established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Therefore, the first requirement for a social service provider is having a charter or other documents that define the list of social services (following the Classifier) and the categories of persons to whom these services will be provided.

Other requirements are specified in the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of March 03, 2020, No. 185 «On Approval of the Criteria for the Activities of Social Service Providers»⁸⁵. They are divided into general ones, which all providers must comply with, and special ones, which apply to specific categories of services. In addition to the requirement mentioned above that services and recipients should be listed in the organization's statutory or other documents, the resolution also requires the following from the providers:

- providing social services by **state standards**;
- appropriate **professional level** of employees of the social service provider, which is confirmed by a document on education, a certificate of advanced training and/or passing certification in accordance with the law;
- **no financial liabilities** for the payment of taxes and fees;
- employees having personal **medical records** and timely undergoing mandatory preventive **medical examinations**;
- social service provider having **premises** that comply with SCS B.2.2-40:2018 «Buildings and structures. Inclusiveness of buildings and structures. Main provisions»;
- **informing** the public about available social services and electronic services in a form accessible to persons with any health disabilities;
- availability of a **public report** on social service provision activities and results of social service quality assessment (for providers with more than three years of experience).

Providers of social services that involve round-the-clock stay/residence, overnight or daytime stay in the premises of the social service provider, including meals (care, supported accommodation, shelter, etc.), social services provided on an emergency basis (crisis), and auxiliary social services must comply with special criteria. Such criteria relate to the availability and characteristics of material and technical resources or permits required to organize certain services.

■ Practical dimension

Out of 16 CSOs whose representatives filled in the questionnaire for the focus group discussions, nobody met all seven general requirements for social service providers. Respondents often reported that their organization meets the requirements for a confirmed professional level of



employees and absence of financial debts, somewhat less often – the criteria for compliance with state standards, informing the public and availability of a public report. Only half have premises that comply with the SCS on inclusiveness, and only one in five employees have medical books and timely medical examinations.

■ Capacity of CSOs to meet the state requirements for social service providers

The main difficulty for CSOs in ensuring compliance with the state requirements for social service providers is guaranteeing the availability and proper equipment of premises for work, particularly accessibility. Some CSO representatives do not understand why all providers must have premises if the services are provided outside the organization's location.

«Well, take the social service 'physical support'. The dispatcher can call an employee at home and say: «Today, we have an application. The person will come to the following address. You need to take the person by the hand, take them to the doctor, and then take them back.» There is no need for an office that has to meet the required standards.» – representative of an international/national CSO

A representative of one of the CSOs providing social support and humanitarian assistance services for people living with HIV, tuberculosis and addictions noted that her organization did not provide medical books for the staff because of the lack of understanding of why they are needed when working with this category of clients.

Sometimes, CSOs face difficulties complying with the state standards of social service provision. They have problems ensuring that their premises and staffing levels meet the requirements due to the lack of stable, predictable, sufficient funding; some criticize the unrealistic and inflexible standards in certain aspects (for more details, see the section «Standards of social service provision»).

■ Donor requirements for CSOs applying for donor funding

Donor requirements for CSOs differ from donor to donor and from one project to another. The most frequently mentioned expectations are state registration of a legal entity, organizational capacity, some experience of the organization's staff in the field of activity for which they are seeking funding, good reputation and ability to provide quality services. Some donors put less emphasis to experience and capacity, as their support is explicitly aimed at strengthening and developing CSOs.

The first of the donor organizations represented among the respondents work on strengthening the capacity of CSOs in general and does not single out social service providers; besides, it has a project that grants CSOs to support vulnerable groups. The donor has the following general selection criteria: the CSO must fall within the scope of the project, operate in regions of Ukraine other than Kyiv, be a small organization that is not yet publicly known, be officially registered as a legal entity, and have statutory documents.

The second donor organization does not currently provide grants to CSOs but works to increase the capacity of CSOs that are de facto involved in the provision of social services and concludes partnership agreements with them to be able to refer beneficiaries. The donor sets out the following criteria: organizational capacity, policies, good reputation and proper quality of services. CSOs are expected to comply with national and international standards for social service

provision; registration in the state Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services is an advantage.

«Well, first of all, it is organizational capacity. That is, there should be a general assessment of whether the organization can provide these services. [...] Are there any financial experts, program people? Or is it just one person who created a CSO and is looking for funding? Secondly, policies must be elaborated. Every organization should have a certain list of policies. You know, a code of conduct, then safeguarding policies, financial policies, anti-corruption policies, and everything related to that. Sometimes, there is a procurement policy, for example. Well, at least there are some hints about it or processes, right? In general, the organizational policy and how it is implemented are important. Has the organization been audited? Does it have audits by an independent auditing company? So that we can also assess the financial capacity. And, of course, it can be reputation, right? And the quality of services.» – donor representative.

A third donor organization offers grants to CSOs under several programs, one of which is aimed at addressing gaps in the protection of IDPs, war veterans and families of the deceased. The donor expects grantees to have a registration of the CSO as a legal entity, specific experience of its staff in the area in which they intend to implement the project, institutional capacity (availability of the necessary staff or engaged specialists), proper quality of services and compliance with the donor's values. There are also specific criteria depending on the project.

«We expect our partners to put human rights above everything else and use the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability in their work. They prevent, avoid, and combat all forms of discrimination on all grounds. [...] Another policy that is mandatory for everyone and part of the grant agreement is the policy on corruption prevention. Organizations are obliged to take care of this. They undertake and guarantee that they do not carry out corrupt actions and will not carry them out in the future.» – donor representative.

«When it comes to service delivery, it is crucial that the organization has experience. The organization should not just be experienced in some field but in the field it provides. Because these services must be provided in a quality way, that they do not harm the case, that they do not harm the recipients, obviously.» – donor representative.

The fourth donor organization offers grants to CSOs to rehabilitate war-affected persons. The donor expects the grantee to be registered in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services. Other requirements depend on the project:

«The first project is funded by donor funds from the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Germany, and they provided funds specifically for rehabilitation. [...] If an organization does not have a long grant history and has just recently been established, it must cooperate with a state or municipal structure and transfer this equipment to its balance sheet after completing the project. The money can be spent on equipment purchases and salaries of specialists who deliver rehabilitation services and administer the project. We have requirements that no more than 10% should be spent on administrative expenses.» – donor representative.

«And the new project that we will implement will be primarily directed to those territories where the largest number of people are affected (by explosive remnants of war – Ed.). [...] That is, there should be the services and activities that are in line with the model of assistance to affected persons, which is an international standard.» – donor representative.

The fifth donor organization offers the opportunity to receive funds for specific purposes, particularly to provide certain categories of citizens with necessary services, including social and important services. The donor considers the organization's experience in the field of activity for which funding is provided and its positive reputation, capacity, and professionalism. Suppose the grantee will provide social services in the sense of Ukrainian legislation. In that case, it is expected to be registered in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services and be guided by state standards.



State Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services

■ Legislative framework

To carry out social service provision activities, providers (state, municipal and non-governmental) must be listed in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services ⁸⁶. According to Article 1 of the LU «On Social Services» 87, legal entities, individuals, and individual entrepreneurs included in the section «Social Service Providers» of the Register are considered social service providers.

According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 99 of January 27, 2021 «On the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services » 88, to be included in the register, the organization should submit:

- an application of the social service provider in a particular form;
- a list of social services that the social service provider has the right to provide, their content and scope, conditions and procedure for obtaining them in a particular form;
- information on the date and results of the control by the authorized bodies over the social service provider's compliance with the requirements established by the legislation on social services (if any).

The organization may also optionally submit other documents that certify the provider's compliance with general and special criteria and ability to provide social services following state standards. The documents are forwarded to the registration entity or administrative service center at the place of registration or entered directly into the Register through the electronic cabinet.

■ Practical dimension

■ Registration of CSOs in the Register

Representatives of international, national and regional CSOs participating in the focus group discussions were mostly listed in the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services. However, some were not registered there. The respondents who represented OMAs, LSGs and municipal institutions of communities confirm that civil society organizations may neglect to do so despite the legal requirement to register for the status of a social service provider. As a result, their activities in the field of social protection take place outside the legal field, and they risk being disregarded by state authorities, LSGs and other stakeholders.

«Well, based on my professional experience and observations, I would say that in terms of de jure and de facto, there are indeed many entities that essentially provide social services. However, they do not label them as social services

⁸⁶ Rostyslav Kis', Olesia Balian. *Legislation regulating the provision of social services in Ukraine and ways to improve it. Analytical report. Published in 2021.*



because they do not document them as required by state standards. And they are not included in the state Register as social service providers. Therefore, they cannot be considered providers from a legal point of view. But they do provide them.» – representative of a municipal institution providing social services.

One of the motives for entering the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services, which CSO representatives mentioned, is the desire to align their activities with the requirements of the law:

«We are registered because the law on social services provision requires it. That is, only those who are registered can provide them. Accordingly, we provide them. Otherwise, it would be just our statutory activity, so to speak, and it cannot be called a social service.» – representative of a regional CSO.

Another good reason to register is the opportunity to receive funds from the state and local budgets for the provision of social services (but for this purpose, you need to have the legal status of a provider and, therefore, to be in the Register):

«...this was the year when the organization was transforming, we were looking for different ways of support, and we wanted, we wanted the state to support us because a lot of donors told us that, like, it would be good, if there the state supported you in addition to us.» – representative of a regional CSO.

Some organizations have registered at the request of local authorities since, in some communities, after their establishment, they turned out to be the only providers of social services in the absence of municipal institutions:

«My colleagues were correct. Some of these organizations are registered purely because they are almost the only ones in their community who have an idea of what social services are. However, they do not always meet the criteria specified in the legislation. Therefore, the local community decided to nominate at least someone for this sacred role of being included in the Register because after decentralization, some communities inherited even the absence of communal facilities, so it's necessary to have at least one provider.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

The experience of CSOs that have registered with the Register is very different. Some said that the process was complicated and time-consuming or that they had to register twice due to updates to the platform. Others said they had no difficulties; they delegated the process to another person for a fee or even received assistance from the authorities:

«The Department of Labor and Social Protection asked: «Are you registered?» We said we applied, but we didn't get a response. And they were like: «Let us apply for you; you provide us with the documents, and we will help you to get through.» We submitted the documents, the ones they... There was a list of documents. We submitted them, and now we have no more problems, and we are in the Register.» – representative of a regional CSO.

■ Attitude of CSOs to the Register

Opinions of CSOs' representatives regarding the Register are divided: some do not understand, why it is needed and do not see any particular benefit from its existence. In contrast, others recognize that the Register can help coordinate the efforts of organizations that operate or are going to operate in the community. At the same time, NGOs complain that the Register is still incomplete and inoperative, particularly in terms of entering data on recipients of social services:

«I would like this mechanism to be fully developed because, to be honest, we have not been submitting information about our beneficiaries for more than a year because I am always asked to wait until I have a personal electronic cabinet and I can submit it all in the electronic cabinet.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

One of the organizations also faced the problem of a lack of proper technical support for the Register users:

«Today, no matter how many times we apply to them to be able to contact somehow at least one person who maintains this state register, we, and after all, we are a national CSO, have not yet been provided with this person, although we have written letters. This State Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services exists, but it is tough to use it: to get an extract from it and so on.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

■ Attitude of CEAs and LSGs to the Register

Representatives of executive authorities and LSGs generally speak more favorably about the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services than CSOs. The respondents expressed the opinion that the presence of an organization in the Register confirms its compliance with the requirements for social service providers. Therefore, it is possible to cooperate with this organization:

«...if I see a provider in the Register, it is of a certain quality and capacity for me. There are criteria, and it's good to know that there are some premises, relevant diplomas, experience, and so on, right? Equipment and so on. For me, it's about quality; that's how it is.» – OMA representative.

The Register can also be useful for LSGs and community residents, as recipients of social services can find out which providers they can contact and choose the best one for themselves without contacting the LSG. However, the low level of digital literacy of some categories of potential users, such as the elderly, remains a problem.

«That is, the Register is designed for the younger generation. But I am all for it. Because, again, it will even reduce the burden on communities. Well, they won't have so many people coming to them to ask questions, for one thing. Secondly, a person can consciously see how many providers there are, what they are like, who they are, where they operate, in which community, and in which oblast. And they can choose one or the other. Or re-select them. This is an excellent initiative.» – OMA representative.

One of the OMA representatives said that the Register contains information about a person's

application for social service, and this helps to analyse and assess the needs of territorial community residents, including those that existing providers do not meet. As mentioned above, in reality, this information is incomplete (since not all CSOs are registered or have the technical capacity to enter data on beneficiaries) and is not displayed on the dashboard, which limits the ability of stakeholders to access this information.

«This means that we can use this Register to see, for instance, what needs are greater here or there for counselling for a particular service for a particular service. Whether 300,000 people a year need to be informed or 500,000. That is, we can see the real need and analyse what is needed in the oblast and each territorial community and what services are needed. We can also see which social service providers meet this need. They show which services they provide, which they do not provide, and which they do not cover.» – OMA representative.

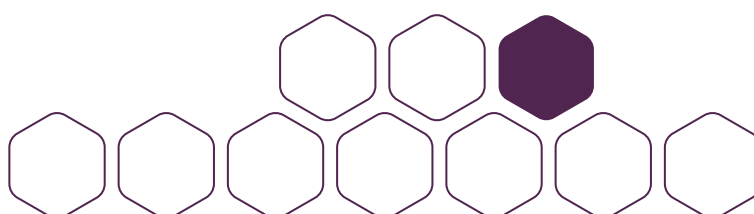
■ Attitude of donors to the Register

Different donors have different requirements for registering recipients of donor assistance in the Register. Representatives of donor organizations that participated in the study expressed different expectations on this issue: some indicated that registration is mandatory (at least when it comes to providing social services as defined by Ukrainian legislation). In contrast, others said that it is desirable as it indicates the organization's potential to switch to funding from the state or local budgets.

«Donor support today is considered so that, if possible, it can be transferred to the state budget at the end of the project – either the local budget or the state budget. And when organizations are involved, this may be the moment when this service can be transferred in the future. And everybody pays attention, one way or another, even humanitarian projects today, to this sustainability.» – donor representative.

«If we are looking for an organization that will provide specific social services, they cannot provide them under Ukrainian law. We, as donors, will not hire organizations to provide specific services. But if it concerns services that are not social or that are of a social nature... For example, psychosocial support services. Services to ensure or support mental health. Services to overcome, say, the consequences of violence. Domestic or gender-based violence. The one hired for that should not necessarily be an organization in the Register of Service Providers, because, according to the law, these services are not social services.» – donor representative.

According to one of the donor representatives, if the project is international, the requirements for CSOs can be set so that organizations from different countries can comply. In this context, there is no requirement to register in the Register.



Standards for the provision of social services

■ Legislative framework

According to Article 17 of the LU «On Social Services»⁸⁹, social services are provided by social service providers in the state, municipal, and non-governmental sectors, regardless of the funding sources, according to the state standards of social services. Requirements for all types of social service providers are equal in this context.

According to the Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine No. 282 of May 16, 2012 «On Approval of the Procedure for Development of the State Standard of Social Services»⁹⁰, the standard defines the content and scope, rules and regulations, conditions and procedure for the provision of social services, quality indicators and accessibility requirements. The standard describes, in particular, the mechanisms of monitoring and control, financial and economic justification of the cost of a social service. The standard is used to organize the provision of social services, monitor the provision and quality assessment of social services, control compliance with the requirements established by the current legislation, and determine tariffs for services.

Currently, state standards have not been adopted for all types of social services: in particular, there are no separate standards for informing, crisis counselling lines, night shelters, short-term accommodation, transitional supported accommodation, social and labor adaptation, social and psychological rehabilitation, including one for people with gambling addiction, personal assistant services, temporary respite for caregivers of people with disabilities, and transportation services. For some other services, some standards apply only to specific categories of recipients. For example, there is a standard for providing shelter to homeless persons but no standard for other vulnerable categories eligible for this service: victims of domestic violence and individuals or families who have suffered damage due to fire, natural disaster, catastrophe, hostilities, terrorist act, temporary occupation, armed conflict and who are left without housing or cannot live in their housing.

■ Practical dimension

Representatives of CSOs who participated in the research confirmed that they are aware of the state standards of social services and try to follow them in their work. Although they sometimes face difficulties implementing the standards in their practice (as discussed in more detail below), the respondents expressed that the standard protects the provider regarding monitoring and evaluating the quality of services provided. Participants reported that organizations develop an internal procedure for providing services: if there is a standard, they are guided by it, and if there is no standard (for example, for transportation services), they create an algorithm at their discretion. However, the participants of the discussions noted that sometimes CSOs-providers follow the standards selectively: they take from them only what they can fulfil and what seems to be a reasonable, intuitive requirement. Representatives of CSOs that follow the standards only partially explained this by the following reasons: incomplete compliance of the standards with clients' needs, a large amount of paperwork if they are followed, and focusing primarily on international standards and donor expectations.

Although the survey participants did not address whether they use state standards in staff

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training or quality monitoring and evaluation procedures, they emphasized that they take both processes seriously: They try to use all opportunities for staff development and diligently monitor the quality of their services (for more details, see the section «Monitoring the provision of social services and quality evaluation»).

■ Difficulties encountered by CSOs when putting the standards into practice

The survey participants who represented CSOs reported that they sometimes face difficulties implementing the state standards in practice. Some respondents noted that it is more difficult for NGOs to comply with the social services provision standards than for state or municipal institutions. This primarily concerns the requirements for premises and the number of staff – non-governmental social service providers may find it challenging to meet these standards without stable and/or sufficient funding and affordable premises.

«Once, I was involved in another project, and we wanted to give a grant to an organization to open a supportive living facility. [...] And they could not meet the standards. Because there are very high requirements for staff and premises. That is, if they had fulfilled all these requirements, it would have been very unprofitable to have so many staff for service.» – donor representative.

Some CSO representatives point out that some standards are unrealistic when applied to specific categories of people (e.g., visually impaired) and that the approaches embedded in them are inflexible and do not reflect the diversity of circumstances in which people seek assistance:

«...as far as I know, it doesn't work like that. A person comes at night, in the daytime, and they come and want to eat, and we cannot give them food because they are not registered with us. They come in the winter, when the temperature is minus 20, and the ambulance brings a person to our gate. So, we accommodated them not where there are three people per 15 square meters but as the fourth person.» – representative of a regional CSO.

«Now, what if a person receives services, for example, physical support, and they write a 'plan of provision' of these services? Just imagine a normal person who has a headache now or in 3 days and urgently needs to see a doctor, and they have no plan written for that day. Unfortunately, there are a lot of such inconsistencies.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

The high level of detail of the state standards is perceived by some respondents as an advantage, while others – as a disadvantage:

«We still have standards written on 30 or more pages. Not only I do not read them, but other people do not. These standards should be designed to be helpful for implementation.» – a representative of a regional CSO.

■ Donor expectations regarding compliance with the state standards

Representatives of donor organizations generally expect grantees to provide social services by state standards and, in case of their absence, to be guided by international standards or specifications developed by the donor/partner organizations. However, such requirements may

not be imposed when testing new approaches and services.

«We are guided by the standards that exist. Best practices guide us. For example, if a field is new and standards are just being developed, they are still based on something, such as international standards in this area. Very often, these are European standards and practices closest to us and which, in our opinion, are more in line with human rights, efficiency, integrity, etc. We work with research institutions. We encourage our partners to increase their understanding and knowledge of the standards.» – Donor representative.

If a donor imposes its requirements for the provision of social services, it can create an additional burden on grantee CSOs that have to be guided by both state and donor standards:

«Of course, we have some difficulties with our international donors because we sort of cannot differentiate ourselves between the current legislation and international standards, and we fulfil, provide services under the state standards, publish them, etc. We often argue with donors that we cannot do some things the way they require, especially when it comes to documenting our work because keeping it following both Ukrainian legislation and donor's demands would be a double burden for our specialists.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

Monitoring the provision of social services and quality evaluation

■ Legislative framework

The monitoring and evaluation procedures are regulated by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 449 of June 01, 2020 «On Approval of the Procedure for Monitoring the Provision and Evaluation of the Quality of Social Services»⁹¹. The Procedure separately describes the process for monitoring the provision of social services and assessing their quality.

Monitoring data is collected once a year or quarterly. It monitors social service provision using data on social service providers and recipients, the number of services provided for the period, the needs of residents for social services (in dynamics), the resources involved in providing social services, etc.

Social service providers keep records and analyses performance indicators for the provision of social services and submit data to local social protection authorities. The data are summarized, analyzed, and transferred from the local level to the regional level, from the regional level to the National Social Service, and then to the Ministry of Social Policy.

The **quality** of social services is also **assessed** annually, but not under a state of emergency or martial law or within three months after its termination. The assessment can be internal (conducted by the provider) and external (conducted by the provider's founder or commissioned by local authorities local and central executive bodies). Methods for assessing the quality of social services include surveys of social service recipients or their legal representatives, observation of the process of social service provision, interviews with the provider's staff, and examination of



recipients' applications and other documentation. The questionnaire for the survey of service recipients, attached to the Procedure, covers, among other things, questions about the relevance of the service to the needs and individual plan, satisfaction with the quality and frequency of social service provision, the attitude of the social worker, the list of social services offered by the provider, and the convenience of visiting the provider.

In addition to the monitoring results, generalized data on quality assessment from social service providers and accompanying analysis are transferred from local social protection authorities to regional ones, followed by the National Social Service and eventually the Ministry of Social Policy.

The Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine of May 16, 2012, No. 282 «On Approval of the Procedure for Developing the State Standard of Social Services», also contains a chapter on monitoring and control over the implementation of standards. This document describes, among other things, the quality indicators of social services (targeting and individual approach, effectiveness, timeliness, accessibility and openness, convenience, respect for the dignity of the recipient of social services, professionalism) and the methods for determining them. For monitoring and controlling the quality of social services, it is suggested to use the following (sometimes rather vague, unmeasurable in practical terms) criteria/indicators:

- compliance of the scope and content of the social service received with the one specified in the contract;
 - degree of improvement of the emotional, psychological and physical condition of social service recipients;
 - provision of social services in the most favorable environment;
 - economic efficiency of the social service;
- surveys of social service recipients for quality assessment.

■ Practical dimension

■ Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of work of CSOs

The CSOs that participated in the study paid close attention to assessing the quality of their services. This is partly due to the requirements of the donor, LSGs, or state institutions that provide funding, but above all, CSOs declare their interest in performing their work in a quality manner.

«The state does not need it as much as we need it. We need to evaluate ourselves. Do we love people? Do we want to help them? Do we pay enough attention to them? Because they are already disadvantaged and in critical situations. We are transparent, the commission always comes to us, and they communicate with our people.» – representative of a regional CSO.

Those CSOs following the state monitoring and evaluation procedures treat them mainly as formalities. Their representatives note that these procedures are laborious, insufficiently informative, and lack scrutiny of the quality-of-service provision. Therefore, CSOs usually also have their algorithms for internal monitoring and quality assessment.

«In my opinion, this assessment is not informative. We do what we have to do, that's it. And for ourselves, we conduct a separate survey, we have developed a questionnaire to assess our internal situation.» – representative of a regional CSO.

«Because we entered the Register, we have been invited to participate in the survey. Well, the one done by the Department of Social Protection. And our parents have already passed it on to the Department of Social Protection. [...] Many people here will agree that in our work, the priority is not quantitative indicators but qualitative ones, which are very difficult to understand in the questionnaire because of such questions. And it becomes clear in in-depth interviews instead. In-depth conversations where parents can open up, tell more about where they lack something and where things are going well. [...] All these forms, not only Caritas but also any donors who offer us standards and monitoring forms, are not exhaustive for us. Yes, they confirm that we have done everything we wrote in the application, everything we were supposed to do, and the right amount, among other things. But they say very little about the work itself. About the services we provided and their quality.» – representative of a regional CSO

Among alternative methods of quality assessment used by CSOs, their representatives mentioned:

- questionnaires before and after events or service provision, including psychological tests;
- in-depth interviews with clients;
- group discussions with clients;
- monitoring visits by external supervisors;
- telephone surveys of beneficiaries;
- social workers communication with coordinators and cases discussion.

■ **Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of work of communal providers**

Representatives of OMA, LSG, and municipal institutions note that the legislation does not assess the quality of social services during martial law, so communities only monitor their provision following the procedures approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. At the same time, municipal social service providers and representatives of regional state administrations report that they practice their methods of quality control and do not neglect feedback from clients:

«We finalize the support; we post on social networks about how the support is conducted and the results. We report to the committees. We conduct supervision.» – representative of a municipal institution providing social services.

«Social workers provide the service itself. Social work specialists and department heads coordinate their work. The specialists and the head of the department carry out internal monitoring of the work of lower-level social workers. They go out in teams of 2-3 people directly to the client's home. They look... [...] Then they communicate and interview the client. Whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied, what wishes they have [...] Besides, there is another factor, such as a survey of the social worker themselves from their point of view, whether they think they are doing their job well or not.» – representative of a municipal institution providing social services.

«We cooperate quite closely with civil society organizations that work in the oblast and represent the interests of a particular category. If a service is not provided, they react to it immediately.» – OMA representative.

The lack of social protection workers in communities hampered the implementation of monitoring and evaluation procedures. The available employees focus primarily on providing services to clients, so there is not enough time for «paperwork» – collecting and analyzing feedback.

«How can we do this in the community, if they have only one social worker on staff? There is no one else to supervise them. Because they do not have enough money for salaries.» – OMA representative

■ Donor practices for monitoring and evaluation

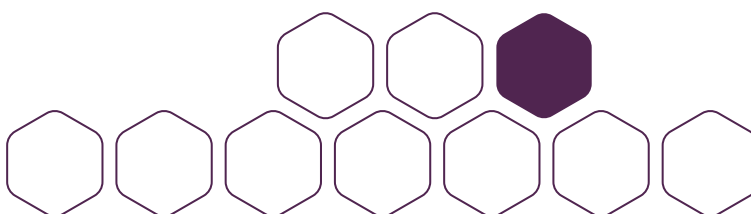
Donors also pay considerable attention to monitoring and evaluating the quality of grantees' work. Among the control methods, representatives of donor organizations mentioned:

- feedback forms for beneficiaries;
- receiving feedback from beneficiaries through social networks;
- monitoring visits of donor representatives to the locations;
- «mystery shopping» method (can be offensive for CSO employees: «it is tough to work without trust»);
- public opinion polls;
- reporting forms for recipients of donor funds;
- management control over the project implementation;
- analysis of documents confirming client service.

Respondents mentioned various ways of obtaining feedback from beneficiaries most often among the quality monitoring and evaluation methods provided by donors (or in accordance with their requirements); however, we assume that management control and reporting forms for grantees are also integral components of this process. Given the small number of responses and the qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) nature of the data collected, it is impossible to rank the methods by prevalence as part of this research.

Cooperation with donors sometimes incentivizes CSOs to implement monitoring and evaluation practices in their activities. Besides, donors finance more expensive methods of monitoring and evaluation that organizations usually cannot afford on a routine basis:

«It seems that this cooperation is very disciplining regarding monitoring. As we have it, we don't always include the monitoring and evaluation stage. Pre-monitoring, post-monitoring. And we can choose not to do it or to do it according to our resources. If we look at financial resources, we most likely don't have enough to hire an external contractor systematically or to have a person in the team, such as a sociologist, who knows how to form a sample to make it relevant. What rules must be followed to ensure the research is conducted under the requirements? And how to process the quantitative and qualitative results so that the conclusions are meaningful and can be considered in the further work. In international organizations, it is self-evident that there should be monitoring and evaluation.» – representative of an international/national CSO.



STAKEHOLDERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES BY CSOS

Attitudes of CEAs and LSGs towards commissioning social services from CSOs

The critical factors in the attitude of executive authorities and local self-government bodies towards commissioning social services from CSOs are insufficient supply from CSOs, doubts about the capacity of CSOs to provide social services in a stable and qualified manner, and the priority of preserving funding for municipal providers. Stability is one of the most frequently mentioned requirements used by the authorities' representatives when discussing the potential of CSOs' engagement in social service provision.

«There is a lack of stable organizations. Since few organizations work regularly and provide social services in *** oblast, I can name no more than 5. I have worked in the social sphere for quite a few years.» – OSA representative.

Some representatives of the executive authorities and local self-government bodies in the oblasts believe that municipal providers cannot provide the entire range of services in communities and cooperation with CSOs is necessary, but only if it is possible to monitor and control their work and regularly train CSO employees (advanced training). The respondents representing the executive authorities and LSG sometimes express doubts about their ability to control the quality of work of CSOs and their employees' actual level of qualification. Local authorities are more confident in their ability to respond to violations or shortcomings on the part of the utility provider.

«The only thing is that these providers, which are not municipal and non-governmental, need to be properly... well, I don't want to say controlled, monitored. First, they should be in the Register because of certain criteria. And they must be trained, for example, at the regional centers where I work because they exist in every oblast. That is a mandatory training program; without this training, you cannot get a license to work. And without entering the Register, you can't get a license to work. They should complete the training, enter the Register and start working. And the National Social Service should supervise, check, and monitor them.» – OMA representative.

■ Insufficient supply of CSOs

Representatives of local authorities from different oblasts point out that insufficient CSOs in their regions can offer social services. Our analysis of the Register showed the same results.

«We simply do not have enough of them. There are not enough NGOs. We would all happily engage them, but we don't have them. I told you that we have only 10 NGOs in the oblast.» (referring to those listed in the Register – Ed.)⁹².

The level of engagement of CSOs is also affected by geographical disparities in their activity:

⁹² The authors of the report checked the respondent's information against the Register: indeed, only 10 NGOs and 4 COs are registered as social service providers in this oblast.

participants of the conference on social service provision held in 2019 pointed out the following:

«Unfortunately, CSOs mostly operate in urban areas. Rural areas have not yet become the objects of proper attention of CSOs, and the self-organization of the population of rural areas is not active enough.»⁹³

Representatives of the executive authorities in the oblasts of our research agree with this:

«But if you drive 60-100 kilometers from the oblast center, there are simply no NGOs there, and there is simply no one to engage.» – OMA representative.

Our analysis of the Register confirms the disproportions the research respondents and published literature mentioned.

■ Concerns about the capacity of CSOs

LSGs have concerns about the capacity of CSOs to provide certain complex social services in a stable, qualified manner and over a long period. The perception of CSOs' capacity can be divided into four components:

1. availability of qualified personnel;
2. ability to provide services sustainably over a long period;
3. availability of material resources;
4. ability to comply with medical, hygienic and other standards of service provision.

«Considering this is a 'child's assistant' area, the requirements are rigorous. Most importantly, performance should be guaranteed. To be honest, some NGOs receive assistance for a short period, distribute it, and report it, and that's it. And then they just sit back. But it should be done every day, and the requirements for working with children with special needs are high. This is a difficult area.»

Respondents representing the executive authorities in the oblasts often perceive CSOs as providers who can cope well with services such as counselling and psychological assistance but are not sure about their readiness to provide services such as inpatient care, for example.

«If the provider is non-governmental, well, it's one thing, if it's just informing, counselling, support, it's one thing, but if we're talking about NGOs that are social service providers, and they open in-patient facilities, well, I mean, they provide a service, they provide a service to care for a person, yes, all the aspects, the peculiarities of nutrition, the peculiarities of accommodation, sanitary and pedagogical standards, there are specifics of the SCS for accommodation, support, medical support of such persons, there are specifics, we need to take into account the quality of this service and the specialists, professionals who work there» – OMA representative.

⁹³ *The system of social services in Ukraine in modern conditions: a collection of articles based on the materials of the national conference / Collective of authors – Kharkiv : 2018. – p. 52*

■ **Prioritizing the preservation and funding of municipal providers**

Sometimes, the level of CSO engagement is negatively affected by the desire of community leaders to preserve existing communal institutions and staff, given the minimal budget for the provision of social services in the community. The authors of published studies and respondents of our interviews point this out:

«Given the structure of the budget classification, local communities treat the budget funds allocated for the maintenance of public sector institutions and the budget funds allocated for the purchase of social services from non-governmental sector providers as one. Hence, we understand that social service providers of different status are competing for the same amount of funding, and, accordingly, the more services are procured from non-governmental sector providers, the less will be received by public sector social service providers. This has several manifestations in practical terms. Firstly, having the requirements for lower thresholds of salaries and staffing levels of municipal sector providers defined by law, local communities try to finance mainly municipal social service providers, and only then, on a residual basis, procure services from non-governmental sector providers.»⁹⁴

■ **Concerns of the authorities' representatives regarding «non-local» CSOs**

The respondents representing LSGs and executive authorities pointed to the following advantages of municipal providers: the proximity of their employees to service recipients, trusting relationships between employees and beneficiaries living in the same community/settlement, and emotional connection between conscientious providers' employees and service recipients. As for CSOs, government representatives sometimes doubt whether it is possible to build trusting relationships between service recipients and non-local people and whether CSO employees are as emotionally «invested» in their clients.

«CSOs provide a lot, and we are grateful for their help. But they are not local and do not experience what we experience. We come to families, and indeed, the family faces difficult life circumstances, and we want to help, and we do help. So, the CSO does not live what we live every day. Because our work is like a second home. We spend more time not with our children, not with our family. We communicate more with other people's families. We give as much of our energy as possible to have compassion for those children. To establish relationships in cases where there is domestic violence. We have reconciled them many times. That's how it is. I think that our institution has the advantage in most cases.» – LSG representative.

⁹⁴ Rostyslav Kis', Olesia Balian. *Legislation regulating the provision of social services in Ukraine and ways to improve it. Analytical report. Published in 2021.*



■ **General lack of interest and skills of LSGs to procure social services from CSOs**

The study participants pointed out that even if there is a proposal from a stable, experienced CSO that has proved its ability to provide social services, its chances of receiving an order from the LSG are not very high due to the subjective attitudes of some government representatives and lack of skills/experience in such procurement.

«So, it's regulated, but there is no direct interest. And it gets to the point where, as I said, the city has never supported us or our projects. However, our organization has received grants from the regional councils of two Italian regions for several years. Italian cities give money for our project in city *** (she smiled), while city *** does not because they believe this service is irrelevant. That is, they are not interested» – CSO representative.

Attitude of CSOs towards the provision of social services at the expense of the state or local budgets

■ **CSOs are not financially interested in providing social services at the expense of local budgets**

Financial terms offered by LSGs for the provision of social services very often do not satisfy CSOs. Their representatives believe that the proposed budgets are inadequate to the actual cost of services, point to dumping by municipal providers, and compete for «labor» from donors who offer CSOs the opportunity to receive much higher payments for their work.

«For two years, we provided a social service to counsel students with disabilities. Do you know what the negative experience was? We applied for three years in a row. The first year, we didn't win the competition because another organization was underbid for the cost of the service. I mean, it seems to me that... The price was already meagre, but they lowered it even more. They had duplicated activities because they have a state center and provide the service, which was not very profitable for them. So, we were very disappointed that the cost gave them an advantage. Not the quality, not what we offered, but the cost.» – CSO representative.

■ **It is difficult and expensive for CSOs to administer social service projects funded by community or state budgets**

CSO representatives say, the problem lies in the low payment for social services offered by LSGs. Our survey's respondents point out that administration of such activities is more complicated and time-consuming than work funded by donors and often requires individual employees, who should have specific skills.

«...because in our experience, we also realized that it is more efficient to spend resources on finding donor funds that we can use more freely and

guarantee decent salaries for our specialists than to enter this story with social services commissioning. Again, this requires no additional people to administer all these bureaucratic procedures. And now it is a more attractive way for us, giving us more resources for direct work with beneficiaries when we can receive donor funds, and not spend our energy on this whole process.» – CSO representative.

One of the factors that negatively affects the willingness of CSOs to provide social services for budgetary funds is the difficulty of obtaining funds through the Treasury:

«In my opinion, as long as payment for social services is put in the third priority in the list of payments from the Treasury, CSOs will not work with budgets at all. We need to revise the order on the Treasury. It may not be the priority, but at least payments for social services should be made the second priority. And now they come third» – LSG representative.

The following quote demonstrates how the low cost of social services offered by local authorities, multiplied by the complexity of the work itself and the specifics of the administration of these activities, discourages CSOs from active cooperation with LSGs in this area.

«And for the CSOs themselves, fulfilling their statutory activities seems attractive (the social services market – Ed.). On the other hand, over the two years that we have been providing the service, we have faced the fact that it is a huge amount of work. It requires a lot of specialists. An accountant must have a certain... Well, be able to work with the Treasury. Many accountants from NGOs refuse to work there. Because it is very, well... There are certain difficulties. And the salary is very low, minimal. And it's as if it were a volunteer contribution. Ours was (a volunteer contribution – Ed.), and we consciously participated for two years. It was... So if the state trained CSOs more and paid more for qualified labor, more money would be needed. Because people work, they spend their time. They also need to support themselves somehow. Our experience is that this is volunteering.» – LSG representative.

Some CSO representatives pointed out that sometimes tenders for providing social services at the expense of LSGs included a condition of 15% contribution of the cost of work from the non-profit organization itself, significantly complicating the proposal's preparation. An additional barrier for CSOs is that local budgets fund the services provided under the social services commissioning upon completion of the service. For a particular (rather long) period, CSOs must provide services at their own expense. The absence of a mechanism of advance payments for social services from local authorities restrains CSOs from participating in social services commissioning competitions. An expert consultant of our study points out:

«Now, this (social services commissioning – Ed.) is a mechanism of compensation for the services provided, i.e. a non-governmental provider must have its resources to provide services and then receive compensation for them. That is why today, the public procurement mechanism often comes first.»

Besides, working with community or state funds creates a risk of fiscal audits for CSOs.

«And, secondly, you know, if we are talking about NGOs, no one wants to get involved with public funds. They don't want to have some financial inspectors

come and put the screws to them. There is no trust in the objectivity of these inspections» – OMA representative.

■ Interruptions in work at the expense of LSGs hurt the staffing situation in CSOs

Representatives of CSOs note that work done at the expense of the local budget is usually unstable, which prevents strong employees from remaining in the organization for a long time.

«I think the main problem is that funding from the local budget through tenders creates a challenge that not all specialists can withstand any interruptions in work. The fact that there is no stable salary causes a problem with specialists. They leave because they do not have a main and stable job. That's why they can't provide services. It includes services for our organization, for example, or some other organization – because it is not permanent» – CSO representative.

Attitude of CSOs towards the provision of social services at the expense of donors

CSOs are much more favorable to providing social services at donors' expense than working for the budgetary funds of LSGs or the state. One of the main reasons for this is financial support of social services provision by the donor, which is seen as adequate by the respondents and allows paying competitive remuneration to the specialists. Regarding budget-funded work, it is much more challenging to motivate specialists financially due to the low rates offered by the state and, consequently, by LSGs. An essential advantage of working for donor funds for CSOs is a more straightforward, uncomplicated, and predictable project administration and reporting of the work done. According to the respondents, communication with donors is also more accessible and more efficient than with local governments.

«Donors evaluate a person's work as an average in the region, sometimes higher. When a person works, they can receive a typical salary in the sector. And this salary is fair, so it's not underestimated. Then, if you work as a donor, you always work according to a calendar plan. This plan is written for the entire project period, and it is clear what will happen and when. When there is monitoring, and when there are inspections? The criteria for such inspections are clear. So, this approach is very similar to the approach in business, where everything is transparent and all the steps are specified. It is also very difficult to expect this in the state. Even with well-defined laws, the implementation mechanisms are usually very different; you can look at them from both sides and don't know what to expect from them,» – CSO representative.

The disadvantage of donor-funded social service provision is that it is a project activity, the funding for which ends after a certain period, which threatens the sustainability of service provision. Although cooperation with donors is financially attractive for CSOs, the short duration of projects can lead to the fact that after the project is completed, CSO employees start working for free, as they do not want to leave behind the people who have begun receiving social services at the expense of the donor.

«A donor can give money for six months, a year, even three years. But then, for example, if we provide a supported living service, when you take a child with a disability to live with you or a young person, you can't just tell them: six months passed, the project is over, now leave, goodbye, get out. [...] Legal support sometimes lasts for years, if they are victims of violence. [...] That's why it's not suitable for project activities. But it is very suitable for the stability of the state. If the state orders and local authorities order a service, they know that it should last longer and be provided in the community. And the need for this service will not go away. And, if it is budgeted, it is more stable.» – CSO representative.

«Yes, if these are long-term grants for five years, yes, it is more interesting, and you can do a lot of work here and change a lot in the society you work with. But the problem here is that when it's a one-year project, you raise all the silt from the depths, start working, and then the year ends; you can't do much in a year. You work with people, and then you abandon these people because the year ends and the grant ends, and it's almost impossible to help anyone else. Then you have to finish the job as a volunteer.» – CSO representative.

It is due to the limited timeframe of donor projects that successful cooperation between CSOs and the state (or local government) can be interrupted when each uses its advantages in providing social services: the state (or local government) provides a material asset that it has (premises), and the CSO delivers the work of specialists funded by the donor. But when the project ends, this cooperation disappears.

«If you work from grant to grant, you don't know how long the grant will last. This can be a problem. We have such experience with one of the organizations we cooperated with that provided assistance. This is a state-owned rehabilitation center. That is, the state funded it. As a result of the reduction of state funding, they were looking for an opportunity to involve an NGO in the activities of this centre so that it could cooperate with such an organization. This way, the NGO provided such assistance based on the premises of the service provider, which is state-owned, and they engaged specialists with our support. However, the specialists left when the project ended, and this assistance stopped. They could not find further funding.» – CSO representative.

Apart from the transparency of cooperation procedures with donors, some respondents pointed out that donors' high reliability in fulfilling their financial obligations and timeliness of payments are advantages. At the same time, CSO representatives sometimes had negative experiences with executive authorities and LSGs. Among the disadvantages of cooperation with donors in the provision of social services, CSO representatives point out a certain formalism of tasks and a significant focus on quantitative indicators of the project (targets). Large donors strive for ample coverage of projects, which can negatively affect the quality of services, especially regarding socio-emotional support or educational activities rather than material assistance. Providing complex social services, such as home-based care for children with disabilities, can be difficult for donors due to the small number of people covered and donors' expectations of measurable, sometimes unrealistic, results from projects. Proving their effectiveness to the donor can be difficult, especially regarding long-term improvements in the health and development of children (or other beneficiaries).

PROBLEMATIC ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SERVICES PROVISION BY CSOS

Capacity of CSOs to provide social services

A thorough study, «Existing Mechanisms of Cooperation between Public Authorities and Civil Society Organizations in the Context of Implementation of the National Strategy for Civil Society Development in Ukraine 2016-2020⁹⁵» was published in 2016, but, unfortunately, its hypotheses and conclusions remain relevant today as well. According to the authors, who agree that one of the problems is the attitude of the authorities towards cooperation with CSOs, the low capacity of many CSOs to implement such complex and integrated tasks as the provision of social services, as well as the desire of CSOs to engage in advocacy activities rather than economic ones, are also problematic.

«The other side of the problem is that most CSOs focus their activities exclusively on advocacy and do not aim at becoming entities providing social services, conduct economic activities and meet the criteria of social service providers. There are several reasons for this:

- Establishing a service according to the standards requires financial, human, and other material costs in premises, equipment, etc. Not all CSOs have the knowledge, vision, skills, and responsibility to develop such a service.
- Government structures are not often inclined to assist CSOs, and if they do finance the provision of social services by CSOs, it is an exception to the rule, and CSOs have to fight for such assistance. Funds are allocated on a residual basis and do not cover all service costs. Often, CSOs refuse to receive funds from local budgets because the procedure for obtaining them is complicated and time-consuming, and the amount of money is inadequate for the efforts spent on acquiring them.
- By cooperating with CSOs, government agencies do not aim at solving social problems but rather demonstrate the process of cooperation with CSOs.»⁹⁶

The authors of this research analyses the reasons for the low capacity of CSOs to provide social services, highlighting the following: non-compliance of most CSOs with the criteria specified by the state for social service providers; limited access of CSOs to material resources of communities (premises, land plots); monopolization of social services by other, more powerful CSOs; unwillingness of CSOs to report on their financial activities publicly; lack of qualified staff in CSOs⁹⁷.

⁹⁵ Existing mechanisms of cooperation between state authorities and civil society organizations in the context of implementation of the National Strategy for Promoting the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine 2016-2020. – Kyiv: – Vaite, 2016. – 280 p.

⁹⁶ Existing mechanisms of cooperation between state authorities and civil society organizations in the context of implementation of the National Strategy for Promoting the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine 2016-2020. – Kyiv: – Vaite, 2016. – 280 p.

⁹⁷ Existing mechanisms of cooperation between state authorities and civil society organizations in the context of implementation of the National Strategy for Promoting the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine 2016-2020. – Kyiv: – Vaite, 2016. – 280 p.

■ Lack of qualified CSO staff at the local level

According to some respondents of our research from among donors, not all CSOs that are trying to provide social services have actual staff at the local level:

«There are enough requests, but in many cases, these requests come from national NGOs, not from ourselves. Accordingly, there are not many organizations of such a kind in Ukraine. Firstly, there are not so many. Second, their inability to provide services remotely comes down to the fact that they are looking for organizations that can... Or trainers who can provide services in remote settlements or territorial communities.» – a representative of a donor organization.

The staffing problem of CSOs is, of course, part of the broader staffing problem of the entire social services sector, which was formed due to low wages in this area, hard work, migration due to the war, etc.

«The staffing problem. That is, it is complicated for us to find qualified social workers who can provide social services. The issue is especially problematic in the East and South of Ukraine, and we have been... I don't know; for four months already, we have not been able to find qualified specialists for Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Odesa. Sumy and Chernihiv are also problematic. It seems the whole East and South are.» – CSO representative.

■ CSOs do not own necessary material assets

Lack of necessary material assets (often premises) drastically reduces CSOs' capacity to provide social services. The situation is aggravated because even if CSOs own (or rent) premises to deliver social services, they cannot receive discounts on utility services.

«Or at least cover utilities for the premises they own. But the state does not meet us halfway even here, even though, yes, we owned an apartment. We simply asked for a subsidy, a benefit, a discount, or whatever for utilities. But the state did not meet us halfway.» – a CSO representative.

■ There is a need for precise segmentation of social services and coordination of niches for different types of providers

Speaking about the abstract capacity of CSOs to provide social services may be an extreme and unproductive generalization. The study shows a segmentation of types of services: more complex services (which require material resources) are better provided by municipal enterprises, while CSOs better provide others. Municipal structures have more significant opportunities to provide social services of a «stationary» nature (availability of premises and places for beneficiaries, constant care, control and monitoring), which require work at the local level regularly.

«Municipal institutions provide more expensive social services. These include inpatient care, where people live permanently, and home care. These services are costly. That's why no CSOs in our oblast provide such services. CSOs provide services such as informing, counselling, mediation, representation of interests, social adaptation, social integration, and reintegration.»

Our study's expert consultant points out that it would be optimal to find specific niches of specialization for CSO representatives and municipal providers.

«Not all services provided by the classifier can be easily procured on a turnkey basis. Services such as care (home care, day care, inpatient or palliative care), support during inclusive education, temporary respite, transportation services, sign language interpretation, physical support, etc. can indeed be procured.

But I'm not sure, if there is a mechanism for procuring services to support families in DLC, representation of interests, mediation or emergency/crisis intervention...

For the social services market to function properly and efficiently, it is necessary to ensure the development of the municipal and non-governmental sectors equally. Based on parity, financial and economic feasibility, and consideration of the best interests of community residents, we can talk about the entire functioning of the social services market.»

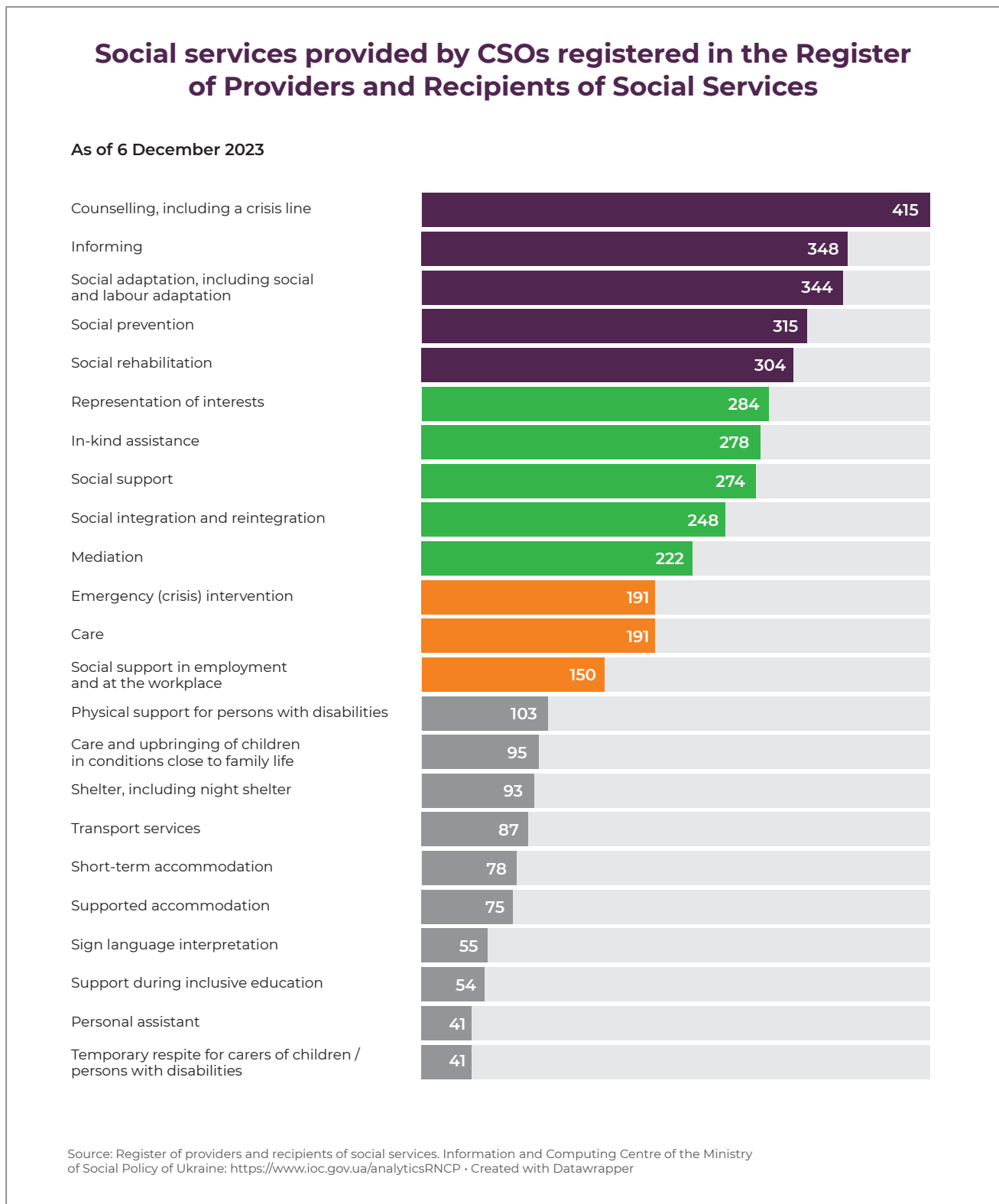
The respondent representing a donor organization also emphasizes that it is difficult for most CSOs to make a «phase transition» and crystallize as a stable provider of, for example, inpatient care services, which would have premises, required permanent staff, etc. However, they still have a niche to fill.

«And the disadvantage is that the stability of funding is questionable. Most organizations suffer from this due to the instability of funding. A tiny number of organizations can survive and carry out stable activities. A very, very small number of such organizations. That's why most organizations engage in human rights activities and implement individual programs. They gather everyone together, hold an event, and then go home. But to provide stable services, you must maintain the premises, pay for utilities, and maintain sanitary standards. So, many things cannot be provided because of the funding instability. And this is precisely the problem.

The advantage is that organizations can be more flexible; they can respond to people's needs without being attached to one place. For example, we took an organization providing psychological and legal services. They have created their portal, offer them remotely, and are not tied to any community or territory. Yes, they provide such services using grant funds. They are more or less successful in granting, right? And they receive funds for such services. But these are the services that do not require material and technical base.» – a representative of a donor organization.

The most significant number of CSOs registered in the Register reported that they are engaged or would like to be engaged in counselling (415 CSOs or 79%), informing (348/66%), social adaptation (340/65%), social prevention (315/60%) and social rehabilitation (304/58%). It is important to note that at the current stage of implementation of the Register, it is impossible to determine whether registered providers provide social services at all and, if they do, to what extent. Other standard services are advocacy, in-kind assistance, various types of social support and social and psychological rehabilitation, social integration and reintegration, and mediation (each of these services is provided by more than 200 organizations). Instead, the least common social services that are provided or can be provided by CSOs are sign language interpretation, support during inclusive education, inpatient care, night shelter, personal assistant, and temporary respite for persons caring for children/persons with disabilities. No more than 55/10% of CSOs reported about each of these services during registration.

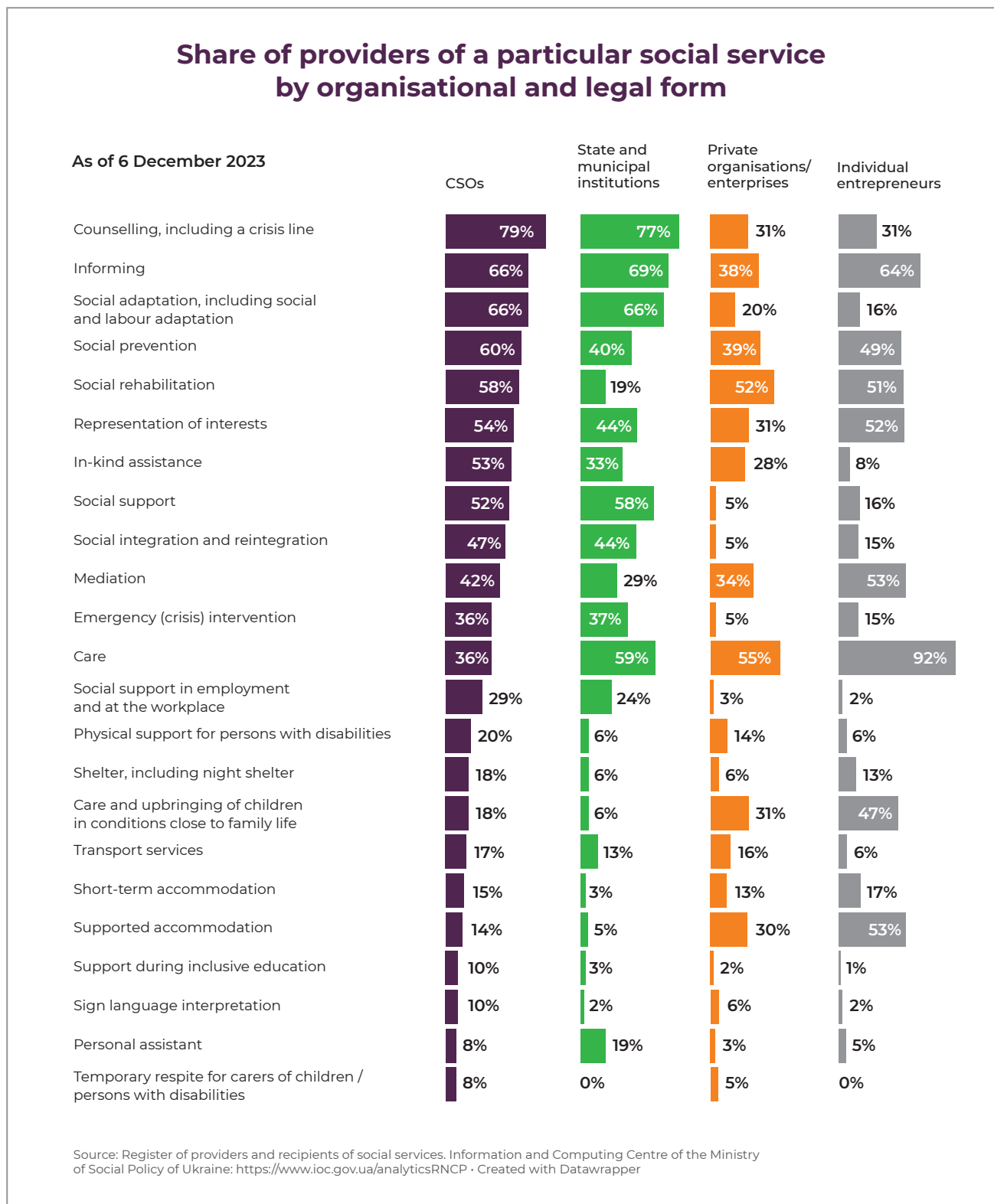
Figure 6.



If we compare the social services offered by the providers depending on their organizational and legal form, among CSOs, a significantly higher share provides in-kind assistance, social prevention services and support during inclusive education, but much fewer organizations are engaged in care (daycare, palliative care, inpatient and/or home care). Let's compare only CSOs and state/municipal social service providers. CSOs are significantly ahead of the latter in terms of the share of offers of social prevention, social rehabilitation, in-kind assistance, mediation, physical support for persons with disabilities, providing shelter, care and upbringing of children in family-

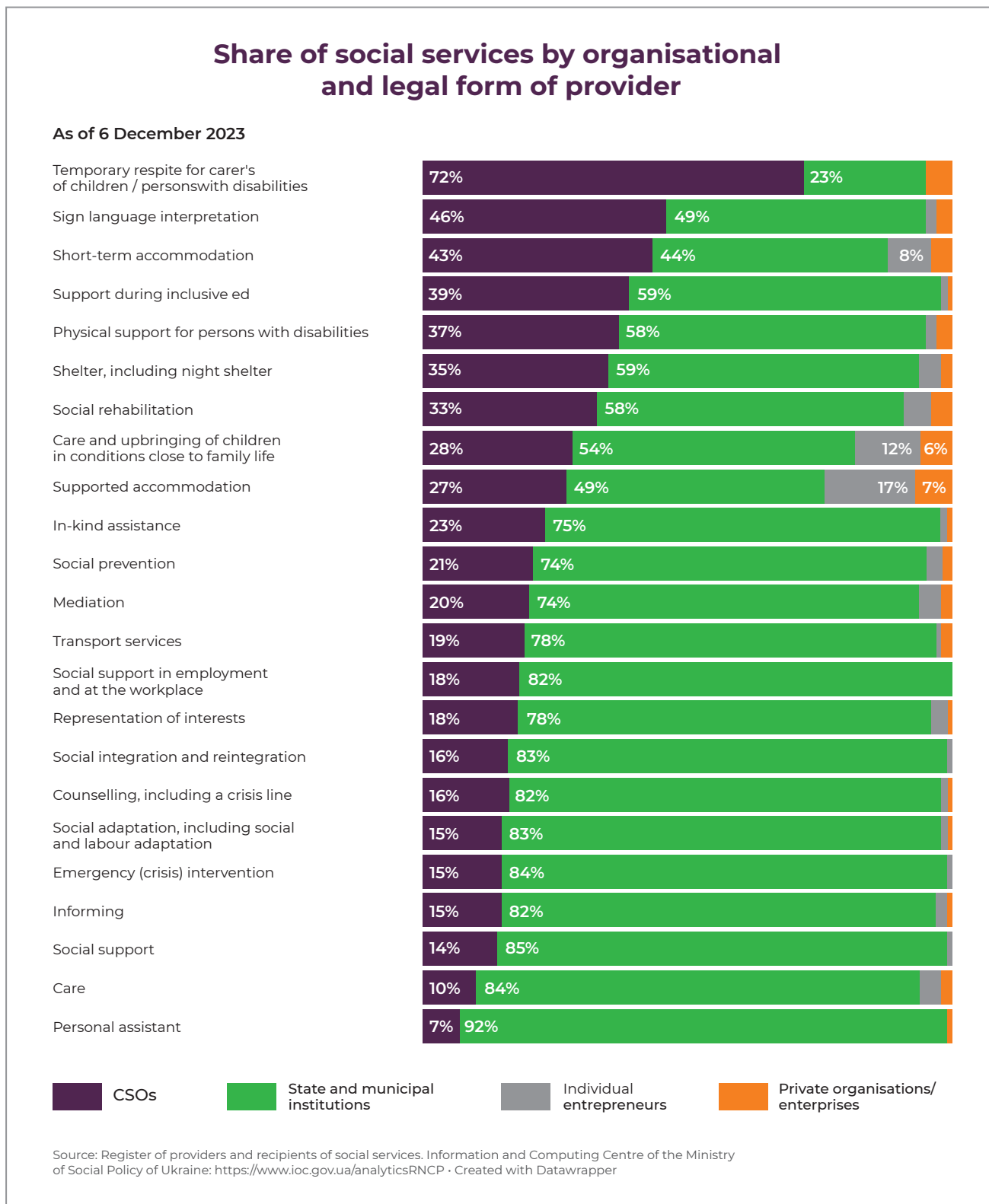
like conditions, short-term and supported accommodation, support during inclusive education, sign language interpretation and temporary respite for persons caring for children/persons with disabilities. In contrast, among state and municipal providers, there is a higher share of those offering care and personal assistant services. Compared to private individuals and organizations, CSOs collectively offer a more comprehensive range of services than private providers.

Figure 7.



Let's consider providers' organizational and legal forms in the context of individual services. It turns out that CSOs with a share in the Register of less than 15% account for 72% of all providers of temporary respite services for caregivers of children and persons with disabilities, more than 40% of providers of sign language interpretation and short-term accommodation, and at least one-third of those offering support during inclusive education, physical support for persons with disabilities, providing shelter and social rehabilitation.

Figure 8.



Some respondents who represent CSOs also believe that, in reality, there is a specialization, a distribution between types of social services that are better provided by the state/municipal providers or by CSOs:

«Few CSOs can take on serious cases where they will be with the family 24/7 and always be on the move. That's why I respect the work of state structures and state social workers. They do arduous work for meagre salaries, so we have much to learn from them. But, again, we can improve the social sphere through our flexibility, and I would like to learn it. Maybe brainstorming in such focus groups will result in new ideas afterwards.» – a CSO representative.

■ CSOs need training and professional development programs for their employees

Representatives of CSOs would like to have an opportunity to receive free and state-certified training and professional development of employees involved in social services provision.

«I wish our specialists had... could improve their qualification level, as it is done in municipal institutions. Because our teachers have been working with us, say, for five years, as well as a psychologist. We are an NGO, so we must send them somewhere at our expense. There are trainings and certificates. We also get them from ISAR Ednannia and other organizations. But I would like it to be like professional development certified by state institutions.» – a CSO representative.

Notably, the respondents representing the executive authorities in the oblasts indicated that regional centers of social services conduct such training for providers. More active informing and involvement of CSOs in this activity is needed (at least those in the Register). The CSO respondents identified the following training needs: psychological assistance training; basics of social services provision for newcomers; case management and work with vulnerable groups; prevention of professional burnout and emotional support; and assistance in aligning the state standard of social services provision with donor expectations.



Capacity of LSGs to provide and procure social services

■ Systemic problem of capacity and inequality of communities

The social services sector is affected by a problem that permeates the entire activity of LSGs in Ukraine – tremendous inequality in communities' financial and managerial capacity. Large communities with sufficient budgets and an adequate number of qualified managers can successfully organize the process of providing social services. Communities with fewer resources do worse.

«If the community is not poor, capable, and can afford a staff member who would cover the community's needs, then this is not a problem. They need five social workers, hire them, do a needs assessment, and all the rest. So, do they need to create a separate social protection unit? Great. They create it, provide everything they need, and set it to work. We refer them to some donors and provide them with equipment and everything they need. And this is how it should be, and it would be great. But let's take a community that is a little poorer, very poor; it has the same people in need, the same needs, but it is unrealistic for it to afford to create not even a sector but a social protection department because it will eat up the budget of their entire apparatus. It's unrealistic.» – OMA representative.

«Dear communities, you have to allocate money to rehabilitate children eligible for benefits. Some communities have, while others do not even consider it. They have no money. Because they don't have any budget-forming enterprises or entrepreneurs who would pay them taxes, well, they don't exist. So, they wanted to form a community. And they did. And I don't know how they are to live after that. If they are not joined to a more capable community, it is utopia.» – OMA representative.

In addition to the specific difficulties of communities in organizing the process of social service provision, some non-governmental social service providers see a major systemic problem that has arisen due to the transfer of social services almost entirely to the responsibility of communities. In their position on reforming the social service delivery system (published in 2021), **Caritas Ukraine** representatives rightly point to the different financial and managerial capacities of communities, which directly affect the ability to provide residents with an acceptable level of social services:

«The fragmentation of financial pools of social protection that has been taking place in Ukraine in recent years, due to the intensification of decentralization reform, leads to a deterioration in the quality and manageability of social services and the restriction of the rights of citizens who need such services. In particular, the transfer of powers to finance social services to communities leads to chronic underfunding of the sector. Economically depressed territorial communities, where residents are more likely to find themselves in difficult life circumstances, cannot finance social services properly. Because of this, ATCs are gradually abandoning the maintenance of communal facilities/social service institutions, closing them or transferring them to service providers capable of maintaining them.»⁹⁸

⁹⁸ *Reforming the system of social services provision. Caritas Ukraine's position on reforming the social service delivery system. Published on July 30, 2021.*



The authors could not find up-to-date data for 2024, but according to the Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine of February 11, 2022, No. 90 «On Approval of the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine for the 2022 budget year and two budget periods following the planned one (2023 – 2024)»⁹⁹ «**in almost 850 territorial communities, social service providers have been established and social work is being carried out, which is directly provided by more than 3.9 thousand social work specialists.**» That is, in a significant number of communities in Ukraine, no such social service providers were established as of February 2022.

The respondents of our survey also confirmed that some communities do not have any social service providers.

The authors of the study «**Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs**»¹⁰⁰ (2023) say that most communities cannot provide all essential social services to their residents:

«We should note that most of the communities we interviewed for this study are currently unable to provide their residents with access to all 18 basic services provided by the Law on Social Services. This is a rather important finding, given that the sample included both urban and rural communities, and all of them differed in size and geographical location.»¹⁰¹

The authors' reason is the same as the one found in our study – the financial inability of communities to perform the functions assigned to them under decentralization¹⁰². Some respondents of our research believe this problem is fundamental and can become chronic if new, larger, and more capable communities are not created.

«This topic is still sore for me. Because I understand it. There are just too many communities, and it is unrealistic to do this. And the process is not over, but the war has begun. Perhaps, if this process was somehow extended, the community amalgamation process would also be extended and less capable communities would merge with more capable ones. Perhaps this would be a way out of the situation. Because there are weak communities where every area is limping, not just social protection.» – OMA representative.

⁹⁹ Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. Order No. 90 of February 11, 2022. On Approval of the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine for the budget year 2022 and two budget periods following the planned one.



¹⁰⁰ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.

¹⁰¹ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.



¹⁰² Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.

■ Specific problems of communities caused by the war and legislative changes

The year 2024 adds a new problem for communities: a reduction in tax revenues they previously received as personal income tax from the military. Financial difficulties and migration due to the war aggravate the staffing problem: communities cannot retain the required number of employees. Issues with funding and staffing make it impossible to develop new areas of social services (assistance to veterans, assistance to victims of gender-based violence) in less capable communities.

«And the eternal problem is the lack of staff. There are not enough social work specialists, not enough professionals who work with children, people with disabilities or other categories. And if we also gather them for training and tell them about the direction of trafficking (human trafficking – Ed.), violence and all the rest, well, they become overwhelmed.» – OMA representative.

■ The problem of priorities and subjectivity of community leadership

Apart from financial and staffing problems, the community's ability to provide social services is directly affected by the priorities of its leadership: judging by the results of the study, there are many cases when even the leadership of financially capable communities does not allocate sufficient funding for social services.

«Moreover, I will not name the city or oblast center, but recently, a bill proposed a significant reduction in the number of social work specialists. And this city is not a poor community. It's just that there are always priorities. Sometimes, the priority is the development of the veteran component; for example, the priority is the development of schools, and sometimes the development of the health care system. Somewhere, the priority is the development of social services. But it's always, well... you have to choose.» – a representative of a donor organization.

«No, local initiatives... I mean, decentralization has also had a great impact. When the local community depends on the head of the territorial community, he will first build a road for himself, roughly speaking. And the last thing he will consider is whether he needs the social work specialists in his community. Or is it unnecessary because he has not encountered them and is not interested?» – a representative of a donor organization.

That is, capable communities in the context of social service provision combine two factors: financial capabilities and willingness to use them to provide social services. Apart from the fact that social services may be competing with landscaping, road construction, etc., it is crucial that even within the social protection sector, social services are often the lowest priority for community leaders. The authors of the study **«Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs»**¹⁰³ (2023) wrote the following:

¹⁰³ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.



«At least from some of the interviews conducted, we can also see that, for various reasons, LSGs give social services a secondary role in ensuring the social protection of the population, prioritizing primarily the payment of social assistance and benefits. It is the payments that LSG leaders often perceive as the only/key component of social protection.»¹⁰⁴

■ **Attraction of donor funds as an attempt to increase the capacity of LSGs**

Sometimes, attracting donor support is an option to strengthen the capacity of communities to provide social services. Some international donors with strong financial capacities can work in low-income communities, implementing their social service delivery programs through CSOs. This is perceived positively and used by active leaders of the OMA/ OSAs, but, unfortunately, the number of CSOs at the local level is often too small to cover the needs of the population for social services at their expense alone.

«As I said, we also actively work with donors, attracting and redirecting them to the territorial communities where we are weak. Of course, we are trying to do this; we have a map, and in each territorial community, we have identified the providers and services they provide. And, accordingly, when we cooperate with donors and international partners, we send them to the territorial communities without a provider. Thus, at least in each territorial community, there is a provider who can identify services, and then it is easier to work with someone who can provide them.» – OMA representative.

Problematic aspects of the normative regulation and practice of social services provision

■ **The problem of imbalance of duties, responsibilities and actual capacity of communities to provide social services**

The research participants often pointed out that the legislation places all responsibility for organizing the provision of social services on local authorities. At the same time, there is no mechanism for controlling community leadership, which harms the development of this sector.

«Until local authorities are held accountable for not providing services, they will not be provided. Let's imagine an example. I have seen a lot of examples when we come to a community and ask, «Why are you not providing social services?» They answer: «We don't need them. Our residents do not need social services.» We ask: «Why do you think so?» «We have conducted an assessment, and according to the assessment, no one needs special services. That's why we don't provide them.» And there is no mechanism to regulate this.» – OMA representative.

¹⁰⁴ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.



The absence of a mechanism for controlling the management of LSGs results in a possible failure to provide services in full in accordance with residents' real needs. This, in turn, automatically reduces the involvement of CSOs in the provision of social services. Respondents representing oblast executive authorities believe that sometimes it is not even a matter of financial capacity but rather the priorities of the community leadership.

«That is, if it is stated that these services should be provided, then there should be some other control over why they are not provided. Is it because of financial insolvency, indifference, or the inability to sign a memorandum with a non-governmental organization? Sometimes, they even offer their services free of charge, not always for a fee. That's why I say that we need control that this particular old lady, woman, man, or child needs this service, and they should understand, be it a woman or a man, any person, that they can get it, and you have to provide it. How you provide is up to you, whether you do it on your own or involve an NGO, but everyone who needs the service should receive it in one way or another.» – OMA representative.

The respondents believe that in addition to the mechanism of control over the provision of social services, the community should also have a mechanism of responsibility of the community leadership for failure to provide such services.

«Look, perhaps the most important change that should be made is the change of holding the heads of territorial communities accountable for the provision of relevant social services at the community level. Because at the moment, basic services are more or less delivered, or rather, provided, and as for the rest, it all depends on the head of the territorial community and the work of social protection workers in the respective community.» – OMA representative.

The authors of other studies point out that there is no mechanism for holding those responsible for failing to assess the population's needs for social services accountable¹⁰⁵. According to our study participants, the National Social Service Service is currently vested by law with the function of monitoring, not control, and this should also be changed. The recommendations of the study **«Development of Social Services during the War»**¹⁰⁶ also point to the expediency of giving the National Service control powers:

«...to directly entrust the National Social Service of Ukraine with the authority to monitor the annual determination of the community's social service needs.»¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ *Development of social services during the war. Prepared by the advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF as a partner of the Ukraine Response Consortium as part of the project «Addressing the urgent multisectoral humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations in Ukraine». Published in 2023.*

¹⁰⁶ *Development of social services during the war. Prepared by the advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF as a partner of the Ukraine Response Consortium as part of the project «Addressing the urgent multisectoral humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations in Ukraine». Published in 2023.*

¹⁰⁷ *Development of social services during the war. Prepared by the advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF as a partner of the Ukraine Response Consortium as part of the project «Addressing the urgent multisectoral humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations in Ukraine». Published in 2023.*



The study participants believe that the legislation should oblige community leaders to allocate funds to provide social services in the community budget based on a preliminary assessment of the need for such services.

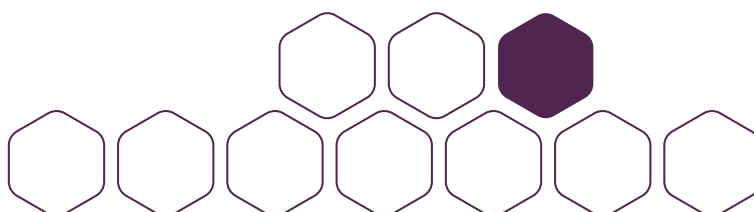
«And again, it may be about ways to improve the legislation. The legislation should specify, prescribe, and oblige that the community, when forming its budget for the next year, allocates funds to provide services to those in need, having previously assessed them. And it can be done in different ways. If you want, you can use the funds to pay salaries to the employees of your municipal enterprise who will provide services. If you want, you can procure them from another community. If you want, you can procure them from the public sector. But you must include these funds in your budget year. If you don't budget for it, there is nothing to pay for. And this person in need will be left without a service.» – OMA representative.

At the same time, the expert consultant of our research disagrees that the legislation does not oblige LSGs to provide social services, pointing out that Article 34 of the LU «On Local Self-Governments» refers to the provision of social services to community residents as the own (self-governing) authority of local governments. And since the provision of the Law cannot be recommendatory, the law is binding on everyone, including LSGs. Some respondents pointed out that there is no mechanism for the state to control not only the fact of assessing the need for social services in the community or budgeting for social services but also the quality of the services provided in the community (by municipal providers or CSOs).

«I'll start with the shortcomings. One of the shortcomings is quality control. Our country doesn't have quality control, which is standard quality control, right? I just have a few very vivid examples of what the CSO was doing, how poorly it was done, how inappropriate it was, and how unethical it was towards clients. But there were no control mechanisms, right? And so... and I have a couple of examples.

Because providing social services is the responsibility of local authorities, the Ministry (Ministry of Social Policy – Ed.) cannot influence what local authorities do because of decentralization.

When we arrived, the Ministry expressed its dissatisfaction with the way things were going for LSGs, so how could we influence them? There are no levers of influence on this now. And let's be honest: There may be a conspiracy between local authorities and some so-called «CSOs» about what is happening.» – representative of a donor organization.



■ Unclear legislation on the person responsible for social services in the community

The study participants complain that the legislation does not clearly define, who is responsible for the provision of social services in the community:

«Yes, there is one person or no department at all. I'm not talking about communities with a social protection department. This person is authorized to make decisions on the provision of social services. However, some communities do not have these departments. Here, it is necessary to clearly define who has the right to make decisions on providing social services. According to the law, it's the LSG that makes the decision. But we would like to be specific. We would like specifics.»

■ Significant bureaucratization of social service provision and the need for further digitalization

The results of the research «**Development of Social Services during the War**»¹⁰⁸ (2022-2023) emphasize the significant bureaucratization of social services and the lack of a working mechanism for data exchange between the structural units of the Department of Social Protection, the State Tax Service of Ukraine and the Pension Fund of Ukraine. Paperwork between different structures greatly complicates and slows down the work of social service providers:

«However, during the survey of employees of structural subdivisions of the Department of Social Protection of the Population and municipal institutions providing social services, we learned that the existing system of social services provision is too bureaucratic.

For example, employees of the social services system report that the questionnaire for the recipient of social services alone takes up to 45 A4 pages.»¹⁰⁹

Respondents of the study «**Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs**»¹¹⁰ (2023) who represent LSGs also point to the problem of data exchange between different agencies:

¹⁰⁸ *Development of social services during the war. Prepared by the advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF as a partner of the Ukraine Response Consortium as part of the project «Addressing the urgent multisectoral humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations in Ukraine». Published in 2023.*

¹⁰⁹ *Development of social services during the war. Prepared by the advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF as a partner of the Ukraine Response Consortium as part of the project «Addressing the urgent multisectoral humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations in Ukraine». Published in 2023.*

¹¹⁰ *Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs. Published in January 2024.*



«We do not have access to the Registers at all. And we face the fact that even when we make inquiries, for example, to the pension fund, they simply stop giving us information. Because the information is classified, it contains personal data, and so on. We even develop some statistical information on our own based on, say, our work in other areas. For example, to calculate how many people with disabilities we have, we could not find this information in any government agency. And as a result, we [...] worked with humanitarian aid and simply collected information through advertisements.»¹¹¹

The participants of our research also point to similar problems. They emphasize that approving the provision of services is lengthy timewise and includes many stages. Moreover, they also mentioned the slow exchange of documentation between institutions, which is often accompanied by burdensome paperwork. Some requests, such as data from the tax service and the Pension Fund to the Social Security Administration, arrive with a delay.

«Because there is indeed bureaucracy. The procedure for organizing social services stipulates that a person should apply to the social protection department or the structural unit for social protection. The structural unit for social protection instructs the CSS social service provider to conduct a needs assessment and determine whether the person needs this service. We visit the person's home and draw up a needs assessment report. We find out whether the person needs counselling services or not. Then, we take a list of documents, applications, etc. Then we send... or rather, the Social Protection Department sends inquiries to the Tax Office and the Pension Fund about their income for the previous quarter. And it says that it can be done through a digital... well, a digital process. Electronic requests are made, and information is received. But the reality is that no one receives anything. This data from the tax office and the pension fund does not come within five days, as prescribed in the procedure, but much later. So, it would be good, if there was an exchange of information.» – OSA representative.

Respondents believe there has been no progress in simplifying the paperwork involved in providing social services in the long term and that 80% of the time spent on delivering a particular social service can be spent on paperwork.

«Well, I have worked in the social protection system for over 20 years. And I have seen transformations, including those in social services. And I can't say that the processes are getting easier over time. They are getting more complicated. And if we talk about the process of providing social services in general, it can be divided into two parts. This is when the direct provision of social services is what we are working for, for the result. That is, for a person to be satisfied and get a certain result. The second part is the formalization of this process. Documentation. It is usually paper-based. Depending on the social service, the share of this part of the process can sometimes reach 80% of the time.» – a representative of a donor organization.

¹¹¹ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs*. Published in January 2024.

The study participants also criticize the current state and the degree of usefulness of the Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services, pointing out that both in legislation and in reality, it is not fully integrated into the process of social service provision:

«It is not really involved and is not integrated either in the law on social services properly or in the bylaws on financing social services and determining the need for social services, so it is the fifth wheel. If it does not integrate into the overall system and the system does not interact with it, it will just continue to play the role of a fifth wheel that is just made for the sake of it.» – representative of an international/national CSO.

Our research respondents representing CSOs also point out that starting to provide social services to a person, even if he/she needs them immediately, is complicated (and often impossible). This is true for different categories of service recipients, from homeless people to war veterans.

«To register a person in a state institution, someone who came there... with no documents, no fluoroscopy, nothing. According to the law, they have no right to accept them. This person has to sign a declaration with a doctor and undergo a fluoroscopy. Then they have to go to the medical centre and bring a passport, and only then the state institution has the right to take them to the night shelter. That's just insane, right? And what about people who need help getting a passport or restoring it? And where will this person get money for a fluoroscopy, if they have no place to sleep?» – CSO representative.

«But sometimes even two weeks is too long. Well, look, what are the examples? Well, the devil is in the details. Take this veteran I'm talking about, right? He's being discharged after demobilization, but it will take several months to confirm his disability. And there will be no pension. Do you know, why it is horrible? His wife is in shock, wondering where to get the money. This gap is when the family will no longer have a serviceman's salary, they will not yet have a pension, and they will have two weeks or less... Look, passing the protection department takes 15 days at least. But they have to pass it; they have to get examined. Some documents should be written for them. It can take a month, but they need to eat.» – LSG representative.

At the same time, the expert consultant of our research pointed out that if urgent intervention is needed, the legislation provides a mechanism for emergency/crisis provision of social services. The expert believes that a possible reason for such delays may be the staff of the Social Protection Department's lack of awareness about the possibility of using such a mechanism. The study «**Development of Social Services in Time of War» (2022-2023)** indicates that the problem for users is the lack of the possibility to apply for a social service electronically, even though this possibility is legally enshrined in the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers¹¹². The authors of the study point out that the actual situation differs from that set out in the regulations:

¹¹² *Development of social services during the war. Prepared by the advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF as a partner of the Ukraine Response Consortium as part of the project «Addressing the urgent multisectoral humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations in Ukraine». Published in 2023.*



«However, the rule enshrined by the government has not been implemented into practice, and neither recipients nor providers have such technical capability today. The absence of such a feature does not allow individuals to quickly and conveniently inform the authorized bodies about the need to receive a social service, including in case of emergency.»¹¹³

As a recommendation, they state:

«To eliminate the existing problem of the lack of technical capability to submit an application in electronic form for receiving social services to the administrative service center, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, together with the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, should develop a procedure for submitting applications in electronic form through administrative service centers, their subsequent processing and transfer to the relevant authorized bodies. In addition, the Ministry of Digital Transformation should ensure that applications for the provision of social services can be submitted through the Diia portal, as provided for in clause 25 of the Procedure.»

According to CSO representatives, another aspect of the problem of the bureaucratization of social services is the requirement that employees have licenses even for simple activities.

«We also included something like educational support in the project. But this is basic literacy. Because girls don't know how to read or write. So, we hired a specialized teacher to work with them individually. And the city refused us because they said you don't have a license to provide educational services. And it also was an issue for us. Well, we're not a school, we're not a college (smiled). We don't need this license. But someone must do this work. And the city told us, well... no. Let the girls study somewhere else; I don't know where, but somewhere, where they won't be accepted for this training. But we will not give you money for this.» – CSO representative.

■ Problematic tax policy towards CSOs

The survey respondents representing CSOs pointed to the problematic tax policies of the state towards civic and charitable organizations. As examples of problems, the participants of the discussion pointed to the lack of tax exemptions for CSOs; changes in the legislation, according to which a CSO becomes a PIT payer if it assists more than 1 million UAH per year; problems with distinguishing between humanitarian and charitable assistance and reporting on its provision to beneficiaries.

«For the tax office, yes. Since December 1, the legislation has changed; a charitable organization that assists and... A charitable organization and a public organization. An NGO that provides charitable assistance for more than UAH 1 million a year is a PIT payer. It is subject to mandatory registration as a VAT payer.» – CSO representative.

¹¹³ *Development of social services during the war. Prepared by the advocacy analysts of the Right to Protection CF as a partner of the Ukraine Response Consortium as part of the project «Addressing the urgent multisectoral humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations in Ukraine». Published in 2023.*

«This issue is topical among accountants, and many webinars are held. CSOs and religious communities provide large amounts of charitable assistance during martial law. Enormous amounts. But ...what is the definition of humanitarian aid or charitable aid? They are also interpreted differently. Very differently. And I think, my colleagues will agree that it is challenging to maneuver between the legislation of the tax inspection. You submit a report, you submit a balance sheet, and you don't know whether you have submitted it correctly or whether the tax authorities will consider it. Or will they look at it differently? That's another thing. VAT and registration of VAT payers, who have provided more than a million in charitable aid, is very serious.» – CSO representative.

Lawyers who cooperate with the non-governmental sector also point to the problem of distinguishing between humanitarian and charitable aid in the activities of CSOs:

«In my personal opinion as a lawyer, the legislator has very poorly defined the difference between the terms 'charitable aid' and 'humanitarian aid', which creates unnecessary difficulties for the work of civil society institutions, volunteers and benefactors/donors.»¹¹⁴

■ Poor information on the possibility of receiving social services

Problems with informing potential beneficiaries of the possibility of receiving social services were mentioned by respondents of our research:

«People do not know what social services are available. Because who will inform them? It is not profitable for local authorities to inform people about their rights. Because then they will go and demand this right to be observed. And LSGs don't want to spend money on social services. They are like, we have other priorities now; we need to build roads, we need to build trash dumps. That will continue until there is no responsibility for non-provision and no state control mechanism.»

The assumption that the lack of information about the availability of social services is not a mistake, but a deliberate policy of some local government leaders is also voiced by the research participants representing the executive authorities in the regions:

«Because the problem is that we ask them, if they provide a particular service in their community. And they claim, there is no need to provide it; there are no people in need. And there are no people in need only because a person in need may not know that they have the right to receive a particular service from the community budget. The point is that every time we call for it, we carry out an information policy. However, we must understand that if the community is not capable, it will not implement such a high-quality information policy because many people will be in need. They will not have the funds left for paving, lighting and other things.» – OMA representative.

¹¹⁴ Lilia Viriovkina. *Charitable and humanitarian aid – the difference between them. Part 1. Published on June 25, 2023.*



The findings of the **«Survey on Social Protection and Social Rights in Ukraine: Satisfaction with Social Services»**¹¹⁵ (2023) indicate:

«We have identified that one of the primary challenges in providing social services is insufficient information about their availability and accessibility. For example, some of the informants we spoke to said they learned about the social services they received by chance, like from people they knew who were already receiving similar services. We can assume that due to the lack of more systematic dissemination of information about social services, some citizens in need of support, care, adaptation, or other social services may not be covered by them.»¹¹⁶

Authors of the study **«Development of social services during the war»**¹¹⁷ (2022-2023) reached similar conclusions:

«...in the pre-war period, territorial communities provided insufficient information to the population about the list of social services offered by social service providers. The lack of a unified approach to organizing the system of social services in communities and the absence of a single interface for providing information on the provision of social services on the official web portal of the territorial community caused the population, which in peacetime had never needed or used social services, to misunderstand which body and which social service to apply for. This conclusion is confirmed in the results of the research.»¹¹⁸

■ Inadequate cost of services, if they are calculated according to the legislation

This topic has been discussed in detail in the previous sections, so we will only briefly mention that the participants of our study emphasize the need for a legislative review of the social services cost.

«Because it turns out that a service, for example, accompanying a child during inclusive education at school, if a child with a disability is accompanied, costs, I don't know, about 8 UAH an hour. That is, if not for parents willing to sit there for free, this service will not be provided at the appropriate level. For example, if a tender for social services is held at the city level, the city must

¹¹⁵ Natalia Lomonosova, Yulia Kabanets, Oksana Buts, Kateryna Babych. *Research on Social Protection and Social Rights in Ukraine: Satisfaction with Social Services*. Published on March 29, 2024.

¹¹⁶ Natalia Lomonosova, Yulia Kabanets, Oksana Buts, Kateryna Babych. *Survey on social protection and social rights in Ukraine: satisfaction with social services*. Published on March 29, 2024.

¹¹⁷ *Development of social services during the war*. Prepared by the advocacy analysts of the CF «Right to Protection» as a partner of the Ukraine Response Consortium within the framework of the project «Addressing the urgent multisectoral humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations in Ukraine». Published in 2023.

¹¹⁸ *Development of social services during the war*. Prepared by the advocacy analysts of the CF «Right to Protection» as a partner of the Ukraine Response Consortium within the framework of the project «Addressing the urgent multisectoral humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations in Ukraine». Published in 2023.



act in accordance with the current legislation. According to the current legislation, there should be some calculations. They can't just write, for example, one service for a certain amount or a salary for a certain amount of money because there is a calculation of the cost of a social service. Some changes should be introduced here.» – CSO representative.

■ Quality of service delivery standards

Respondents believe there is a certain imbalance in the standards of social services provision. On the one hand, they are very detailed and often require things that are either impossible or difficult to accomplish; on the other hand, some services are not described sufficiently. Examples include transportation services and services for the visually impaired.

«As for what is written in the state standards, I'm sorry, it's um... I don't want to use a word like that, but it's something that is written by some employee, an official who sits in the Ministry on the 19th floor. He looks out the window and writes whatever he sees there. That is, these state standards, they... Look, it's written there. Because I studied this matter, right? There, it is written that when a visually impaired person is taken, say, to the CAS, to the court, or the clinic, it is specified how many minutes he should be there. Is it possible to fulfil this? But it is written in the state standard.» – CSO representative.

«We have to provide the service, but we cannot pay for parking, according to the regulation. It's the same, if we take a car wash or buy keys. The fact is that we cannot do it to provide the service. We are under martial law, and this resolution 590 is the priority. On the one hand, it seems fair, but on the other hand, to provide the service, we should have a car, which must be parked somewhere. It has to be there. Because this is an official service, it cannot be parked at someone's house. That's an example. And the fact that there is no standard is also a dual situation. Because you seem to be a bit freer, whether the provider can regulate all the legislative issues that appear later is also a question.» – CSO representative.

■ The need to create a «sole procurer» of social services

Practitioners and researchers of social services have recently suggested changing the system of social services procurement in Ukraine. Following the example of medical services, a single entity should be created that would have the authority and budget to procure social services throughout the country. According to Halyna Skipalska, executive director of the Ukrainian Foundation for Public Health, director of the HealthRight International office in Ukraine, it could positively impact the involvement of CSOs in the social services market.

«Meanwhile, taking into account the limited local budgets during the wartime period, Ukraine has started to raise the issue of creating a state or non-governmental structure in the social sphere that will take over the financing of the most popular social services from the national level, from the national budget – something like the National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU) that was created in due time. Such a structure is expected to be able to both supplement the funding of certain social services provided by local municipal institutions

and purchase services from CSOs.»¹¹⁹

The same opinion is shared by the authors of the in-depth study **«Legislation Regulating the Provision of Social Services in Ukraine and Ways to Improve It»**¹²⁰ (published in 2021):

«The creation of a sole procurer of social services as a separate central executive body that will act in the interests of social service recipients and procure social services from social service providers of all forms of ownership will radically change the current situation and promote the effective functioning of the social services market.»¹²¹

According to the authors of the study **«Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs»**¹²² (2023), respondents from among the heads of LSGs strongly demand redistribution of powers in the field of social protection.

«The two main desirable scenarios of change discussed by the representatives of the communities we talked to are as follows:

- direct redistribution of powers, i.e. changes towards some centralization, when the state will again take on more responsibilities in the field of social protection: act as their warrantor and provide funding;
- redistribution of financial responsibility: communities retain their social protection responsibilities, but the state is more actively involved in their co-financing, thus supplementing the resources of local budgets in communities.»¹²³

The respondents of our research point to the fundamental imperfection of the legislation, which prevents the recipient of social services from choosing their provider and makes it impossible to implement the principle of «money follows the customer» (which could be achieved if a «sole procurer» is created). They state that the community leadership, not the service recipient, determines who will provide what services and whether they will be provided. As noted above, the likelihood of receiving quality social services depends heavily on the community's capacity and its leadership's interest in organizing service delivery.

¹¹⁹ Halyna Skipalska. *What social problems has the war highlighted?* Published on October 3, 2022.



¹²⁰ Rostyslav Kis', Olesia Balian. *Legislation regulating the provision of social services in Ukraine and ways to improve it.* Analytical report. Published in 2021.



¹²¹ Rostyslav Kis', Olesia Balian. *Legislation regulating the provision of social services in Ukraine and ways to improve it.* Analytical report. Published in 2021.

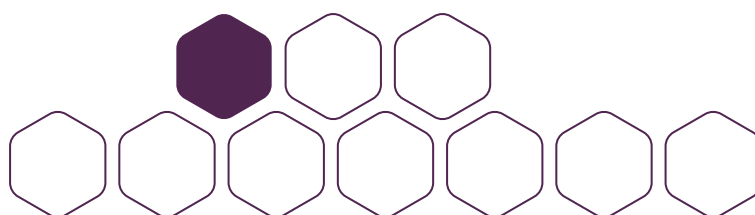


¹²² Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs.* Published in January 2024.

¹²³ Nataliia Lomonosova, Alina Helashvili, Yuliia Nazarenko (CEDOS and the Human Rights Center for Servicemen «Principle»). *Social Services for Male and Female Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs.* Published in January 2024.

«Secondly, it is the absence of any consideration of the recipient's needs and desires and choice of a social service provider. That is the function, role, and wishes of the recipient to choose freely, which is declared in the law on social services, are not currently being fulfilled in any way, either technically or practically. As a result, we have a situation where organizations could provide services, but the mechanisms of financing and interaction are inadequate and imperfect. In general, we advocate for a shift away from competitive options.

That is, this principle of «money follows the recipient of services» cannot be ensured by a tender. Therefore, if we fully universalize the model, we can turn it into a more European model, where a person will receive services regardless of whether the community is financially capable and self-sufficient, whether they live in a better or worse community. They will receive services in general tailored to them. But at this point, if we cross the Rubicon, we can get a normal service market that meets the needs of each recipient.» – CSO representative.



About ISAR Ednannia

ISAR Ednannia

is a Ukrainian civil society organization that has been strengthening civil society and the culture of strategic philanthropy for 25 years, and also enhancing initiatives to build democracy in Ukraine.

The mission

is to nurture and unite leaders of the nation – those who bring people together into communities and lead them forward, those who choose to become leaders and take on responsibility.

Strategic objectives of ISAR Ednannia:

1. Developing and strengthening civil society to make it influential
2. Promoting the culture of strategic philanthropy in communities.
3. Platform for cross-sectoral dialogue and cooperation.
4. Development and consolidation of democracy in Ukraine.



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is an online database of research and materials
dedicated to civil society in Ukraine.
The database is open and contains current,
evidence-based data.



Recommended Research by ISAR Ednannia:

Civil Society in the Context of War:
Sociological Research 2023-2024



Towards European Integration

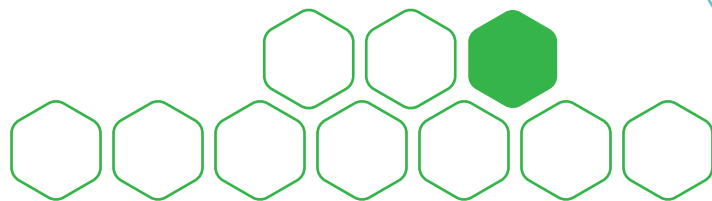
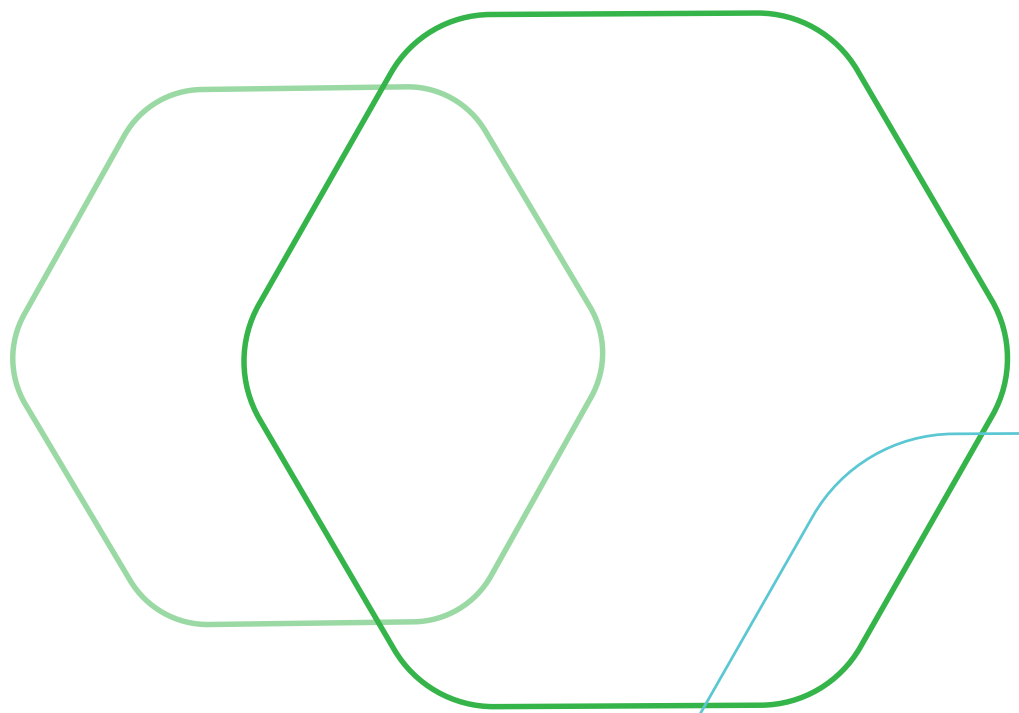


CSOs Working in the Veteran Sphere



Challenges and Needs of the Volunteer Sector





2024