



from relief to recovery



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

Rapid Needs Assessment

Previously Occupied and Frontline Territories
in Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblasts

December 2023

In collaboration with



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Figure 1 Many whose houses were destroyed because of military activities during the war want to rebuild their home.

Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| AOS | Angels of Salvation (Ukrainian Charity Foundation) |
| CRSV | Conflict-Related Sexual Violence |
| EWR | Explosive War Remnants |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussions |
| FSL | Food Security and Livelihoods |
| GBV AoR | Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility |
| GIHA WG | Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group |
| GoU | Government of Ukraine |
| HIAS | Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (International non-profit organization) |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Person |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| JMMI | Joint Market Monitoring Initiative |
| KIIs | Key Informant Interviews |
| MHPSS | Mental Health and Psychosocial Support |
| MoH | Ministry of Health of Ukraine |
| MSF | Doctors Without Borders |
| NRC | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| NFIs | Non-Food Items |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PSEA | Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| (R)NA | (Rapid) Needs Assessment |
| (S)GBV | (Sexual) Gender-based Violence |
| TH | Territorial Hromada |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| ZOA | Zuid-Oost Azie (International non-profit organization) |

Reading guide

This reading guide provides an overview of the structure of the report. After the general introduction (chapter 1) and justification of the methodology (chapter 2), an overview of the context in the South East of Ukraine and the specific oblasts is provided in chapter 3. The report then presents the results of the rapid needs assessment (RNA) in chapter 4, starting with a profile description of the respondents before diving into the identified needs for the specific sectors assessed: fuel/heating, shelter, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), livelihoods and protection, including Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The sections provide an overview of the overall findings before delving into specific information at the oblast level to understand the context more comprehensively.

After the presentation of the findings per sector, the perceived vulnerable groups and preferred modalities of assistance are elaborated on, as well as the availability and accessibility of services, markets, and humanitarian support. The conclusions and recommendations from the needs assessment are presented in chapter 5, and the report concludes with the next steps for HIAS and ZOA in the final chapter 6.

Annexes and attachments at the end of the report provide additional information and pictures of the needs assessment activities. A concise summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations can be found at the beginning of the report in the Executive Summary.

Disclaimer

Photographs by Lieuwe Siebe de Jong

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This document covers a joint needs assessment implemented by HIAS and ZOA in collaboration with Angels of Salvation. The views expressed herein should not be taken, in any way, to reflect the official opinion of the organisations involved and the involved organisations are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Executive Summary

A multi-sector joint needs assessment was carried out in Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblasts from the 24th of November until the 5th of December 2023 by ZOA and HIAS. The purpose of the needs assessment was to understand the current humanitarian situation and priority needs of the population in previously occupied and frontline territories in the selected locations to inform the design of future humanitarian responses. Another aim was to assess the cash feasibility and modality preference by the population.

The needs assessment focused on previously occupied areas retaken by Ukraine and frontline areas. Data was collected through a set of complementary research methods, including 396 in-person household surveys, 7 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and 2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Analysis was done using KOBO Toolbox, PowerBI and Excel. The majority of respondents were female (71%), and the largest age group was between 50-64 years old (43%). The average household size was 2.6 persons, with a significant proportion, 67% of respondents, being returnees. The most frequent vulnerability indicators at household level included households with elderly members (32%), single female-headed households (25%), and individuals with chronic health problems (13%) or disabilities (6%).

The most urgent need identified by respondents is fuel for heating, with no less than 63% of the total respondents stipulating it as their first or second priority need. These findings indicate that heating and fuel are an ongoing and returning need for a striking part of the population, especially in wintertime. In addition, it is worth highlighting that one out of five respondents (18%) reported being currently unable to heat their homes at the moment of data collection because of the unaffordability (64%) or limited availability (41%) of the type of fuel they use. More specifically, respondents face issues in affording fuel prices (mainly gas) and are no longer able to collect firewood themselves due to the presence of Explosive War Remnants (EWRs) in the field in previously occupied territories for example. Moreover, damaged housing and lack of functioning heating facilities

contribute to the issue for some individuals. Based on the findings of the assessment, there is a gap could be omitted in addressing this need, as only 17% of those who see fuel for heating as their priority need currently receive support to meet this need. The most common fuel used for heating is firewood (71%) and gas (33%). According to the market assessment carried out by REACH, fuel for heating is generally available (including on order) in both oblasts.

In terms of shelter, more than half (57%) of the respondents, mentioned building materials for house repair as their first or second priority need. In Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblasts, the level of destruction and needs are very high, with no less than 93% of the respondents in Khersonska and 91% in Mykolaivska stating their houses suffered some level of damage (ranging from minor damages to complete destruction) resulting from military activities during the war. Cash to access building materials, skilled manpower, and heat one's home, is required for improving shelter conditions. In both oblasts, financial constraints are identified as the main barrier (80%) to accessing the construction market. The supply side of the market seems to be functioning well for the majority of participants, with only a small portion (7%) facing barriers because of the unavailability of goods (i.e., building materials).

Although MHPSS was generally not the first thing that came to mind when people were asked about their priority needs (which is expected to be related to the overall sensitivity and stigma related to topics concerning one's psychosocial well-being), the general results of the World Health Organization (WHO)-5 Well-Being Index are alarming. According to this index, a total of 30% of the surveyed are suffering from poor well-being and quality of life and have a score that suggests the possible presence of psychological symptoms including depression, and no less than 38% of the respondents are experiencing psychological distress, with the presence of depressive symptoms. Generally, people declare that what cause them the most worries are the military operations (30%), the damaged or destroyed houses (18%), the economic situation (17%) and the uncertainty about their future

(16%). A quarter (28%) of the respondents declare that someone in their household would benefit from MHPSS services, and 11% are unsure or would rather not say, indicating that the percentage of people who may benefit from MHPSS services may be in fact higher. Additionally, 52% of respondents state that they do not know how to access MHPSS services at present, which seems to be mostly due to a lack of available information about these services (31%) or a lack of knowledge on the topic (30%).

Moving on to the findings on livelihoods, it is worth highlighting that one out of eleven (9%) respondents see food, and 4% input for farming as their current first or second priority need. Subsistence farming is a common livelihood strategy in the rural areas of the surveyed oblasts, yet there has been a notable decline in the participation of rural households in subsistence farming activities (livestock and crop farming) since the beginning of the war, impacting the food security and livelihoods of these households. Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts are both affected (e.g., in Khersonska oblast, 80% of the respondents relied on livestock farming before the war broke out, leaving only 50% in the current situation) and no less than two-thirds of the respondents of these two oblasts are interested in receiving support to invest in animal/crop farming for the improvement of their household's food intake. Current barriers faced by people in keeping and restoring their livestock include the limited availability of animals, high prices of livestock, and scarcity of fodder and water, while physical access to fields (mainly caused by insecurity related to EWRs), cost of seeds, and unavailability and financial access to fertilizers and seeds are the main barriers to crop farming. Poultry remains the most popular choice for animal husbandry, with chickens being the preferred animals in both Oblasts. Reasons are the short cycle and cost-effectiveness. The most popular crops include potatoes, tomatoes, and cucumbers.

With regards to WASH, safe drinking water is considered a first or second priority need for 8% of the respondents and another 15% sees utilities, including water, gas, and electricity, amongst their top priority concerns. Based on the results of the needs assessment, a significant number of respondents face challenges in accessing safe drinking water due to its lack of availability and poor quality. Challenges are faced in Mykolaivska (56%) and Khersonska (50%) Oblasts due to factors related to the destruction of the centralized water supply system, remoteness of villages, and the aftermath of the Kakhovka dam burst. While efforts have been made to restore access to clean drinking water, there is still a need for improvement, particularly in remote and frontline communities. Sanitation facilities are generally available, but running water is lacking in many areas, and many households require essential hygiene items (soap in particular).

The protection needs in the targeted oblasts of the RNA are diverse, encompassing physical security, exposure to EWRs, military activities, and adverse weather conditions. While violence is not the predominant concern, gender-based violence (GBV) remains pervasive, with underreporting due to low awareness and fear of stigma. The doubling of domestic violence cases highlights the challenge of identifying and addressing GBV. Data reveals a lack of knowledge regarding GBV. Barriers to identifying GBV services include information and knowledge gaps, uncertainty in choosing qualified specialists, and the unavailability or cost of services. A substantial knowledge gap exists also regarding the Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).

Zooming in on the perceived existing vulnerabilities amongst the target population, respondents emphasized that all assessed communities suffered from the war and that everyone was impacted to some degree. Yet, elderly, people with disabilities, persons with chronic health problems, single-female households, families with multiple children (3+), and those who lost their income were identified as being particularly vulnerable.

Young people and individuals in their 40s-50s were disproportionately affected by a loss of income while receiving less support compared to the elderly and families with children. The majority of respondents, accounting for 93% of the total, expressed a strong preference for (digital) cash as the most suitable and relevant modality of assistance, because of the flexibility, swiftness, and freedom it provides.

The delivery of humanitarian aid in the targeted regions and nationwide is a consistent effort, however, there are challenges and variations in services among different areas. Currently, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) provide the majority of support in meeting priority needs, and some assistance is provided by the Hromada/State. There are significant gaps in support for the top priority needs identified by respondents, such as fuel for heating and building materials, where a large percentage of those in need reported not receiving any support. This emphasizes the ongoing need for assistance in addressing the most pressing needs of those affected by the war.

The conclusions of the report highlight a continued need for assistance in addressing the urgent needs of those affected by the war. Based on the findings of the needs assessment, **recommendations** include the following:

Fuel/heating

To alleviate the heating challenges faced by the population in all oblasts, it is recommended to provide cash for fuel, especially in wintertime, as a way to address the main barriers of the unaffordability of fuel (mainly gas) and the difficulties people face to collect firewood themselves because of the presence of EWRs in the fields amongst others. When providing cash, it is recommended to closely monitor the availability and price trends of fuel for heating in the targeted oblasts and also account for the costs of delivery services where relevant to improve people's access. Furthermore, support in fuel/heating would be most effective in combination with efforts to improve housing conditions (e.g., facilitate home repairs).

Shelter

Address the high level of destruction to shelters caused by military activities by providing cash for building materials and skilled laborers or contractors to help improve shelter conditions and make homes safe and habitable. It is recommended to take the necessary measures to tackle barriers that impede people's access to the construction market, starting with addressing financial access constraints, ensuring the provision of delivery services to reduce potential mobility limitations, and closely monitoring the functioning of the construction market to ensure safe and full access to building materials and services for those in need.

MHPSS

Boost awareness through outreach activities, provide accessible MHPSS services that address the needs of the most vulnerable through individual consultations, group-based activities such as community-based recreational activities to enhance community resilience and connection between people, stress-management techniques to prevent the consequences of prolonged toxic stress and promote self-help attitudes, peer support groups for vulnerable women or veterans and their families, parenting skills interventions to support parents and caregivers, and integrate mental health support with sectors like shelter and livelihood to ensure the provision of comprehensive psychosocial support in targeted regions.

WASH

To improve people's access to potable water, close consultation with (local) authorities and enterprises is key to finding sustainable solutions for those areas with limited access to safe drinking water. The ongoing efforts of the national and local government in the (re)construction and maintenance of water supply networks, needs to be complemented with the support by humanitarian organisations with expertise, especially where gaps arise. Additionally, it is recommended to provide cash-based assistance to people in need of essential hygienic products, including amongst other women's items.



Figure 2 People from the community cut and collect firewood to prepare for winter.

Livelihoods

Provide targeted assistance in the form of (cash for) agricultural inputs to help farmers resume their farming activities in Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts. Cash based assistance allows people to invest in their preferred animals/seeds, although poultry seems to be most cost-efficient and feasible. Where needed, offering additional support for the necessary repair of stables/shelter is recommended. To increase the impact and sustainability of livelihood programming, a more in-depth market analysis for various types of agricultural livelihoods, as well as additional market-based programming are required. Likewise, it is crucial to consider the risks of EWRs, promoting small-scale homestead farming in demined areas only. Besides focusing on livestock and crop farming, the promotion of alternative income-generating activities and skill training could be further explored, seeking potential win-win construction scenarios, such as individuals in the building/construction work to support home repair efforts in the oblasts with high shelter needs.

GBV

Outreach to raise awareness about gender-based violence and PSEA, enhance provision of high-quality, safe, accessible, and gender-tailored prevention, risk mitigation, and response services, establishing

referral pathways, and ensuring staff and local authorities training in GBV Core Concepts, Safe Referral, and PSEA.

Provide cash-based assistance

To effectively address the material needs of the respondents, it is recommended to provide cash-based assistance tailored to the specific context and needs of each Oblast. This is in line with the overall preference for cash as a modality. To facilitate cash-based assistance, it is important to continuously monitor the functioning, availability of and access to (financial) services and markets. The Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) can provide insight and is to be complemented by own market assessment of relevant markets and services.

Continuous coordination

Continuous coordination with (local) authorities, humanitarian actors, and the targeted population is key for the design and implementation of a response. Likewise, a thorough consideration of the various levels and aspects of vulnerabilities that exist within the community is necessary when deciding upon the inclusion criteria.



1. Introduction

Between November 24 and December 5, 2023, HIAS and ZOA conducted a joint multi-sector Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) in the South-East of Ukraine to understand the prioritized needs of conflict-affected individuals, identify gaps, and determine the most relevant forms and modalities of assistance. Another factor leading to the decision for a joint needs assessment is the wish to explore opportunities for joint programming between HIAS and ZOA for a complementary approach in which ZOA brings sectoral expertise and experience in Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFIs), WASH, and Livelihood needs, and HIAS in MHPSS and Protection, including GBV. The data collection for the RNA was conducted in collaboration with Angels of Salvation (AOS), a Ukrainian organization operating in all oblasts of Ukraine, and with solid experience on Shelter/NFIs, Food Security and Livelihoods, MHPSS, Education, Nutrition, and WASH.

The findings and recommendations from this report will be shared with the humanitarian community, including donors, national and international actors, Ukrainian civil society, and government bodies, to shape future humanitarian responses in the region. Platforms for sharing the Needs Assessment include amongst others the S/NFIs, FSL, Protection clusters, as well as the GBV Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR), Gender in Humanitarian Action (GIHA) and MHPSS working groups.

2. Methodology

Geography

The geographical focus of the needs assessment was on hard-to-reach areas located near the frontline in territories that have been occupied and were retaken by Ukraine over the past years and/or were under shelling (Figure 3 and 4).

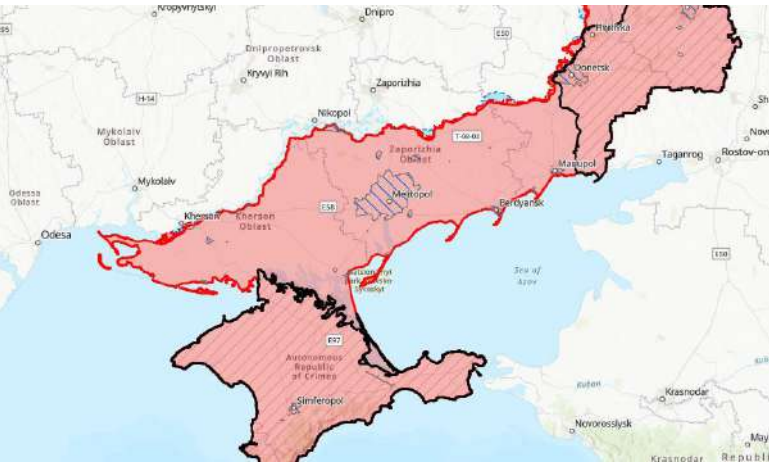
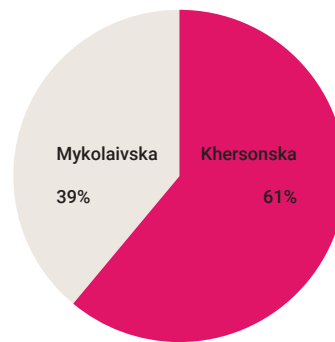
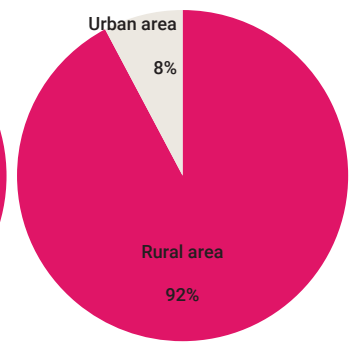


Figure 3 Map frontline area Ukraine

All interviews were conducted in previously occupied territories, and communities that are/were located near the frontline and have been affected by the military activities. The main focus was on rural areas (Graph 2) because of a higher presence of damaged private houses, fewer services available, limited economic choices and being less accessible for assistance delivery programs due to logistical and other constraints (OCHA, 2024).



Graph 1 Coverage of the respondents per Oblast



Graph 2 Context characteristics of the locations



Figure 4 Map newly accessible areas

The selected Oblasts for the needs assessment concern Khersonska (61%) and Mykolaivska (39%) located in the South-East of Ukraine (Graph 1). Communities were selected based on preliminary information retrieved through consultation of lists of de-occupied territories and key informants regarding the location's characteristics, existing needs, gaps, and vulnerabilities, amongst others.

Target population

The sample size of the needs assessment was 396 household-level surveys amongst randomly selected war-affected populations in four selected oblasts.

Research methods

The needs assessment included a set of complementary research methods to collect data:

- 396 in-person household surveys
- 7 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- 2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with community members, including elderly, men, women, and youth.
- Desk research and document review
- Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (REACH)



Figure 5 Overview locations needs assessment

The household survey was developed in Kobo Toolbox in English and translated into Ukrainian for data collection. Respondents were randomly selected in the targeted locations and the questionnaire was conducted in person with anonymous answers submitted digitally via Kobo Toolbox. Respondents gave their informed consent before the start of the interview.

In order to gather qualitative and more detailed information, FGDs and KIIs were conducted alongside the household surveys. This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the needs and gaps in the communities. At least one KII was conducted in each Hromada, involving key informants such as (vice) mayors, administrative heads, experts and officials from various departments and services related to culture, shelter, social services, and humanitarian assistance.

To gain more insight on the functioning of the market, prices and people's access to markets and services, the monthly JMMI of REACH was consulted. ZOA also participated in the data collection round of November and December covering various Hromadas in Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts.

See annexes for an overview of the household surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and reference list desk research.

Data analysis

Data collected through the household surveys was initially reviewed in Kobo Toolbox to discover the general trends. A more thorough data analysis was done in Excel and PowerBI to unravel these trends and gain more in-depth insights.

Data collection team

The assessment coordination team for this project comprised one female international staff member from ZOA and one female Ukrainian consultant from HIAS. The data collection team consisted of 14 enumerators (5F / 9M) from ZOA and 9 enumerators from Angels of Salvation (6F / 3M). All enumerators were native speakers of both Ukrainian and Russian languages. Before the actual start of the data collection, enumerators received a joint training. Besides discussing the purpose and details of the needs assessment, including the survey questions, the training also included a session on MHPSS and GBV facilitated by an expert from HIAS.

The FGDs were facilitated by one female international facilitator and one male national translator/interpreter from ZOA. Both the KIIs and FGDs applied a semi-structural research approach using a predesigned template including a set of questions covering similar topics to the questionnaire and additionally included a gender analysis part.



Figure 6 Many villages in Khersonska Oblast are damaged up to 80%

Limitations

Several limitations were identified that could potentially impact the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the collected data, including access constraints due to remote locations and security risks. The influence of weather conditions emerged as a significant factor both in terms of access, as well as in finding respondents (fewer people on the streets) and respondents' willingness to engage with enumerators, due to pressing immediate concerns such as heating. Likewise, the timing of the assessment and the cold may have influenced responses to survey questions, particularly regarding the emphasis on fuel for heating. Another potential bias that needs to be accounted for is that the majority of respondents (71%) were women.² Additionally, the lengthiness of the questionnaire (20-30 minutes) may have affected results, with participants potentially

feeling tired or less willing to answer questions towards the end of the survey. Hence, when topics related to MHPSS, Protection and GBV were discussed, people might have been more reluctant to answer these questions in depth, which might have been compounded by the sensitivity of such topics. The persistent societal stigma surrounding these issues rendered conversations challenging. Some respondents clearly lacked the necessary vocabulary and awareness on mental health to express their struggles. The stigma extended to the interaction between enumerators and respondents, with enumerators sometimes feeling uncomfortable facilitating discussions on mental health and GBV despite the training provided to them at the start of the survey. This can have an impact on the quality and quantity of the data collected regarding MHPSS, Protection and GBV.

12 ² | Looking at the demographics of villages versus cities, this division can be partially attributed to the general trends of higher number of women compared to men in the villages, particularly amongst the elderly population, due to factors such as longer life expectancy and the impact of conflict and lifestyle choices.



3. Context Analysis

The ongoing conflict has had devastating impacts on livelihoods, essential services, and infrastructure in southern and eastern regions of Ukraine, particularly in Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts. These areas have been affected by Russian occupation and shelling along the frontline, as well as continuous displacement of populations. The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam has caused extensive flooding, directly affecting around 100,000 residents. Attacks on hospitals and medical facilities persist and the conflict has resulted in a significant increase in poverty rates, particularly in war-affected regions like Khersonska Oblast, exacerbating the already dire situation. Marginalized groups, such as rural women, individuals with limited mobility, and those living close to the frontline, face restricted employment and livelihood opportunities, amongst others due to security risks, including shelling, landmines and EWRs. Humanitarian efforts are impeded by access constraints related to insecurity, which are further compounded by current severe weather conditions. Nevertheless, together with community representatives and authorities, who play an integral role in decision-making and the provision of support, efforts are being made to maintain services, alleviate suffering, and address priority needs amidst the conflict. In the sections below, more specific context descriptions at Hromada level will be provided for both oblasts, before diving into the needs assessment results in the next chapter.

Khersonska Oblast

Velyka Oleksandrivka, Vysokopilska, Borozenske, Novo Oleksandrivka, and part of Bilozerska Hromada were occupied for 7-8 months with accessibility restored in late 2022. In all Hromadas, a small number of people have remained in their communities during the occupation (e.g., 10% in Vysokopilska and Velyka Oleksandrivka). The occupation has left a trail of destruction. Presently, residents are returning to these areas, actively engaging in the reconstruction of damaged houses and the restoration of critical infrastructure including electricity grids, water supply, and gas pipelines.

Mykolaivska Oblast

Berezhneuvate while not occupied, was on the frontline for 8 months until November 2022, facing continuous shelling, mines, rockets, and missiles resulting in widespread destruction. A substantial part of the population left as a result of hostilities. About half of the population of Bila Krynytsa and Murakhivka and 70% of Lepetykha have now returned to find their villages and homes destroyed. In the Territorial Hromada (TH) of Shevchenkove some villages were occupied (Ternovi Podiy), and others evacuated (Liubomirivske and Myrne) when the aggressor came close. In the aftermath, the houses and infrastructure were destroyed, fields were mined, and cattle killed or lost. After a period of forced displacement, people are returning to the area to rebuild their homes and livelihoods.

See annexes for an overview of the locations.

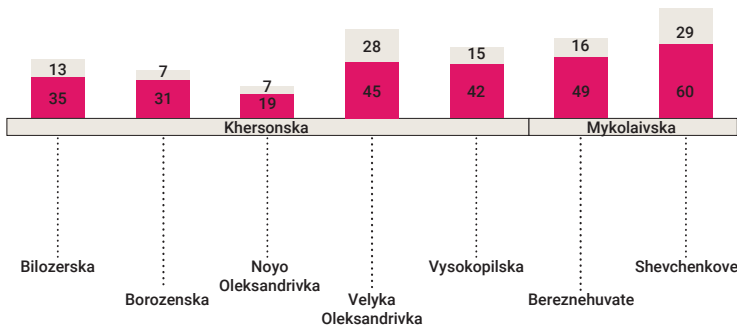
4. Results

4.1 Respondents

A total of 396 randomly selected people were interviewed in Khersonska (61%) and Mykolaivska (39%) oblast in the South-East of Ukraine (Graph 3).

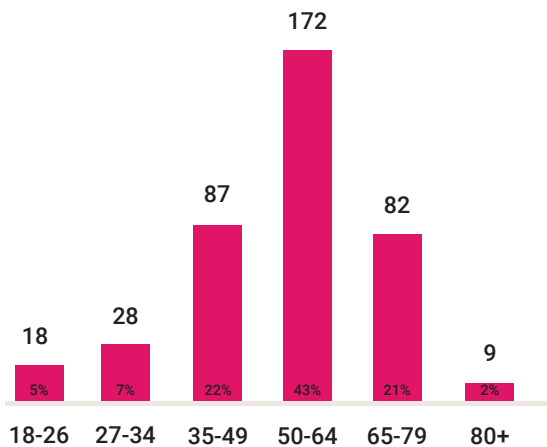
Coverage Rhomadas per Oblast

Female Male



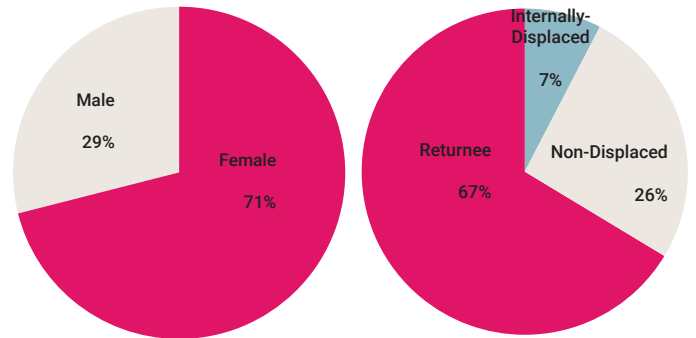
Graph 3 Coverage respondents per Hromadas and Oblast

Out of the respondents, 71% identified as female and 29% as male. The ages of respondents ranged from 18 to 80+, of which the largest age group (43%) is between 50-64 years old (Graph 4, Graph 5).



Graph 4 Demography of respondents

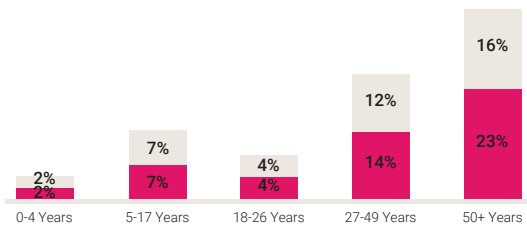
The average household size of the interviewed people is 2.6 persons. The household displacement status was as follows: 67% returnee, 26% non-displaced and 7% internally displaced person (IDP) (Graph 6, Graph 7).



Graph 5 Gender of respondents Graph 6 Displacement status

Household composition

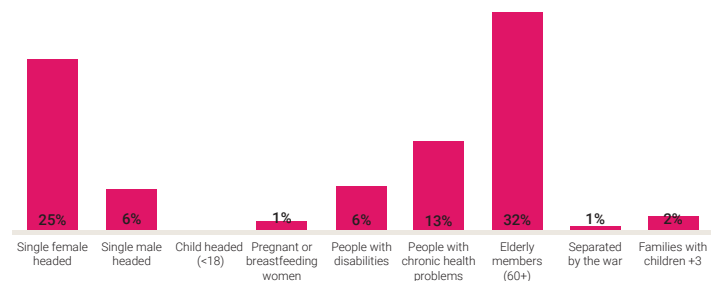
Female Male



Graph 7 Household composition

At household level, some prominent vulnerability characteristics include households with elderly members 60+ (32%), single female-headed households (25%), households with people with chronic health problems (13%) and disabilities (6%) (Graph 8).

Vulnerabilities at household level



Graph 8 Vulnerabilities at household level

4.2 Identified Needs

According to the needs assessment, the most pressing needs identified by the participants are fuel for heating and building materials for house repair.

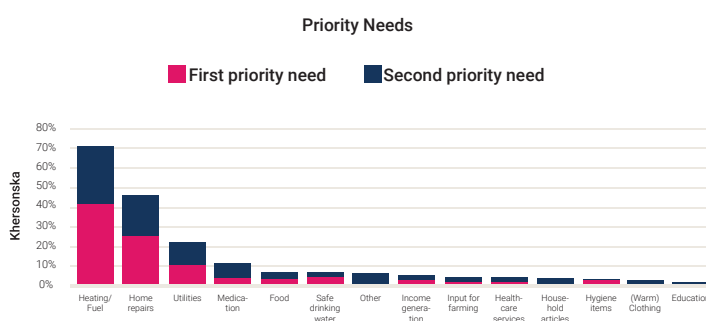
Out of the 396 respondents, 250 (63%) mentioned fuel/heating and 224 (57%) building materials for house repair as their current first and/or second priority need. Utilities (15%), medication (12%), food (9%) and drinking water (8%) are also mentioned as priority needs, although by a smaller number of interviewees. To measure MHPSS needs, a separate set of questions based on the WHO-5 Psychological Well-Being Index was used, that was voluntarily completed by 219 persons (55% of the total respondents).³ The general results show that a total of 30% of the surveyed Ukrainians present with poor well-being and quality of life, and have a score that suggests the possible presence of psychological symptoms including depression and that 38% of the respondents are experiencing psychological distress, with the presence of depressive symptoms. On the basis of the results and complemented by the information collected in KIIs, MHPSS can be identified as another priority concern/need to be addressed as part of an integrated approach to relief the suffering of war-affected populations in the targeted areas. To account for protection issues and gender related risks, questions about security, GBV, and PSEA were also included in the questionnaire and will be further explored in the section on protection and gender-based violence later on.

After evaluating the priority needs as identified by the respondents in the following sections below, a more detailed exploration follows of the sector-specific needs related to fuel/heating, shelter, MHPSS, WASH, Livelihoods and Protection/GBV. Each section provides an overview of the overall findings before delving into specific information at the oblast level to understand the context more comprehensively.

Self-identified priority needs

Khersonska Oblast

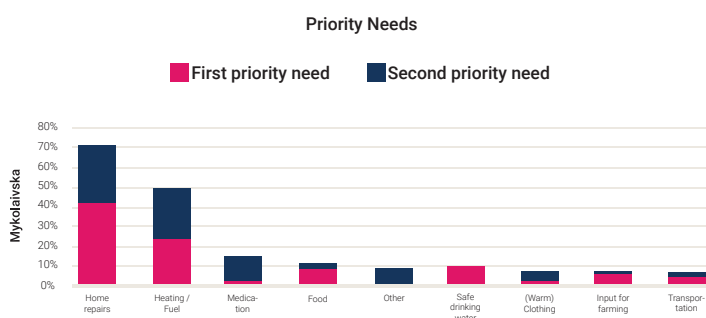
In Khersonska Oblast, about three quarter (71%) of the people interviewed prioritize fuel/heating and almost half (46%) of the respondents find themselves in need of construction materials to repair their house. Other identified needs include utilities, medication, and food amongst others (Graph 9).



Graph 9 Priority needs Khersonska

Mykolaivska Oblast

The situation in Mykolaivska Oblast is slightly different compared to Khersonska. Here building materials are identified as a first or second priority need by almost three quarter (72%) of the respondents, and fuel for heating comes second with 51%. Other identified needs include amongst others medication, food, and safe drinking water (Graph 10).



Graph 10 Priority needs Mykolaivska Oblast

³ | Respondents were asked whether they were willing to answer some questions regarding their current well-being. The response rate of 56% of the total respondents could be related to taboo/stigma/sensitivity attached to discussing topics related to one's mental health and well-being. 15



Figure 7 For many, including Rosali (82), firewood is an ongoing pressing need in wintertime.

Fuel for heating

“In wintertime, heating is the most critical issue. Before people could go to the forest and get firewood or buy fuel from their income or pai (renting land). But now, income is lost and pai is not paid by the farmers, because the farmers cannot use the field due to mines. Also, people cannot go to the forest to collect firewood themselves because of the mines.”

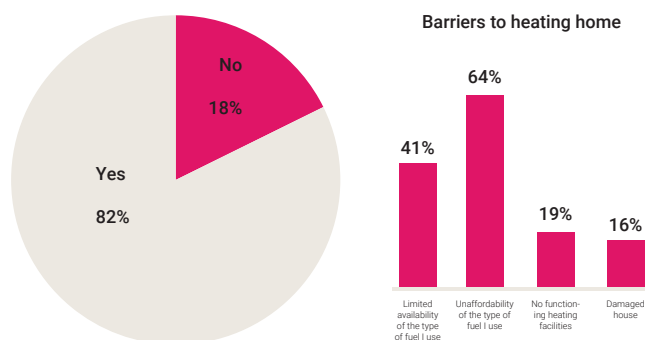
- Head of Starostat in Shevchenkove

As became clear from the previous section, fuel for heating is a key priority need for the majority of respondents (63%), which is not surprising considering the low temperatures at the moment of data collection (November/December).



Figure 8 Firewood stove in one of the respondent's houses

It is important to highlight that fuel for heating concerns an ongoing need, especially in wintertime when temperatures drop, also explained by key informants. Out of the total 396 respondents, 70 people (18%) mentioned currently being unable to heat their homes because of the unaffordability (64%), limited availability (41%) of the type of fuel they use, a lack of functioning heating facilities (19%) or a damaged home (16%) (Graph 11). Amongst those people, 59% also stipulated fuel for heating as a priority need.

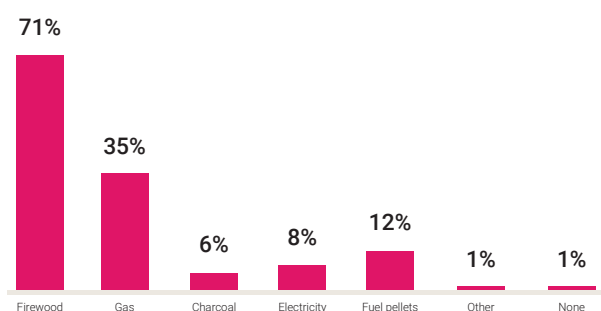


Graph 11 Barriers for those unable to heat their home
Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblast

In addition to the barriers addressed by those unable to heat their homes, the presence of EWRs in the field form another important obstacle for people in the villages who are used to collect firewood themselves or rely on land tenure for an income as explained by the head of Starostat in Shevchenkove, Mykolaivska Oblast (see quote at the beginning of this section).

The most often used types of fuel for heating by respondents are firewood (71%) and gas (35%) (Graph 12). In the section on 4.5 Access to services and markets the access to these types of fuel for heating and the corresponding prices will be further elaborated upon. First, the needs per oblast will be presented in the sections below.

Type of fuel used for heating

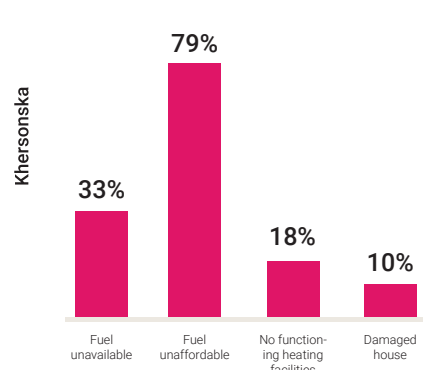


Graph 12 Types of fuel for heating
Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblast

Khersonska Oblast

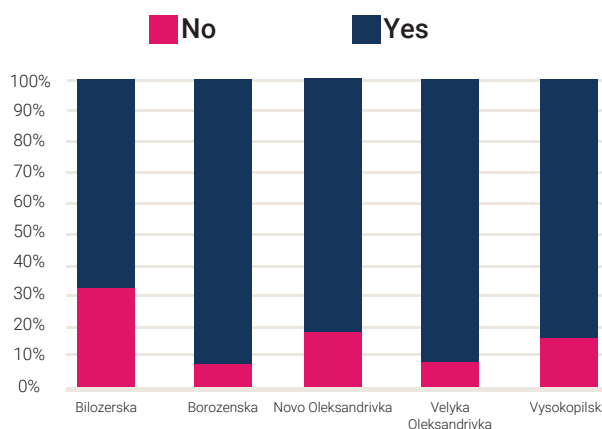
In Khersonska Oblast, almost three quarter (71%) of the people interviewed prioritize fuel for heating as their current first or second priority need (Graph 9). Also, a total of 39 people (16% of the respondents in Khersonska Oblast) say they are currently unable to heat their house: Bilozerska (33%), Novo Oleksandrivka (19%), and Vysokopilska (16%) (Graph 12). For those people, the main barriers relate to the price of fuel which they are unable to afford (79%) and the limited availability of the type of fuel they use (33%). In addition, lacking functioning heating facilities (18%) and damaged housing (10%) are among the identified constraints (Graph 13, Graph 14).

Barriers to heating home



Graph 13 Ability to heat home Khersonska Oblast

Are you able to heat your home?

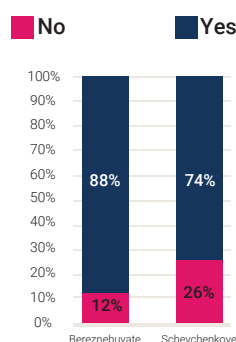


Graph 14 Barriers for those unable to heat their home
Khersonska Oblast

Mykolaivska Oblast

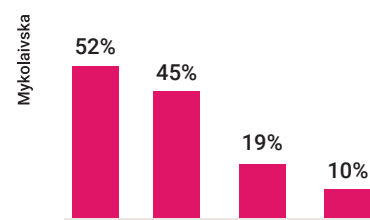
In Mykolaivska Oblast, half of the respondents (51%) indicated fuel for heating as their first or second priority need. On top of that, a total of 31 people (20% of the respondents), reported that they were unable to heat their homes, notably 26% of the people interviewed in Shevchenkove and 12% in Berezhnehyvate (Graph 15). For them, reasons are in the first place related to the unavailability (52%) and unaffordability (45%) of the type of fuel they use. In addition, a quarter (25%) of those unable to heat their home, mentioned their damaged housing and 19% no functioning heating facilities as primary reasons for being unable to heat their homes. No people mention facing mobility constraints in accessing the type of fuel they use as a reason for not being able to heat their homes (Graph 15, Graph 16).

Are you able to heat your home?



Graph 15 Ability to heat home Mykolaivska Oblast

Barriers to heating home



Graph 16 Barriers for those unable to heat their home Mykolaivska Oblast



Figure 10 Approximately 80% of the houses in the street where Karina (19) lives with her one-year-old son Mark are destroyed after the Russians raided the town.

Shelter

“Our houses mean everything to us. It is where our memories are stored, it is the place where our children grew-up. When children return to the house where they grew up, they have all these memories, they come back home. So having our homes destroyed is the worst-case scenario. But we must live further. Repair little by little what was broken with the little resources we have, our savings, and the support we receive from humanitarian organizations.”

Female participant of the FGD in Shevchenkove, Mykolaivska Oblast



Figure 11 Destroyed housing Khersonska Oblast

The data reveals that the majority of individuals surveyed reside in detached houses (86%), with most being homeowners (89%).

A smaller percentage live in apartments, terraced houses, or rented accommodations.

Last year, the damage and loss of houses, as well as the shelter needs of people were estimated on the basis of a Rapid damage and needs assessment carried out by the World Bank, Ukrainian Government, the EU and UN (See calculations for Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts in Table 1). According to this assessment, Mykolaivska is one of the five oblasts with the most significant numbers of damaged residential units besides Donetsk, Kharkivska, Luhanska, Kyivska (World Bank et al., 2023).

| Oblast | Damage | Loss | Needs |
|-------------|---------|------|---------|
| Khersonska | 1,136.9 | 66.9 | 1,444.4 |
| Mykolaivska | 2,216.1 | 45.3 | 2,815.5 |

Table 1 Damage, loss, and needs by oblast (US\$ million)

March 2023, the World Bank, the Government of Ukraine, the European Union, the United Nations (ReliefWeb). (World Bank, et al., 2023)

Earlier it was already highlighted that more than half (57%) of the individuals interviewed in the needs assessment at stake prioritize shelter as their primary or secondary need. No less than 91% of the people interviewed say their house has been damaged/destroyed because of military activities, including 36% reporting that their homes have been fully

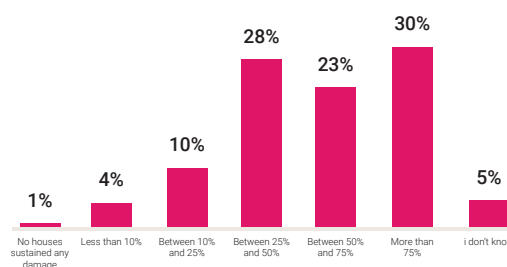


(4%) or partially (32%) restored. Additionally, 16% of those who struggle to heat their homes specifically attribute this issue to the damage sustained by their residences. Furthermore, 38% of the respondents whose houses were damaged or destroyed because of military activities consider their homes to be either partly or completely unsafe or uninhabitable. High shelter needs, specifically for reconstruction efforts, are also widely emphasized by key informants and participants of the FGDs. This underscores the urgent need for reconstruction and rebuilding efforts in these areas to address the damage caused by military activities (see quote at the beginning of this section). The most needed support include (money for) building materials to repair one's house (75%), hire contractors/labourers (38%) and fuel to heat one's house (57%). In the following paragraphs the addressed shelter needs will be explored for both oblasts.

Khersonska Oblast

The needs assessment reveals a severe level of destruction in Khersonska Oblast, where approximately one third of respondents estimate that over 75% of the houses in their community are still damaged due to military activities (Graph 17), with Hromadas like Bilozerska, Novo Oleksandrivka, and Vysokopil'ska having the highest percentages of damaged houses.

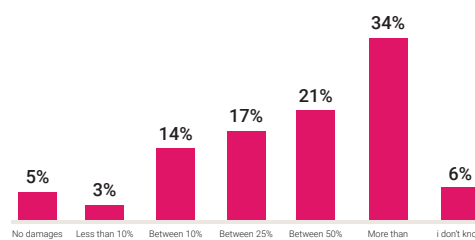
% of destroyed houses in my community



Graph 17 Estimation of destroyed houses in the communities Khersonska Oblast

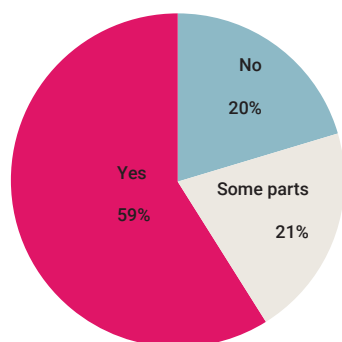
Following the graph below, the houses of no less than 92% of the respondents in Khersonska Oblast were damaged by military activities during the war. Only 5% of the houses are undamaged, and 3% suffer damages related to a general lack of maintenance. The level of damage resulting from the war ranges from minor (14%), moderate (17%) to severe (21%). One-third (34%) of the respondents say their houses were damaged but are now partially restored and 6% of the respondents say their houses were fully restored (Graph 18).

Is your house currently damaged/destroyed?



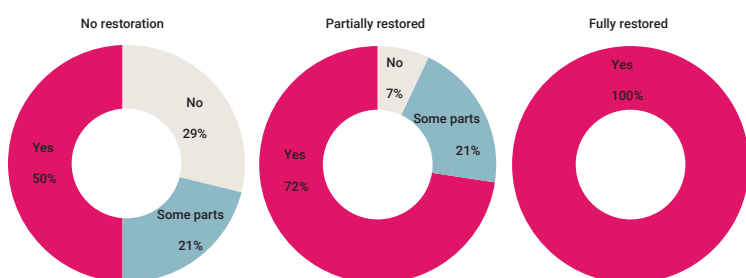
Graph 18 Level of destruction to housing Khersonska Oblast

It is encouraging that the majority (59%) of the respondents whose houses still suffer damages (leaving out those whose houses were not damaged by military activities or were completely restored) due to military activities rate their homes as safe and habitable. Nevertheless, a considerable number of people consider their home unsafe and uninhabitable, either partially (21%) or fully (21%) (Graph 19).



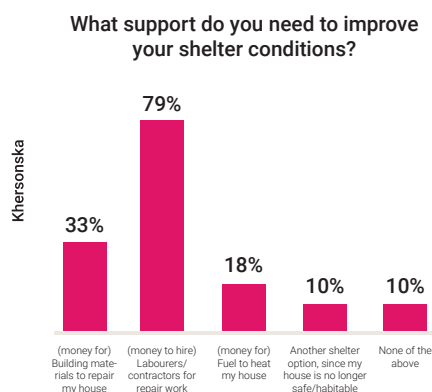
Graph 19 Habitability of housing Khersonska Oblast

When comparing how people rate their houses when no restoration efforts took place with those whose houses were partially or completely restored, the impact of restoration efforts become evident. While only half of those whose houses were not yet restored consider their home habitable and safe, almost three-quarters (72%) of those whose houses were partially restored do so and all respondents (100%) whose houses were fully restored say their home is now habitable and safe. At the same time, it is noteworthy that amongst those whose houses were partially restored, 21% reckon that only some parts of their residence are now safe and habitable. There is also a small percentage of respondents (7%), who still view their homes as completely unsafe and uninhabitable despite the fact that their houses were partly restored (Graph 20).



Graph 20 Comparing habitability and safety ratings of homes amongst different restoration efforts Khersonska Oblast

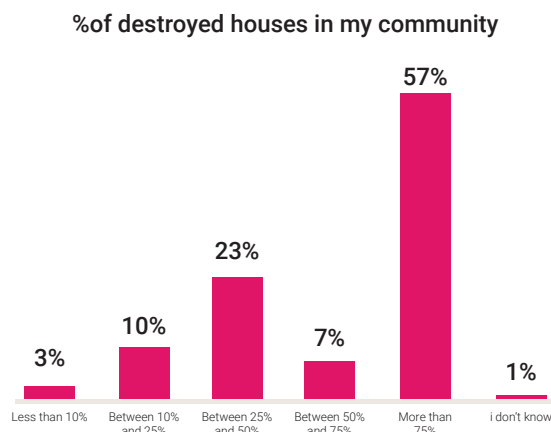
According to the respondents, the main needs to improve their shelter conditions are (cash for) building materials and fuel, as well as (financial) access to labourers or contractors to carry out the necessary repair work. These priorities align with the basic necessities required to make their houses habitable and comfortable, highlighting the importance of financial support and if required skilled manpower in addressing their shelter needs (Graph 21).



Graph 21 Support needed to address shelter needs Khersonska Oblast

Mykolaivska Oblast

In Mykolaivska Oblast, the level of destruction is very high with more than half (57%) of the respondents estimating that more than 75% of the houses in their community are still damaged due to military activities. The highest level of destruction is reported in Shevchenkove, with almost 90% saying that more than 75% of the houses in their community were damaged (Graph 22). The head of Starosta highlights the widespread impact of destruction on the people in the communities saying:

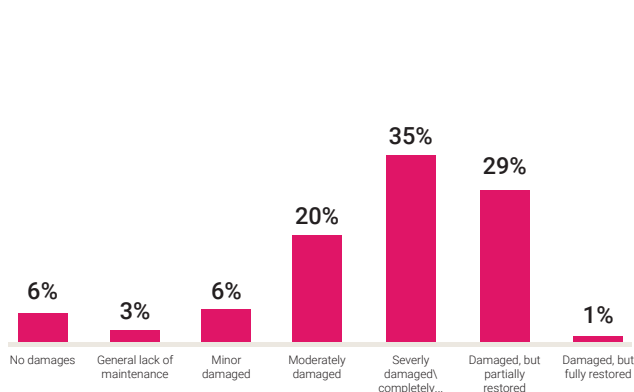


Graph 22 Estimation of destroyed houses in the communities Mykolaivska Oblast

“Those whose house was damaged completely are most vulnerable. People in the villages are not wealthy, they do not have the resources available to reconstruct their houses by themselves, whether they are in their 40s or 80s. People are all equally affected. [...] People had to leave their houses abruptly (were evacuated by the Ukrainian military as a prevention measure when the aggressor came close), they left without belongings. Upon their return, they were left empty-handed.”

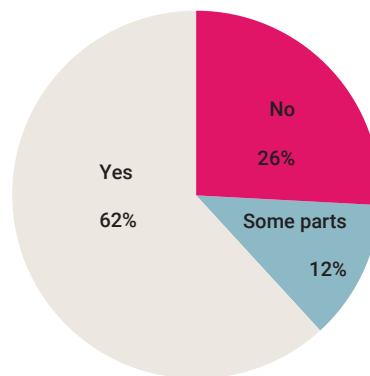
Following the graph below, the houses of no less than 91% of the respondents in Mykolaivska Oblast were damaged by military activities during the war. Only 6% of the houses are undamaged, and 3% suffer damages related to a general lack of maintenance. The level of damage resulting from the war ranges from minor (6%), moderate (20%) to severe (35%). One-third (35%) of the respondents say their houses were damaged but are now partially restored and 1% of the respondents say their houses were fully restored (Graph 23).

Is your house currently damaged/destroyed?



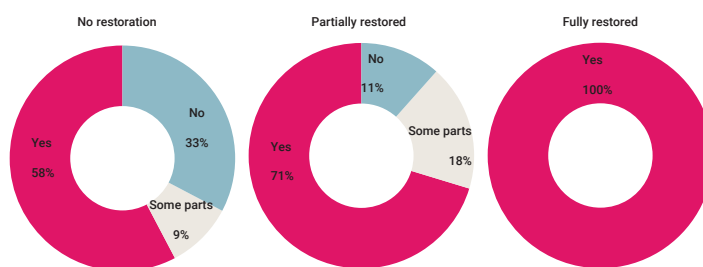
Graph 23 Level of destruction to housing Mykolaivska Oblast

Based on the survey results, it is encouraging to see that the majority (62%) of the respondents whose houses suffered destruction due to military activities (leaving out those whose houses were not damaged by military activities or were already completely restored) still rate their homes as safe and habitable. Nevertheless, over one-third of these people consider their home unsafe and uninhabitable, either fully (26%) or partially (12%), indicating a need for support and restoration efforts (Graph 24).



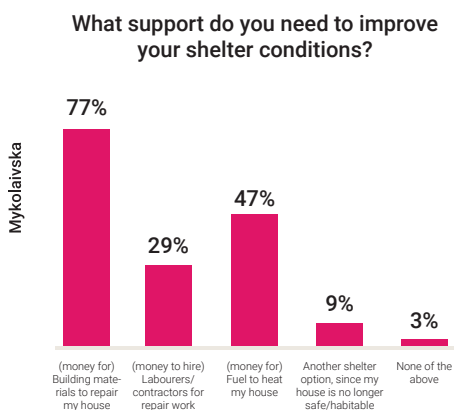
Graph 24 Habitability of housing Mykolaivska Oblast

It is promising that all respondents whose houses were fully restored and 71% of the respondents whose houses were partially restored now consider their homes habitable and safe. Amongst those whose houses were partially restored, 18% reckon that some parts of their residence are now safe and habitable. There is also a small percentage of respondents (11%), who still view their homes as completely unsafe and uninhabitable even though their houses have been partly restored. Amongst those whose houses were not yet restored rate their homes, a substantial greater part considers their home uninhabitable and unsafe (Graph 25).



Graph 25 Comparing habitability and safety ratings of homes amongst different restoration efforts Mykolaivska Oblast

According to the respondents, the main needs to improve their shelter conditions are (cash for) building materials and fuel, as well as access to labourers or contractors to carry out the necessary repair work (Graph 26).



Graph 26 Support needed to improve shelter conditions Mykolaivska Oblast

Some people (9%) require another shelter option, because their home is beyond repair. In addition to these practical forms of support, the head of Starosta of Berezhnevate Hromada argues there is also a need for accompanied psychosocial support for people whose living conditions were impacted by the war: *“Of course housing conditions affect people’s wellbeing. Everyone is stressed and people don’t know where to get help. There was also a woman who had saved money for years to repair her roof and then, in the war it was destroyed in a split second.”* He continues emphasizing the pressure and stress people encounter related to the looming threat of a repetition of events: *“Safety is an issue, you have to decide to restore/renew your house now, but what if the shelling starts again?”* This brings us to the need for MHPSS, which will be further elaborated upon in the upcoming section.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

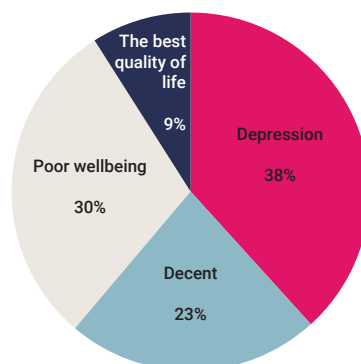
Although MHPSS needs were not highlighted as a first or second priority need by the respondents of the survey, it must be noted that it concerns a highly sensitive topic that is surrounded by stigma and taboo, making it difficult to evaluate the needs on personal wellbeing properly while asking about immediate material needs at the same time. Therefore MHPSS needs were evaluated using a separate set

of questions, using the WHO-5 Psychological Well-Being Index that was voluntarily completed by 219 respondents (156 F; 63 M), which is 55% of the total respondents interviewed. On the basis of the results and complemented by the information collected in KIIs, MHPSS is another concern/need to be addressed in an integrated approach to relief the suffering of war-affected populations in the targeted areas. Below the findings will be elaborated upon, starting with a general overview before zooming in on oblast level.



Figure 12 Abandoned toy after a missile strike in Bila Krynytsa

The general results show that a total of 30% of the surveyed experience poor well-being and quality of life, and have a score that suggests the possible presence of psychological symptoms including depression (score = 29 > 50), and that 38% of the respondents are experiencing psychological distress, with the presence of depressive symptoms (score = 0 > 28) (Graph 27).



Graph 27 WHO-5 Well-being Index general

A quarter (23%) of the participants reported a decent or fair quality of life (score = 51 > 75), and only 9% of the total reported the best possible quality of life (score = 76 > 100).

The wellbeing index scores do not seem to be significantly impacted by the fact that people’s income situation (whether their income decreased, increased, or stayed the same), or the fact that people live in liberated areas or areas that were never under occupation: in all cases, between 72% and 74% of respondents score below average.

The displacement status seems to have somewhat an impact as 58% of IDPs present the lowest scores indicative of psychological distress and depressive symptoms versus 42% to 45% for returnees and non-displaced respectively.

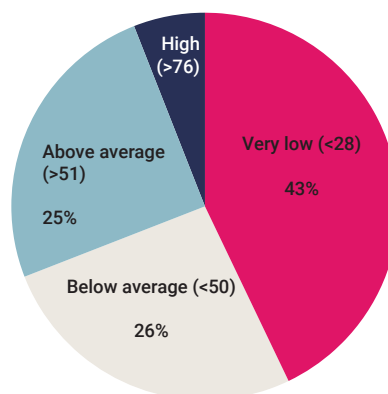
Generally, people declare that what cause them the most worries are the military operations (30%), the damaged or destroyed houses (18%), the economic situation (17%) and the uncertainty about their future (16%).

A quarter (28%) of respondents declare that someone in their household would benefit from MHPSS services, and 11% are unsure or would rather not say, indicating that the percentage of people who may benefit from MHPSS services may be in fact higher. The high proportion of people who are unsure or prefer not to say may be linked to the high stigma that surrounds mental health amongst the general population, which makes it a difficult topic to evaluate or discuss for people, particularly in rural areas. The extent to which MHPSS services are available and accessible to the respondents will be explored in more detail in the section on Access to services and markets.

Khersonska Oblast

The results of the WHO-5 Well-Being Scale indicate that 43% of the respondents reported the lowest level of well-being and quality of life, indicative of depressive symptoms, and an additional 25% reported a below average score indicating poor levels of wellbeing (Graph 28).

In Khersonska Oblast, respondents list their main sources of worries as following: military operations (20%), damaged or destroyed housing due to



Graph 28 WHO-5 Well-Being Index-Khersonska oblast

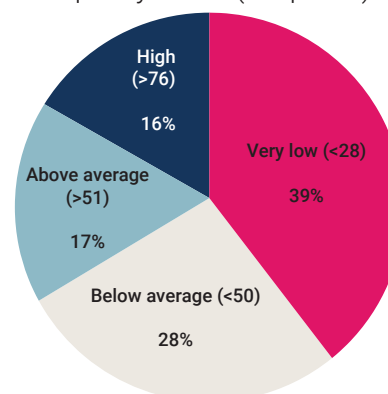
military operations (19%), economic situation (17%) and uncertainty about their future (16%). 7% of respondents also mentioned the psychological wellbeing of their loved ones or themselves as a main source of concern.

When asked if someone in their household would benefit from MHPSS support or services, a third of respondents say yes (32%), 10% are unsure, and 2% prefer not to respond, with only 57% responding a straight no.

Key informants indicate that the population suffers constant stress due to the shelling, fear, and destruction.

Mykolaivska Oblast

The results of the WHO-5 Well-Being Scale indicate that 39% of the respondents reported the lowest level of well-being and quality of life, indicative of depressive symptoms, with 28% reporting a below average score indicative of poor level of wellbeing and quality of life (Graph 29).



Graph 29 WHO-5 Well-Being Index-Mykolaivska Oblast

In Mykolaivska Oblast, respondents list their main sources of worries as following: military operations (19%), damaged or destroyed housing sur to military operations (17%), economic situation (17%), safety and security (17%) and uncertainty about their future (16%). 8% of respondents also mention the psychological wellbeing of their loved ones or themselves as a main source of concerns.

When asked if someone in their household would benefit from MHPSS support or services, 23% of respondents say yes, 14% are unsure, and 1% prefer not to respond, with 62% responding no.

During the FGDs, participants mention that although people got used to the current situation, they are psychologically impacted and experience stress or traumatic reactions such as flashbacks, intrusive memories, or mood swings, and also that people are grieving the ones they lost.

Although some people may want to isolate or avoid recalling their feelings and painful memories, others need each other's support in the community in order to overcome their challenges; they talk together, gather, cry together.

People feel very uncertain about their future, experience prolonged stress and are sometimes worried of retaliation when the Ukrainian army attacks the Russian forces from their area, or people hear shelling regularly. People whose houses have been damaged or destroyed seem particularly vulnerable, and participants mention the emotional toll that comes with having a family house destroyed, where children grew up, where parents settled long ago. (see quote at the beginning of the shelter section). People whose house was destroyed mention that they do not always get support as they do not always fit the eligibility criteria.

Some participants of the focus group think that there is sufficient MHPSS support from organizations in their area, which contradicts results from the survey, however this can be explained by the fact that many participants seem resistant to acknowledge or discussing the needs for psychological support, due to the high level of stigma surrounding the topic and the gap in awareness-raising.

During a KII with a member of the local administration, the respondent indicated that psychological distress is a challenge in the community and constitutes a need: *'The war affected everybody's nerves, that's clear.'* According to them, people suffer from trauma and have a lot of stress which can lead to health problems. People do not feel safe. The respondent also indicates that the support from organizations can be a source of tension in the community, depending on who gets support and who doesn't. Although not everyone has the same level of vulnerability, all need support, which is difficult for administrative services to deal with.

IDPs feel homesick and are psychologically impacted by the impossibility to go home. People also suffer from having partners or family members at the frontline and feel very worried about them: *'Children and men serving in the frontline, it takes its toll.'*

Children also need help: they only have remote education and therefore lack the attention that they would get from the educational system in normal times.

Additionally, the protection cluster meeting minutes from December 2023 stated that *"Due to a high demand in MHPSS in Mykolaivska oblast, NGOs report on difficulties of finding professionals that can assist IDPs in this sphere"*.



Figure 13 The blackened walls and ceiling are a daily reminder for Rosali (82) of the fire that broke out when her house got shelled. She spent some nights in one corner of the house that was still a bit dry, because rain kept pouring through the holes in her home.

Water, Sanitations and Hygiene

Safe drinking water is considered a first or second priority need for 8% of the respondents. Another 15% sees utilities, including water, gas, and electricity, amongst their primary concerns. For those who struggle with access to enough and safe drinking water, the limited availability of water is often a main concern, while the poor water quality is also hindering people in having enough safe drinking water.

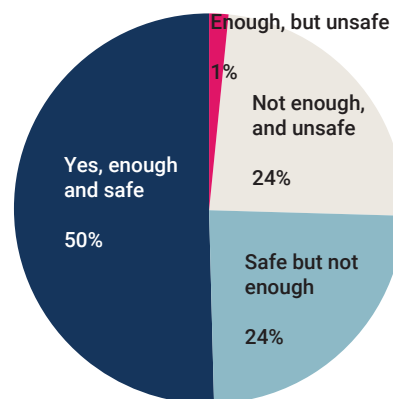


Figure 14 Toilet at administration building in Mykolajivska Oblast

The situation varies depending on factors such as pre-war conditions, remoteness, level of destruction or contamination of water networks, and the capacity of government (both at national and local Hromada levels) and humanitarian actors to support in reconstruction activities. Further exploration of WASH needs on an oblast level will provide additional insights.

Khersonska Oblast

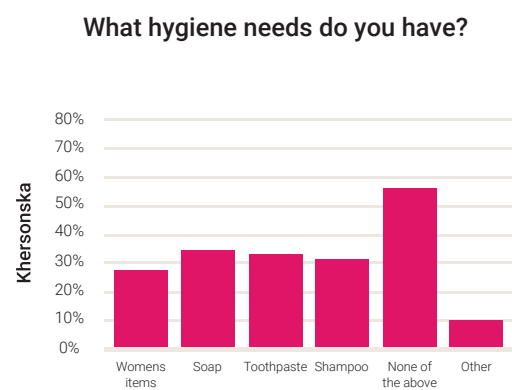
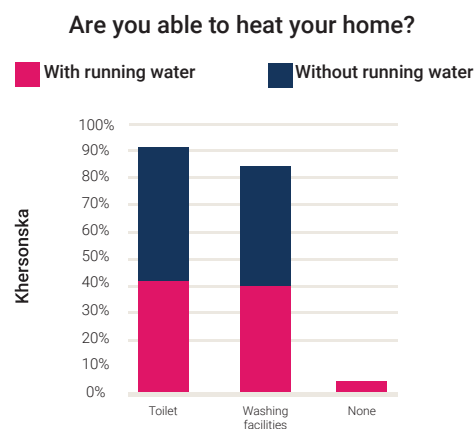
In Khersonska Oblast, there is an equal division among respondents regarding access to safe drinking water, with half stating they have enough and the other half struggling due to limited availability and poor water quality (Graph 30). Some villages have functioning water networks, while others, like Bilozerska, lack such facilities. However, there are humanitarian organizations and Hromadas working to improve access to water for affected and vulnerable communities. Despite limited resources for reconstruction and investment in water networks, efforts are being made, such as the recent installation of a new water pipe in Nova Kuban, to ensure people's access to water in these communities.



Graph 30 Access to drinking water Khersonska Oblast

In terms of hygiene and sanitation needs, the vast majority has access to washing and sanitation facilities, either with or without running water, and more than half of the respondents says their needs for hygiene items are covered. Findings suggest that compared to other sectors, WASH is not considered a priority need and/or is being covered by volunteer groups and humanitarian organizations. Nevertheless, approximately one third of the respondents requires women's items, soap, toothpaste, and shampoo (Graph 31).

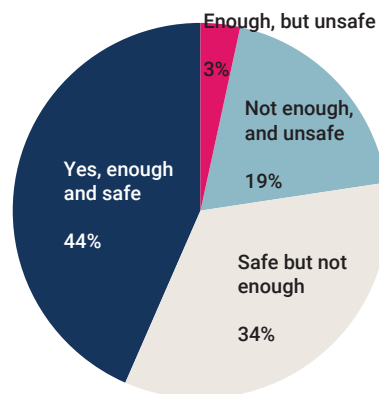
villages, but also to the ongoing efforts made by (local) governments, humanitarian actors to improve access through amongst others purification projects (Berezhuvate), sewage systems (Lepetyha), and water distribution initiatives (Liubomirvsku) (Graph 32).



Graph 31 Sanitation facilities and hygiene needs Khersonska Oblast

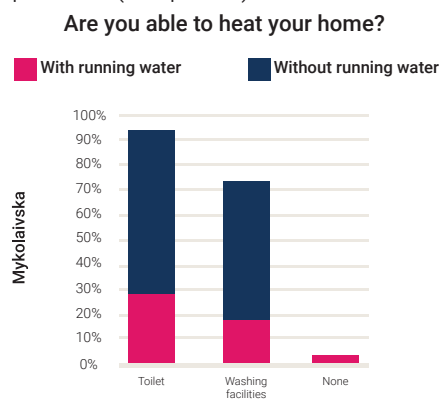
Mykolaivska Oblast

In Mykolaivska Oblast, the access to safe drinking water is divided, with about half of the respondents having sufficient access and the other half facing challenges due to limited availability and poor water quality. Most villages rely on non-potable 'technical water', except for Bila Krynytsa which has a borehole for clean drinking water. The findings suggest that WASH may be considered a lower priority compared to other sectors. This can be partly attributed to the fact that in the pre-war situation access to clean drinking water was already limited in many

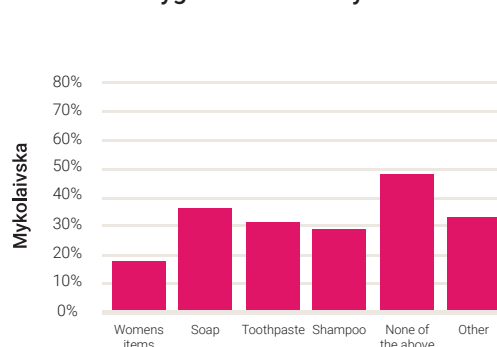


Graph 32 Access to drinking water Mykolaivska Oblast

Most respondents in Mykolaivska Oblast have access to washing and sanitation facilities, although running water is lacking for most. Hygiene items are sufficient for half of the respondents, while the other half still requires products such as women's items, soap, toothpaste, shampoo, and detergent/washing powder (Graph 33).



What hygiene needs do you have?



Graph 33 Sanitation facilities and hygiene needs Mykolaivska Oblast



Olena Alexandryvna

Despite both the Russians and Ukrainian military (depending on what area was occupied by whom at the time) telling her to not go back to her house daily, she did. She wanted to feed her cows and not let them alone.

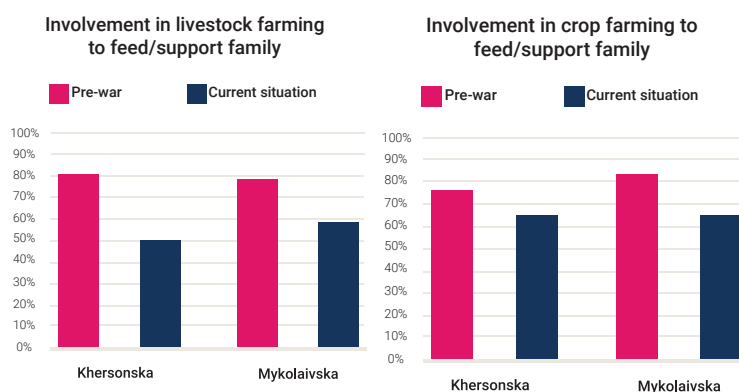
So as bullets and mortars were flying around she kept on feeding her stock, while hiding under the couch every now and then to only get back to attending her animals when the fighting calmed down. "I am laughing now, she says, but back then it was horrifying."

Figure 15 Olena Alexandryvna was caught in the cross fire as her house was in the middle of the frontline for weeks.

Livelihoods

It is worth highlighting that one out of eleven (9%) respondents see food, and 4% input for farming as their current first or second priority need. In the targeted locations in the South-East of Ukraine (mostly rural), common income generating activities and means of subsistence include livestock and agricultural farming, land tenure ('pai'), as well as remote work, domestic work, and small trade. Pensions are another source of income for the elderly (65+) and although those are generally perceived to be small, they turn out to be a relatively stable source of income compared to other sources over the past years. The impact of the war on the abovementioned livelihood strategies has been significant, for example because of a loss of cattle resulting from displacement, losing access to the fields and/or the ability to receive an income out of land tenure (pai) due to the presence of EWRs and less employment opportunities amongst others. To gather more information on the impact of the war on livestock and crop farming in particular, the questionnaire specifically targeted those living in rural areas with a set of questions on their livelihoods responded to by 365 (92%) out of 396 respondents. The results will be discussed below and complemented with input from key informants and participants of FGDs.

Respondents were asked about their involvement in livestock and crop farming for the purpose of feeding/supporting their families both before the commencement of the war, and in the current situation. The data shows a clear trend of declining participation in both livestock and, to a lesser extent, crop farming across both oblasts. Additionally, KII's indicate the deteriorating market conditions for both livestock and agricultural production, including rising production costs, a shrinking market, and challenges in procurement of animals, fodder, and inputs for farming, which directly affect people's livelihood strategies. In the sections below, special attention will be paid to the impact of the war on livestock and agricultural farming, and the unique patterns, gaps and needs in both oblasts will be further explored (Graph 34).



Graph 34 Participation in livestock and Agricultural farming pre-war versus the current situation



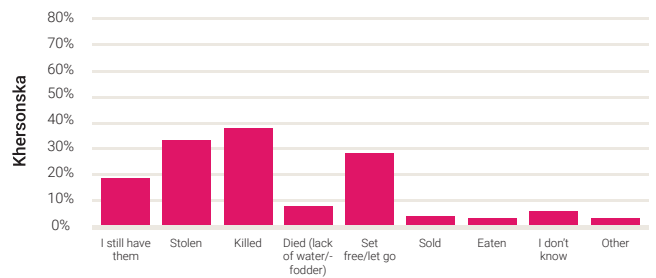
Khersonska Oblast

The loss of employment opportunities after the war leaves many without a stable income, particularly impacting those who lost jobs due to the conflict. Rising prices create financial strain, especially in rural areas, making it challenging for residents to afford essential goods and services. Economic difficulties hinder individuals from maintaining their households, adding to the overall vulnerability of the population. The reliance on farming, remote work, and state pensions for individuals over 60 years indicates efforts to generate income, but economic recovery remains a significant challenge. The return of some residents after de-occupation signals a desire for recovery, but economic opportunities and infrastructure challenges may hinder successful reintegration.

Livestock farming

In Khersonska Oblast, 80% of respondents reported having livestock before the war, whereas the current figure is only 50%. These figures do not only show the importance of livestock farming in the communities of Khersonska Oblast, but also highlights the impact of the war on people’s ability to engage in and sustain livestock farming as a means of feeding and supporting their families. Many people lost their livestock during the war, with the majority of people reporting that their animals were either killed, stolen, or otherwise released by their owners in the hopes of their survival (Graph 35). In the current situation,

What happened to your animals during the war?



Graph 35 Impact of the war on livestock farming Khersonska Oblast

people face a number of barriers in maintaining and/or restoring their livestock, including the high prices of animals, the limited availability of fodder/water and inadequate shelters due to the high level of destruction in the communities. The risk of mines and EWRs in the area also make it more difficult to keep livestock. These challenges compound the difficulties faced by individuals and communities in meeting their food and livelihood needs through livestock keeping (Graph 36).

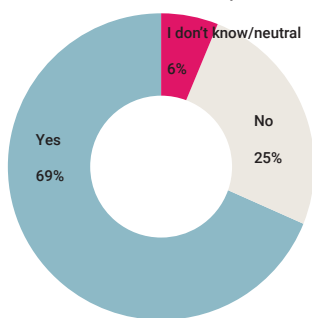
Main challenges/barriers in livestock farming



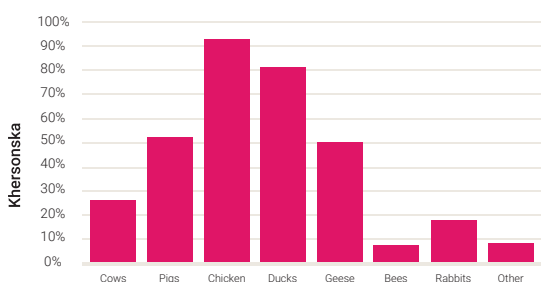
Graph 36 Barriers to livestock farming Khersonska Oblast

The vast majority (69%) of the respondents is convinced about the benefits of animal husbandry in terms of meeting food consumption needs of their household. Poultry, including chickens, ducks, and geese, is most popular, followed by the bigger animals such as cows and pigs. Whereas the number of families who used to keep cows, pigs and geese reduced by half since the war, those with chickens and ducks are almost at the pre-war level. This indicated that people with larger animals were either disproportionately affected or that restoring the small livestock has been relatively easier. Based on the KIIs and FGDs both small and big livestock has been affected by the war. Yet, it is explained that poultry is relatively easier to restore since it is cheaper and the cycle is shorter in terms of growing the animals and delivering eggs and meat in a shorter timeframe (although in wintertime, eggs are not given). Hence, investing in poultry on the short-term is perceived as the quickest and most cost-efficient way to restore the livestock, and it is therefore an often-used coping strategy, although bigger animals are considered to be particularly valuable over the long-term (Graph 37).

Would your household be interested in keeping animals to meet food consumption needs?



Preferred animals for livestock farming

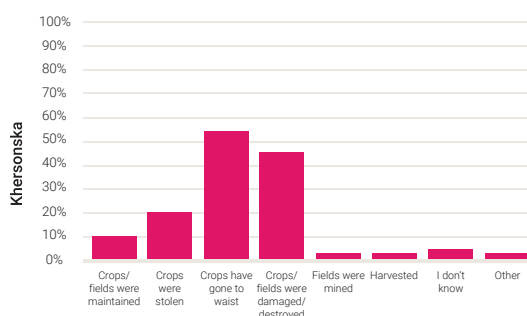


Graph 37 Interest in livestock farming and type of animals Khersonska Oblast

Crop farming

Three-quarter (76%) of the respondents in Khersonska Oblast used to grow their crops for own consumption before the conflict, but this number has decreased to 65% in the present situation. Only 10% of the respondents mentioned that their crops and fields were maintained and a mere 2% was able to harvest their crops for consumption. The destruction of fields and crops has been detrimental, with 55% of respondents experiencing crop wastage and 46% reporting damage or destruction of fields and crops. As one can imagine, this has particularly impacted remote villages heavily reliant on farming for food consumption (Graph 38).

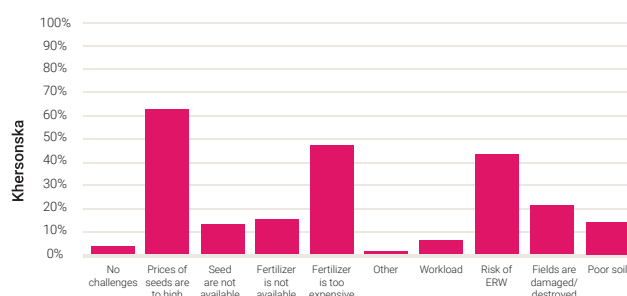
What happened to your crops?



Graph 38 Impact of the war on crop farming Khersonska Oblast

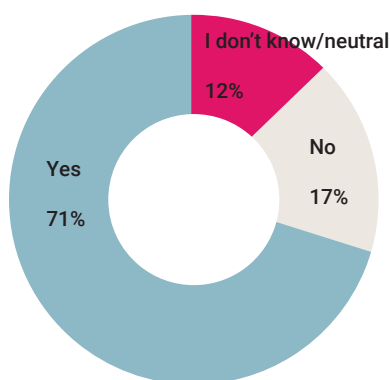
Main barriers faced by people who grow or want to grow their own food for consumption are the high prices of seeds and fertilizer. Another major barrier is the unavailability of the fields, due to destruction and the large amount of explosive war remnant in the fields. These obstacles limit the ability of people to engage in agricultural activities and hinder their self-sufficiency in food production (Graph 39).

Barriers in crop farming



Graph 39 Barriers to crop farming Khersonska Oblast

Yet, the vast majority of the respondents (71%) believe that their household would benefit from growing (more) crops to meet consumption needs. Preferred crops are amongst other potatoes, tomato, wheat, cucumber, and barley (Graph 40). People who were not interested named reasons such as the workload or lacking the space/time for farming for own food consumption, others saw obstacles related to mined fields as already mentioned before. For those interested in crop farming for own food consumption, small scale homestead gardening would be most interesting if financial constraints are to be overcome.



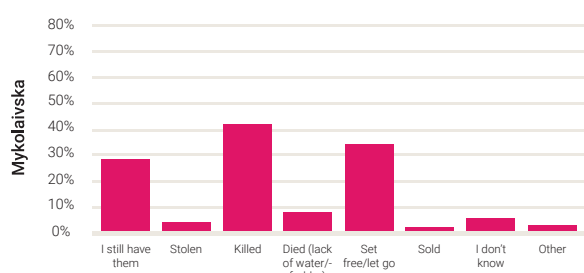
Graph 40 Interest in crop farming Khersonska Oblast

Mykolaivska Oblast

Livestock farming

The conflict has had a significant impact on livestock farming in rural communities of Mykolaivska Oblast. No less than 79% of the interviewed respondents relied on livestock in the pre-war situation. Now, 59% is still involved in this occupation. The volume of animal stock has significantly decreased, with a large number of animals being killed or set free as a last resort. One-third of the respondents still has (part of) their livestock (Graph 41).

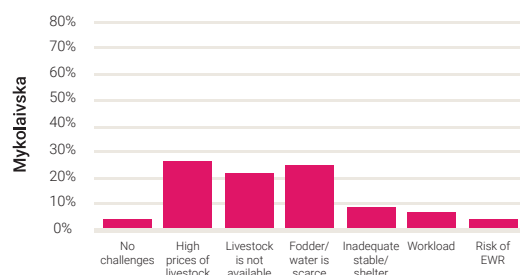
What happened to your animals during the war?



Graph 41 Impact of the war on livestock farming Mykolaivska Oblast

In the current situation, people face a number of barriers in maintaining and/or restoring their livestock, including the limited livestock available, scarcity of fodder/water to feed livestock and the high prices of livestock in particular (Graph 42).

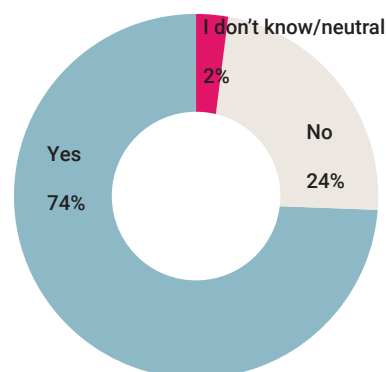
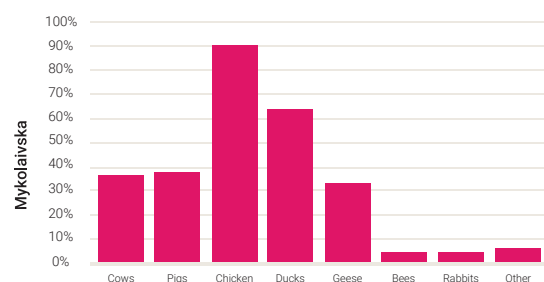
Main challenges/barriers in livestock farming



Graph 42 Barriers to livestock farming Mykolaivska Oblast

A large majority (74%) of respondents recognize the advantages of animal husbandry, with poultry being the most popular choice. The war has affected both small and large livestock, but restoring poultry is seen as more feasible due to lower costs and shorter production cycles. Nonetheless, bigger animals are still considered valuable in the long run (Graph 43).

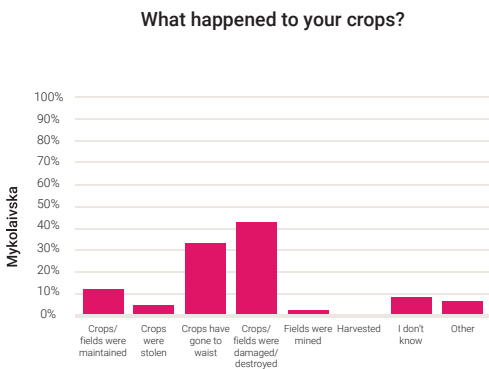
Preferred animals to feed/support household



Graph 43 Interest in livestock farming and type of animals

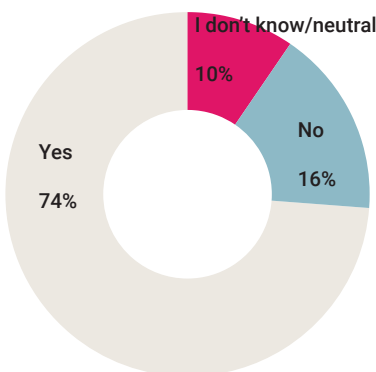
Crop farming

No less than 83% of the people interviewed in Mykolaivska Oblast used to grow their crops for consumption before the war, but this number has decreased to 64% in the present situation. Only 12% of the respondents mentioned that their crops and fields were maintained. The destruction of fields and crops has been detrimental, with 44% of respondents reporting damage or destruction of fields and one-third experiencing crop wastage. This has had a particularly severe impact on remote villages heavily dependent on farming for sustenance (Graph 44).



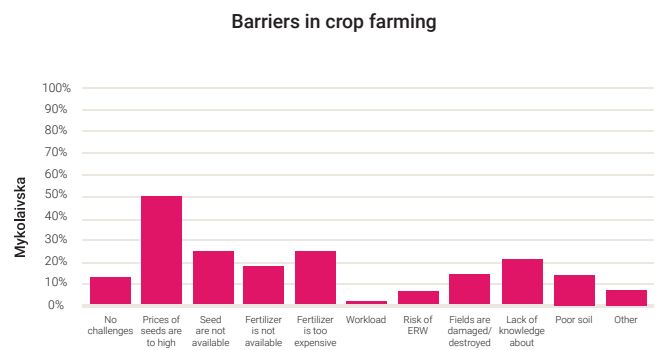
Graph 44 Impact war on crop farming Mykolaivska Oblast

The vast majority of the respondents (74%) believe that their household would benefit from growing (more) crops to meet consumption needs (Graph 45). Preferred crops include potatoes, tomato, cucumber, carrot, and beetroot.



Graph 45 Interest in crop farming Mykolaivska Oblast

When people were asked about the primary barriers for growing food for own consumption, the perceived high prices of seeds (50%) and fertilizer (25%) were frequently mentioned. Also, security risks because of EWRs in the field, and damaged fields pose challenges as indicated by 27% and 15% of the respondents respectively (Graph 46).



Graph 46 Barriers to crop farming Mykolaivska Oblast



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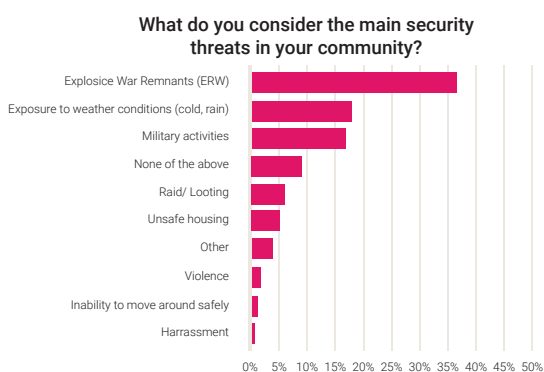
ZOAC
zero relief to recovery



Figure 16 Tamara and Hanna are relaxing at a bench in front of their homes. The village is surrounded by farmland which has been planted with mines and demining can be heard in the distance.

Protection and Gender Based Violence

In terms of security concerns, respondents identified three primary threats: 41% EWRs, 17% military activities and 17% exposure to extreme weather conditions such as cold and rain (Graph 47). Other challenges identified included lack of information about the available assistance for people affected by the conflict (22%) and difficulty in acquiring documents (22%).



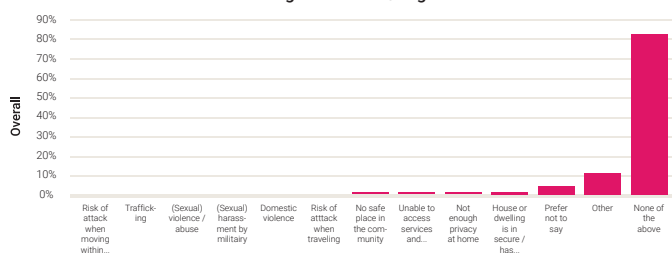
Graph 47 Main security threats identified by respondents from Khersonska, Mykolaivska Oblasts.

Beside general protection concerns, the women among respondents were also asked to report security concerns affecting women and girls. The RNA shows that some concerns for women were inability to access services and resources, not enough privacy at home and house or dwelling is insecure/has no locks. However, 11% reported other concerns and 83% none of the above, both without any

significant additional data and 5% women preferred not to respond (Graph 48). This might suggest that women across the two oblasts, might be reluctant to talk about GBV-related topics. As a matter of fact, this raises serious concerns since fear and stigma often lead to underreporting of GBV cases and increased protection risks. Another reason is identified in the lack of access to survivor services and support, it is estimated that most women who have experienced violence (81%) do not seek help from specialized services and do not report such cases (CARE International, 2022). This is confirmed by the reality that Ukraine is facing: the Ukrainian National Police received 203,724 reports of domestic violence in the first 8 months of 2021, likely representing less than 15% of the actual figure (White Ribbon Ukraine, 2023). Gender-based violence (GBV) affects at least one fifth of women in Ukraine. According to a nationwide study of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2021, 22% of Ukrainian women between 15 and 49 years experienced at least one form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime: domestic violence is the most prevalent form of violence. Ukraine, with a total adult female population of 20,192.29 (Index Mundi, 2023), has a femicide rate of 1.9 per 100,000 women (World Population Review, 2023; World Bank, 2021), while the average in the states in the European Union being 0.9 per 100,00 women.



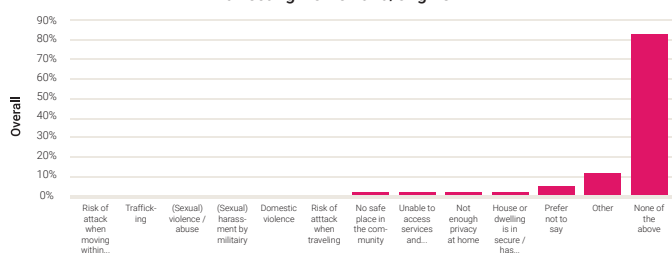
Are there any specific security concerns affecting women and/or girls?



Graph 48 Main security threats identified by women and girls from Khersonska, Mykolaivska oblasts

Additionally, the data collected showed that interviewed women cannot clearly identify any increase in the security concerns for women and girls since the start of the full-scale invasion (Graph 49).

Are there any specific security concerns affecting women and/or girls?



Graph 49 Has there been an increase in security concerns facing by women and girls since the full-scale invasion began? Khersonska, Mykolaivska Oblast

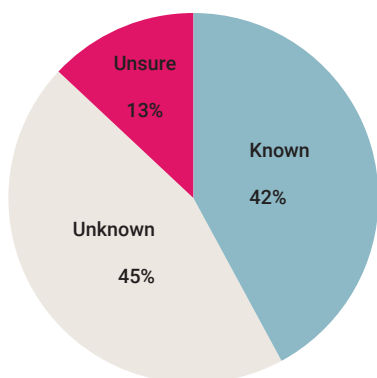
Overall, 18% of the respondents do not know, 60% responded negatively and 22% positively in Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts.

The Unified State Register of Judicial Decisions reveals a doubling of cases of domestic violence by soldiers or military personnel in the first 8 months of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. This underscores the difficulty in identifying gender-based violence and its significant impact on women’s lives. Moreover, calls to domestic violence helplines grew by 50% in the conflict-affected Donetsk and Luhansk regions and by 35% in other regions of Ukraine. Participants in a 2021 study on gender equality, peace and security in Ukraine noted that the increase in GBV was a product of a complex set of social, cultural, and economic factors that support a culture of non-interference in family affairs and a culture of silence around such violence (Care International, 2022). OHCHR notes the heightened risks of conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) in Ukraine in the context of increased military presence in populated areas. Although, allegations of CRSV are mostly made by alleged witnesses or secondary sources, current indicators, including reports from the National hotline for the prevention of domestic violence, trafficking in human beings and gender discrimination, suggest a high risk of sexual violence.

Through the RNA, it was also possible to conclude the community entrusts the police regarding protection matters. Therefore, when asked whom communities might seek support from in case they encounter a survivor of any form of violence, 35% of the respondents stated they would reach the police, while 20% would report to community leaders, and 15% to family members. However, the RNA findings shows that 11% did not know where to report cases of violence, and that respondents do not seem to seek support from any specialized centre for women or international organizations, as 0% of respondent reported that they would seek support from a specialized centre for women.

However, secondary data show that in 10 out of the 27 cases of domestic violence documented in the report, women did not report the violence they had suffered to police because they believed the authorities would not respond adequately (Amnesty International, 2020).

Data concerning knowledge on GBV (Graph 50), shows that interviewees reported either a lack of knowledge or insecurity regarding the meaning of GBV. More precisely, 45% of respondents reported not knowing the meaning of this type of violence, 13% were not sure, and 42% reported knowing the meaning.

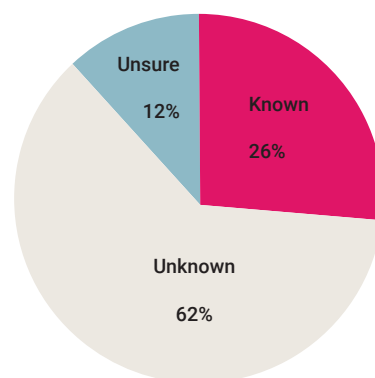


Graph 50 Knowledge of respondents from Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts on GBV

Among those 42% that reported knowing the meaning of GBV, 57% are aware of where to go in case they need to reach GBV-specialized services, such as health, and psychological services.

On the contrary, 35% were not aware where to go to seek specialized support, while 7% were not sure. This indicates that even when they are aware about the meaning of GBV, most of them cannot reach the service that can help them in face the consequences of the violence.

Besides GBV, interviewees were also asked about the meaning of PSEA, as shown in Graph 51. There is an important gap in terms of understanding PSEA in both Oblasts: 62% of the respondents reported not knowing the meaning of PSEA, 12% were unsure, and only 26% confirmed knowing the meaning.

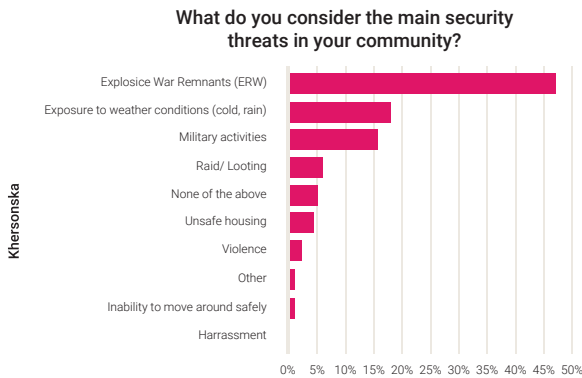


Graph 51 Knowledge of respondents from, Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblasts on PSEA

Among the group of respondents knowledgeable about PSEA, 87% are aware of the reporting system for PSEA cases, while 10% do not know it, and 3% are not sure. This might mean that respondents reached with information are quite few, but when they receive the information about PSEA they are able to identify reporting systems available.

Khersonska Oblast

Regarding protection concerns, respondents from Khersonska Oblast identified the primary threats as follows, as outlined in Graph 52: EWRs at 47%, exposure to adverse weather conditions like cold and rain at 18%, military activities at 16%, unsafe housing at 4%, violence at 2% and an inability to move around safely at 1%. Other protection challenges identified were difficulty in acquiring documents 17% and lack of information about humanitarian assistance 28%.



Graph 52 What do you consider the main security threats in your community in Khersonska Oblast.

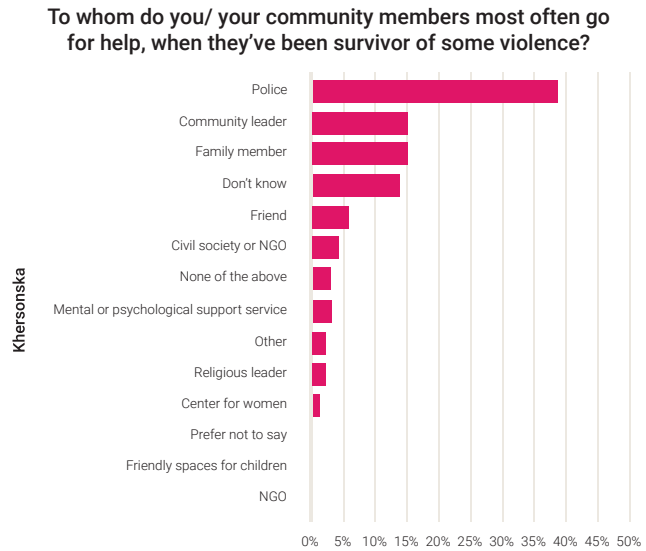
Besides protection concerns women were also asked to report any specific security concerns that affect women and girls. In Khersonska Oblast only 1% reported (sexual) violence/abuse, 1% domestic violence, and 0% indicated the risk of attack when traveling outside the community, as well as the risk of attack when moving within the community, 2% were unable to access services and resources, 2% did not have privacy at home, 0% reported trafficking, 2% indicated their house or dwelling is insecure/has no locks, 80% had none of the above, 4% preferred not to say, 9% reported other protection concerns. Women were also asked if they could identify an increase in the security needs of the women and girls since the full-scale invasion started: 26% reported not knowing, 44% responded negatively and 31% positively.

Respondents identified police as the main actor to report to cases of violence: looking at Graph 53, it can be observed that police, community leaders and family members are the three first actors to whom community members most often go for help when they have been survivor of some form of violence.

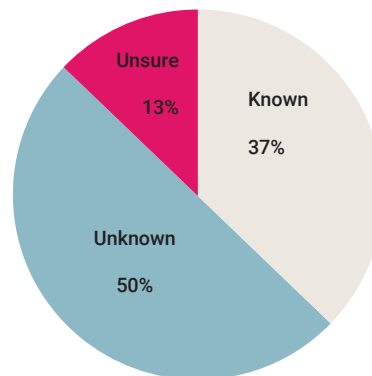
Moreover, the RNA measured the knowledge of the respondents regarding gender-based violence: graph 54 shows that in Khersonska oblast half of the respondents are not aware of the meaning of GBV, 13% are not sure and 13% are aware of it.

Among the 13% who reported knowing the meaning of GBV, 66% of them were aware about where to go to reach response services available for GBV survivors (health, psychological, legal etc.), 9% were not sure

and 26% were not aware. This indicates that even when they are aware about the meaning of GBV they cannot reach the service that can help them in facing the consequences of the violence.



Graph 53 To whom do you/community members most often go for help when they've been survivor of some form of violence Khersonska oblast.

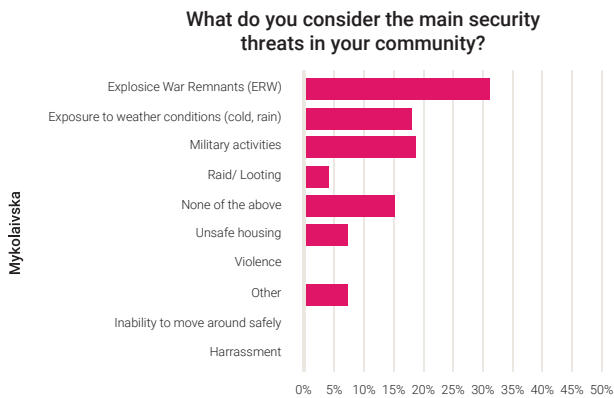


Graph 54 Do you know what is gender-based violence? Khersonska Oblast

Finally, participants were queried about their familiarity with PSEA and its mechanisms. The results indicate that 27% of respondents are aware, 60% are unaware, and 13% express uncertainty regarding their knowledge on this subject. Among the 27% familiar with the topic, the data shows that 88% of respondents are knowledgeable about reporting procedures, while 11% are unaware, and 2% express uncertainty.

Mykolaivska Oblast

Regarding protection concerns, respondents from Mykolaivska Oblast identified the primary threats as follows, as outlined in Graph 55: ERW at 31%, military activities at 18%, exposure to adverse weather conditions like cold and rain at 16%, unsafe housing at 7%.



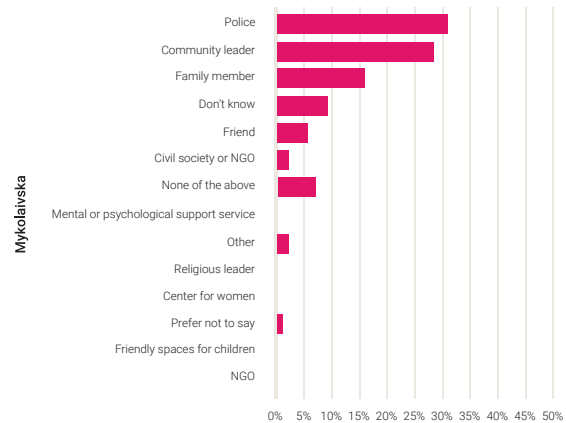
Graph 55 What do you consider the main security threats in your community in Mykolaivska Oblast

Other protection challenges identified were difficulty in acquiring documents 29% and lack of information about humanitarian assistance 12%.

Besides protection concerns, women were also asked to report any specific security concern that affect women and girls. 0% reported (sexual) violence/abuse, and domestic violence, 1% sexual harassment by military forces, 1% reported the risk of attack when traveling outside the community, 0% the risk of attack when moving within the community, 0% were unable to access services and resources, 0% did not have enough privacy at home, 0% reported trafficking, 1% said their house or dwelling is insecure/has no locks, 79% had none of the above, 6% preferred not to say, 12% reported other security concerns.

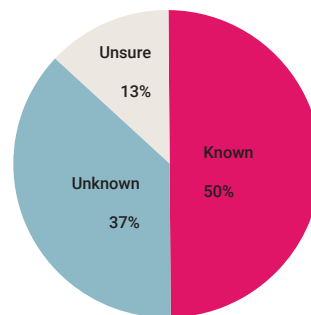
Women were also asked if they could identify an increase in the security needs of the women and girls since the full-scale invasion started: 7% reported not knowing, 84% responded negatively and 8% positively. Respondents identified police as the main actor to report to cases of violences: looking at the Graph 56, it can be observed that police, community leaders and family members are the three first actors to whom community members most often go for help when they have been survivor of some form of violence.

To whom do you/ your community members most often go for help, when they've been survivor of some violence?



Graph 56 To whom do you/community members most often go for help when they've been survivor of some form of violence Mykolaivska Oblast.

Moreover, the RNA measured the knowledge of the respondents regarding gender-based violence: the following graph shows that in Mykolaivska oblast half of the respondents are aware of the meaning of gender-based violence, 13% are not sure of it and 37% is not aware (Graph 57).



Graph 57 Do you know what is gender-based violence? Mykolaivska Oblast

Among the 50% who reported knowing the meaning of GBV, 48% of them were aware about where to go to reach responsive services available for GBV survivors (health, psychological, legal etc.), 5% were not sure and 47% were not aware.

Finally, participants were queried about their familiarity with PSEA and its mechanisms. The results indicate that 25% of respondents are aware, 64% are unaware, and 10% express uncertainty regarding their knowledge on this subject. Among the 25% familiar with the topic, the data shows that 85% of respondents are knowledgeable about reporting procedures, while 10% are unaware, and 5% express uncertainty.





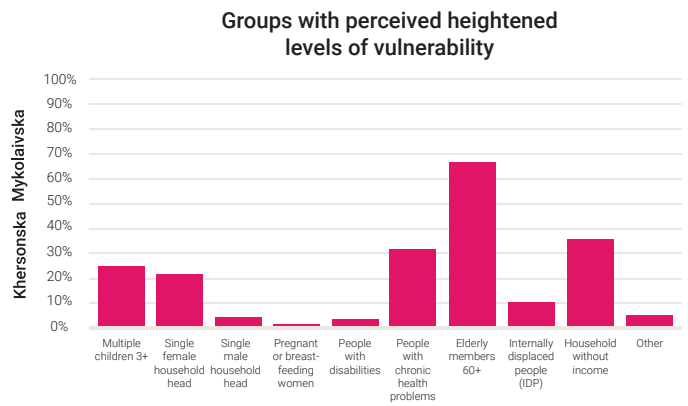
Figure 17 Yaroshenko Viktor Petrovych (82) lost his daughter to the war and poses next to what was supposed to be his home.

4.3 Groups with vulnerabilities

In Mykolaivska and Khersonska Oblasts economic hardships, safety concerns, and disruptions caused by war and occupation have resulted in increased vulnerability for the population. Elderly individuals, who often rely on fixed pensions or lack mobility, are particularly at risk. Limited access to safe spaces and shelters, as well as difficulties in meeting basic needs, further exacerbate their vulnerability during economic hardship. Safety concerns related to EWRs, military activities, and severe weather conditions in winter contribute to the overall vulnerability of the communities.

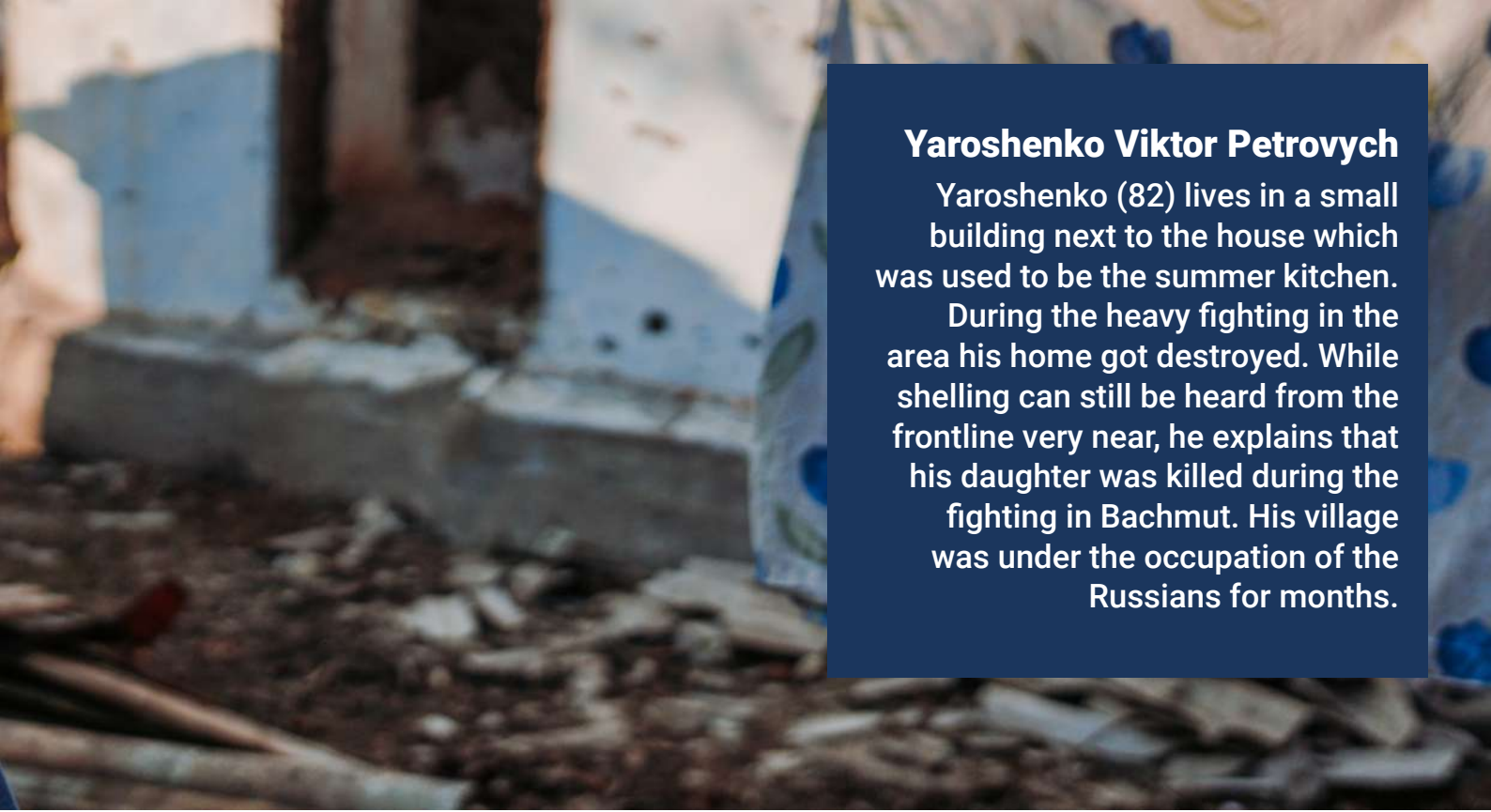
When asked about vulnerabilities in the wider community, 68% of the respondents identified the elderly as one of the most vulnerable groups in their community, followed by people without a source of income (37%), people with disabilities (31%) and chronic health problems (30%). Single-female households and families with multiple children (3+) are also identified to have heightened levels of vulnerability by 21% and 25% of the respondents respectively (Graph 58).

Among other categories of vulnerability addressed in the survey, FGDs and KIIs included people with damaged housing, war veterans and people who suffered injuries or lost loved ones due to the war.



Graph 58 Identified vulnerable groups

Likewise, groups with heightened levels of vulnerability that were most frequently mentioned by key informants include people with disabilities, single pensioners, and people who lost their income or way of subsistence. On national level, data on individuals with disabilities is limited, with the State Statistics Service reporting 2.7 million such individuals in 2020, constituting around 6% of the population. Special focus should be given to children with disabilities: at least 82,000 children are segregated from society, with countless more adults with disabilities permanently institutionalised (European Disability Forum, 2022). Additionally, the Roma population in Ukraine faces persistent discrimination, exacerbated by contested data and a lack of attention to gender-specific issues (Minority Rights Group Europe, 2019).



Yaroshenko Viktor Petrovych
 Yaroshenko (82) lives in a small building next to the house which was used to be the summer kitchen. During the heavy fighting in the area his home got destroyed. While shelling can still be heard from the frontline very near, he explains that his daughter was killed during the fighting in Bachmut. His village was under the occupation of the Russians for months.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in supporting women facing intersecting vulnerabilities. The focus of CSOs is prominent on internally displaced women (82%), women with disabilities (72%), and rural women (64%). However, groups such as female veterans, women from ethnic minorities like Roma, LGBTI, and HIV-positive women receive comparatively lesser support. A UN Women rapid assessment underscores CSOs' thematic areas of focus, with 76% working on the women, peace, and security agenda, 63% on preventing and responding to gender-based violence, and 62% on providing social support and inclusion.

Some respondents of the household survey also stated that *'everyone is vulnerable and needs help.'* Likewise, participants of the FGDs and KIIs emphasised that the war affects all and that people who lost their home and/or income or livelihood (livestock/agriculture) are equally vulnerable:

"Everyone is affected, no matter their condition. Someone is more affected, others less, but everyone has been impacted to a certain degree by the war."

Head of Starostat in Shevchenkove, Mykolaivska

The elderly population, constituting around 22% of the total, faces notable gender disparities, with older

women experiencing heightened marginalization and economic vulnerability compared to their male counterparts. Given that Ukrainian women tend to outlive men by approximately 10 years, their increased dependence on state pension and social policy interventions becomes evident (CARE International, 2022). On the other hand, it is argued that young people and people in their 40s-50s have been disproportionately affected by a loss of income/means of living due to the war. The elderly, people with disabilities and families with children often receive some state support through pensions, subsidies, and allowances (though little) and are amongst the primary recipients of humanitarian support. Yet, young, and middle-aged people struggle to find jobs and are often excluded from receiving humanitarian support leaving them empty-handed.

"Young people do not have a job, while pensioners receive a pension". -Survey respondent

"People who are not yet pensioners but lost their jobs due to the war and have no means of subsistence are amongst the most vulnerable." -Several key informants

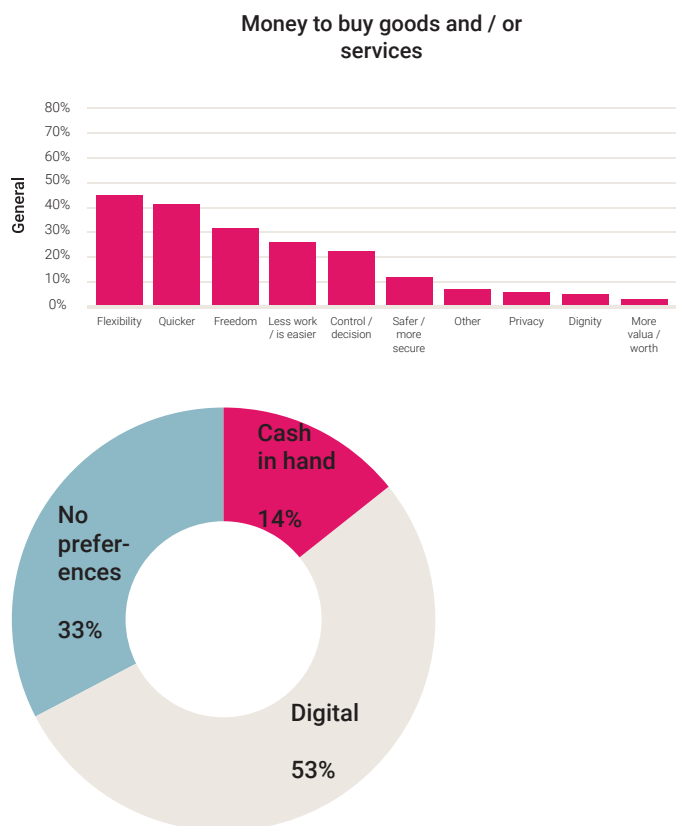


Figure 18 Edwin Visser, Chief Programme Officer, visiting Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblasts.

The economic situation in Mykolaivska and Khersonska Oblast is marked by a loss of traditional income sources, reliance on mutual support, and challenges in meeting basic needs. Unemployment, whether due to the destruction of farmland, occupation-related challenges or a lack of employment opportunities, leaves individuals without a stable source of income. This economic displacement amplifies vulnerability, particularly in the absence of alternative employment opportunities. Disparities in the prices of essential items (water, potatoes) between villages and cities/towns pose an additional economic burden on the vulnerable population residing in rural areas. The economic vulnerabilities identified in the data contribute significantly to the increased risk and overall vulnerability of the population. The combination of low incomes, high living costs, limited mobility, and challenges accessing support programs collectively intensifies the economic hardships faced by the residents in the target areas. The economic challenges may also contribute to community fragmentation, as seen in Khersonska oblast with divisions between those who left and those who stayed during the occupation. This fragmentation can impact the effectiveness of mutual support systems within the community. Furthermore, challenges with documentation can lead to exclusion from certain state programs. In addition, people who have lost their shelter are particularly vulnerable in the region.

4.4 Preferred modality of assistance

The majority of respondents, accounting for 93% of the total, expressed a strong preference for cash as the most suitable and relevant modality. They value the flexibility, swiftness, and freedom that receiving money provides, allowing them to buy goods and services as needed. While 53% of those who prefer cash favours digital cash, 14% would rather receive cash in hand, leaving the rest without a clear preference (Graph 59).

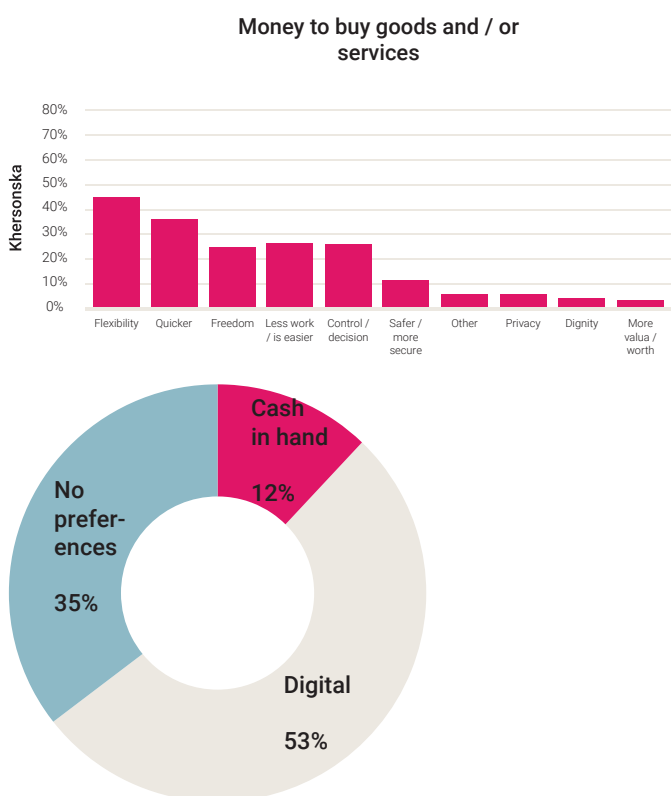


Graph 59 Preferred modalities Khersonska, Mykolaivska Oblast



Khersonska Oblast

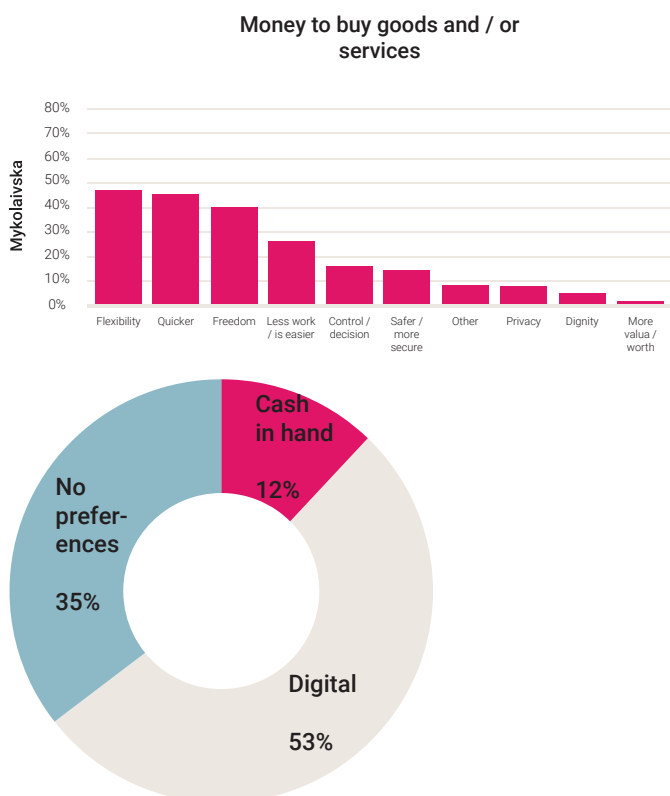
In Khersonska Oblast, almost all (94%) of the respondents perceive cash as the most suitable modality to meet their most urgent needs. This modality is considered to be particularly flexible and quick, as well as it increases people’s control and decision-making power, while requiring only little work/efforts on the recipient’s side. Amongst those in favour of cash, 53% prefers digital money and 12% prefers receiving cash in hand, leaving 35% without a strong preference (Graph 60). A quarter of the respondents would also be content with in-kind goods/services, in the first place because it is considered to be less work/easier, as well as flexible and quick.



Graph 60 Preferred modalities Khersonska Oblast

Mykolaivska Oblast

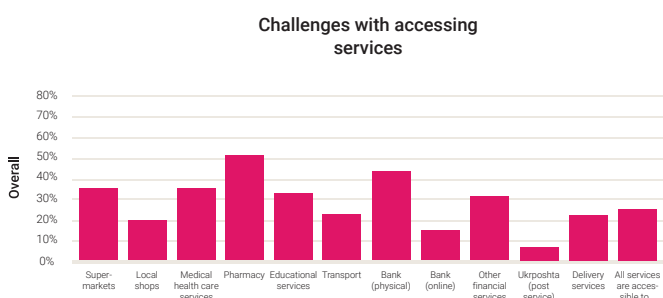
In Mykolaivska Oblast, the vast majority (91%) sees cash as the best option for meeting their most immediate needs. They value the flexibility, swiftness, and freedom that cash provides. Of those who prefer cash, 54% favour digital money, while 18% opt for receiving cash in hand and 28% of the respondents does not have a strong preference regarding the form in which they receive cash (Graph 61).



Graph 61 Preferred modalities Mykolaivska Oblast

4.5 Access to services and markets

The extensive damage to administrative infrastructure, including state institutions, requires significant financial resources for reconstruction, contributing to the economic strain on the community and local authorities. Disruptions in education (mainly offered remotely) and healthcare services due to economic challenges further impede recovery efforts. In addition, in the remote villages assessed there are generally no supermarkets, pharmacies, ATMs and physical banks. This also explains the challenges in access reported by respondents who are often dependent on transportation to the nearest town/city for these services (Graph 62). In the KIIs and FGDs, it is for example mentioned that the transportation costs are relatively high in remote areas (e.g., 70 Grivna for 15 km), limiting the mobility of people with less income and making it difficult for them to access essential services or seek for job opportunities in other areas. To a certain extent, services such as online banking, Ukrposhta (post service), delivery services help to increase access to the markets and services. The majority of people, have no challenges accessing these services, yet those facing challenges require special attention (Graph 62). In the sections below, the availability and accessibility of the markets and services available in Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblast will be discussed in more detail.

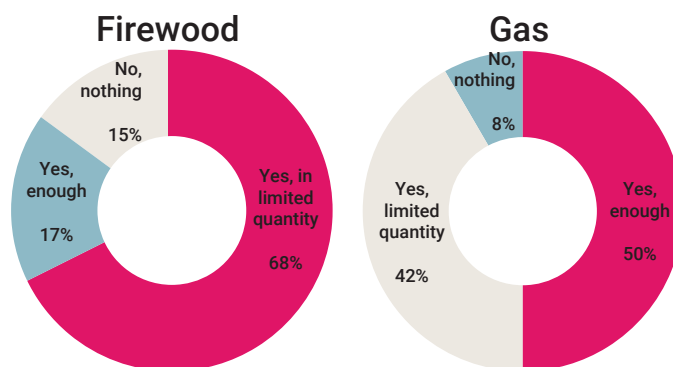


Graph 62 Challenges with accessing services overall.

Market fuel for heating

As previously mentioned, the most often used types of fuel for heating by respondents are firewood (71%) and gas (35%) (Graph 12). When asked about the availability of firewood, 17% of the respondents indicate it is fully available and 63% say there is limited availability, leaving 15% stating that there is no firewood available. For gas, half of the respondents using this type of

fuel (50%) say there is enough available, while 42% mention there are some limitations to the availability of gas (Graph 63).



Graph 63 Availability of firewood and gas Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblast

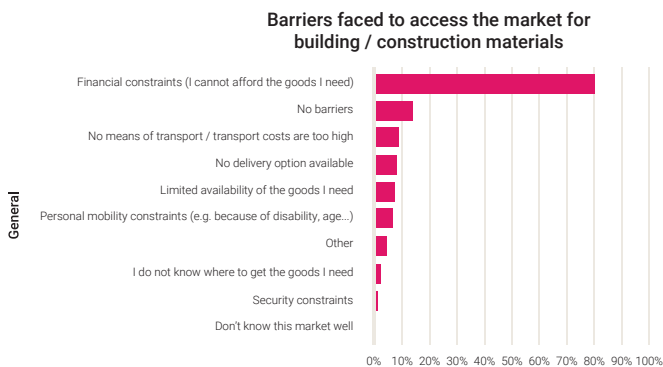
Based on the JMMI results from the past months, the prices of firewood have been observed at approximately 2 million UAH per cubic meter, while gas is priced at around 8 million UAH per cubic meter. The December 2023 report specifically highlights that fuel for heating is reported as fully available by 80% of participants in the Southern region of Ukraine, while 9% mentioning fuel being available on order (REACH, 2024).⁴

Building/construction market

Access to the building/construction market is hindered primarily by financial constraints, impacting the ability of the majority of respondents (80%) to engage in the market. Other barriers that need consideration, although mentioned far less, include mobility constraints due to physical limitations (6%) or no means of transportation (9%). Delivery services are a potential solution for addressing mobility challenges, but it is important to note that 8% of the respondents highlight that those services are not available. The supply side of the market seems to be functioning well for the majority of participants, with only a small portion (7%) facing barriers because of the unavailability of goods (i.e., building materials) and 13% of the respondents facing no barriers at all (Graph 64).

MHPSS services

More than half of respondents (52%) state that they do not know how to access MHPSS services at



Graph 64 Barriers to access the construction market Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblasts

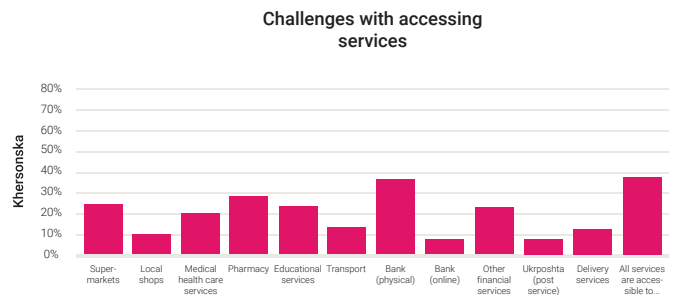
present, which seems to be mostly due to a lack of available information about these services (31%) or a lack of knowledge on the topic (30%). In addition, about a quarter (22%) of the respondents say they face challenges with accessing mental support services.

GBV Services

The RNA results show that in terms of main barriers reported in the identification of GBV services most of them are related to lack of information (34%), lack of knowledge about GBV (13%), not understanding how to choose a qualified specialist/service (10%), as well as the fact that no (free) service is available (8%) and cost of services (2%).

Khersonska Oblast

In Khersonska Oblast, villages reflect economic hardships resulting from war and occupation. Extensive damage, population displacement, challenges in accessing basic services, and unemployment are prevalent issues. Most services are accessible for about 40% of the respondents, and a relatively small percentage of the people face issues in accessing local shops (10%), online banking (8%), post services (8%), delivery services (13%) and transport (14%). Due to the remoteness and small scale of most villages included in this needs assessment, a slightly higher percentage faces challenges accessing supermarkets (25%), pharmacies (29%) and physical banks (38%) or other financial services (24%). Since schooling is still mainly offered remotely, a quarter (24%) of the respondents faces issues with accessing educational services (Graph 65).

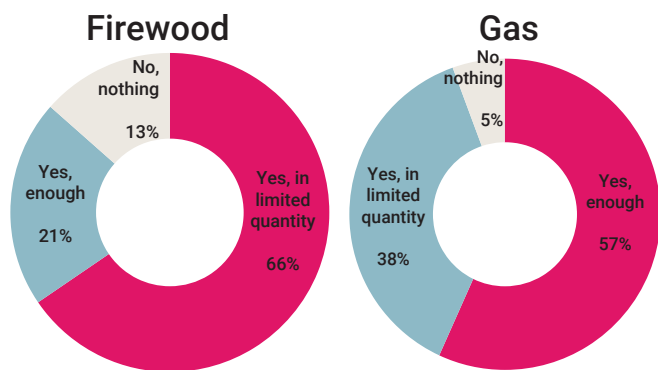


Graph 65 Challenges with accessing services Khersonska Oblast.

The JMMI's monthly report for December 2023 indicates some potential challenges in accessing essential financial services in certain areas of Khersonska oblast, as only a small percentage report that ATMs (5%) and physical banks (2%) are fully available. Issues faced by customers include a lack of cash at ATMs (12%), power outages (22%), or non-existent ATMs (54%). Physical banks are often located in nearby communities (30%) and may not be available during air alerts (12%) or at all (56%). A third of customers reported full availability of Ukrposhta and two third mentioned mobile post services only. Other financial challenges faced in Khersonska Oblast include increasing prices as noted by 61% of the respondents, the inability to afford good (29%), limited availability of cash (22%) and fuel being expensive (REACH, 2024).

Market fuel for heating

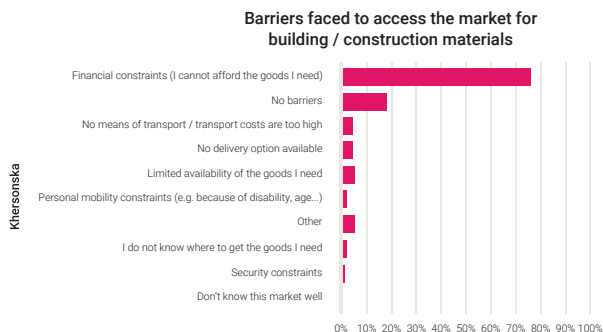
The data shows that a majority of respondents using gas (57%) believe there is enough availability, while a significant percentage (38%) report limited availability and a small percentage (5%) claim that there is no gas available. For firewood, only 21% say it is fully available, while a majority (66%) mention limited availability, and 13% state that there is no firewood available (Graph 66). According to the JMMI over the past months, fuel for heating is generally reported to be fully available in Khersonska Oblast (88% in December 2023), although sometimes in limited quantities (10% in December). Interestingly, fuel on order was reported by 22,2% of the respondents of the JMMI in November and only 2% in December 2023 (REACH, 2024).



Graph 66 Availability of Fuel for Heating Khersonska Oblast

Building/construction market

Considering people’s access to the building/construction market, the findings show that a significant majority (76% of respondents) identify a lack of financial resources as the main constraint. It is worth noting that 18% of interviewees do not encounter any issues or challenges in accessing the market, suggesting that it functions well for these individuals. Only a small portion of respondents expresses difficulty due to factors such as the availability of goods/services (5%) and a lack of delivery services (4%) (Graph 67).



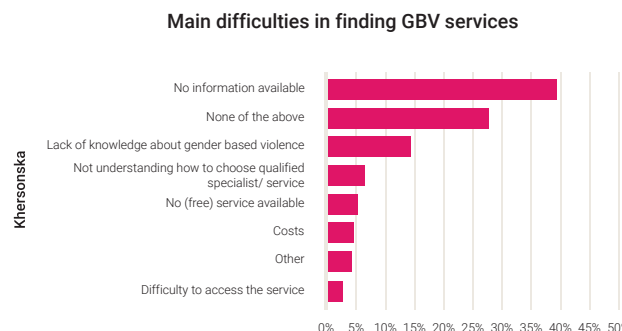
Graph 67 Barriers to access the construction market Khersonska Oblast

MHPSS services

Although Khersonska is the oblast where the most people stated an MHPSS need within their household (32%), more than half the respondents (54%) indicate that they do not know where to access free MHPSS support and 14% says to face challenges accessing MHPSS services. Amongst the difficulties mentioned to find MHPSS support are the lack of information available about these services (36% of respondents), the lack of knowledge about how to choose the appropriate specialist or type of support (11%), and the lack of free available services (6%). Some respondents also mention the lack of time to engage in such activities.

GBV services

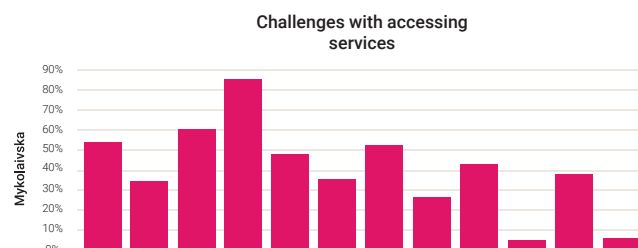
As depicted in Graph 68, the predominant obstacles in Khersonska Oblast are associated with the unavailability of information and a lack of knowledge about GBV, incapacity to understand how to choose a specialized service, as well as the cost of it. In Khersonska some respondents also mentioned the difficulty to access the services.



Graph 68 What are the main difficulties in finding GBV services Khersonska Oblast

Mykolaivska Oblast

The economic hardships resulting from war and occupation are also evident in the villages of Mykolaivska Oblast. The most difficult services to access, according to interviewees, include pharmacies (86%), medical care services (60%), supermarkets (54%), physical banks (53%) or other financial services (42%), and educational services (48%). This is largely due to the remoteness of the villages and the reliance on remote learning. delivery services (39%), local shops (36%), transport (37%) and online banking services (27%) are slightly more accessible. The majority of respondents have no issues accessing Ukrposhta (Graph 69).



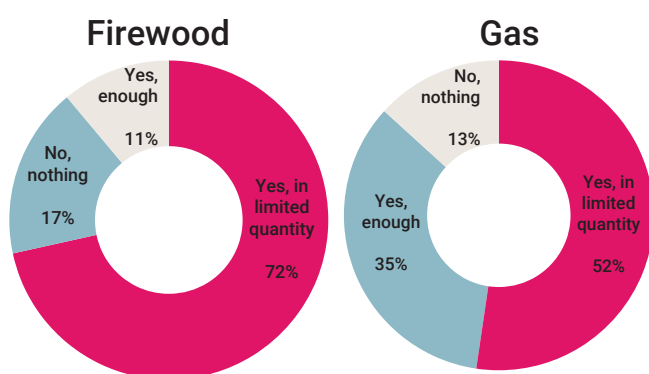
Graph 69 Challenges with accessing services Mykolaivska Oblast

According to the JMMI report in December, the availability of financial services for customers remained high, with 83% reporting full availability

of Ukrposhta, 92% for ATMs, and 83% for banks. Yet, prices increased according to half (50%) of the participants of the JMMI, and expensive fuel was highlighted by a quarter (25%). These trends indicate potential economic challenges faced by customers in accessing affordable goods and services.⁶

Market fuel for heating

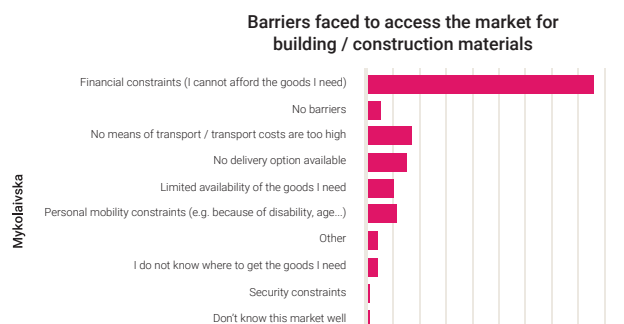
In Mykolaivska Oblast, the majority of respondents using firewood (72%) state that its availability is limited, with some reporting full availability (11%) and others stating that there is no availability at all (17%). With regards to gas, 35% of those using this fuel report enough availability, while a larger percentage (52%) mention some limitations to the availability of gas, and 13% indicate that gas is not available (Graph 70). According to the JMMI over the past months, fuel for heating is generally fully available in Mykolaivska Oblast (92% in December, 2023), sometimes on order (8% in December). (REACH, 2024)



Graph 70 Availability fuel for heating Mykolaivska Oblast

Building/construction market

Financial constraints emerge as a prominent barrier impacting people's ability to access the building/construction market in Mykolaivska. Other challenges, although less frequently faced, include mobility constraints, either due to physical limitations or a lack of means for transportation. Additionally, a relatively small portion of the people interviewed mention that the unavailability of goods (10%) and/or delivery services (15%) hinders them from accessing the market (Graph 71).



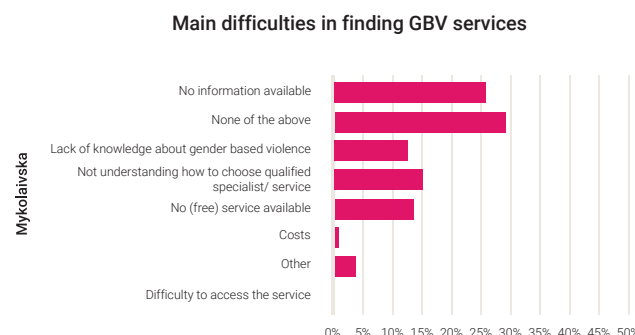
Graph 71 Barriers to access the construction market Mykolaivska Oblast.

MHPSS services

Almost a quarter (23%) of the respondents reckon that someone in their household may need MHPSS. Yet, more than half (57%) of respondents in Mykolaivska Oblast declare that they do not know how to access free MHPSS support services and 35% say they face challenges accessing MHPSS services. Amongst the difficulties mentioned to find MHPSS support are the lack of information available about these services (26%), the lack of knowledge about how to choose the appropriate specialist or type of support (15%), and the lack of free available services (13%).

GBV services

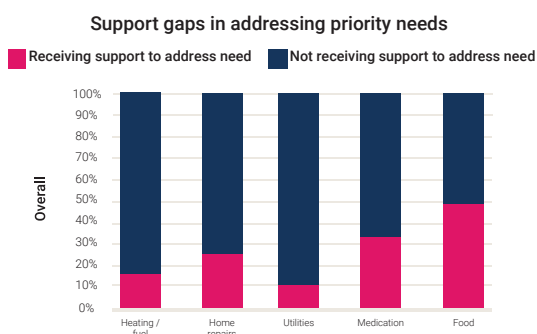
As depicted in Graph 72, the predominant obstacles in Khersonska Oblast are associated with the unavailability of information, incapacity to understand how to choose a specialized service, as well as the cost of the services and a lack of knowledge about GBV, the incapacity to understand how to choose a specialized service as well as the lack of free services.



Graph 72 What are the main difficulties in finding GBV services Mykolaivska Oblast

4.6 Access to humanitarian support

Humanitarian aid delivery in the targeted regions (and nationwide) reflects a consistent effort, although specific challenges and variations in services exist among different areas. Currently, support in meeting priority needs, if any, is mainly received from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and to a lesser extent from the Hromada/State, depending on the need at stake. When comparing the top five priority needs identified by respondents (4.2 Identified Needs) with the support they currently receive, significant gaps can be observed. For example, among those who identified fuel for heating as their main priority need, 83% reported not receiving any support to address this need. Similarly, for building materials, 75% stated that they were not receiving any support. These numbers highlight an ongoing need for assistance in addressing the most pressing needs of people affected by the war (Graph 73).



Graph 73 Gaps in addressing priority needs overall.

In terms of services provided by the government to address needs in MHPSS, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Ukraine has different directorates and departments within, such as the Public Health Directorate and the Department of Medical Services, with responsibility on mental health-related matters. Public psychiatric departments and hospitals are overseen by the MoH, and despite efforts by the MoH to delineate a mental health reform and increase the provision of MHPSS community-based services, mental healthcare at community level is still low, inefficiently organized, and outpatients are required to pay for all services (Heal Traumas International, 2023). In addition, humanitarian actors try to address the critical needs for MHPSS, as of 2023, a total of

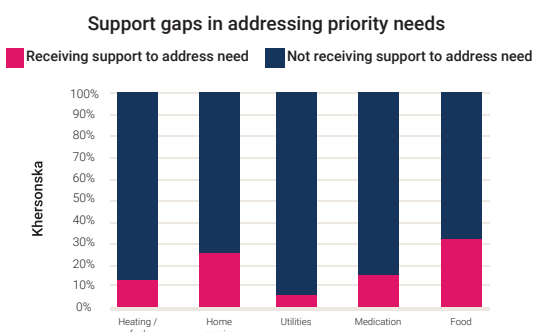
37 organizations were supporting and/or providing MHPSS-related services in over 1,040 Hromadas across Ukraine (OCHA, 2023). The oblast which has the highest number of organizations supporting and/or operating in the sector of MHPSS is Kharkivska (17 organizations), followed by Dnipropetrovska (16), Zaporizka (12), and Chernivetska, Kyiv and Lvivska, with 11 organizations each (Gender Based Violence AoR, 2023). A breakdown of the main MHPSS activities provided in Ukraine, and across the consortium's target oblasts of intervention, can be found in annex Humanitarian Stakeholder Mapping.

In terms of access to support in protection and GBV, services across Ukraine are provided by the Government of Ukraine (GoU), as well as international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and local partners. Through the National Police of Ukraine, a Government Helpline, and La Strada, a hotline operating for the prevention of domestic violence, trafficking in human beings and gender discrimination, the GoU provides support to GBV survivors through counselling, psychological and legal assistance, and referrals to shelters and medical services (UNHCR, 2023). Additionally, in 2023, a total of 119 organizations, both international and local, are supporting and/or providing GBV-related services nationwide. The oblast which has the highest number of organizations supporting and/or operating in the sector of GBV is Kharkivska (33 organizations), followed by Dnipropetrovska (31), Kyiv (28), and Odeska (27). In Mykolaivska Oblast, there are 26 partners, and in Khersonska Oblast, there are 24 partners (Gender Based Violence AoR, 2023). A breakdown of the main GBV activities provided in Ukraine, and across the consortium's target oblasts of intervention, can be found in annex Humanitarian Stakeholder Mapping. Despite these efforts, according to the OCHA's 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview, still 2.5 million people in Ukraine need GBV prevention services. Although some GBV-specialized services continue to operate in several municipalities and in large cities – except in communities where active hostilities take place – essential services are affected by significant gaps and limitations, including

reduction in services, broken referral pathways, lack of quality GBV case management services and safe shelter, and weak coordination at regional and community levels. The capacity of the state to reach and provide life-saving assistance and survivor-centred care to GBV survivors continues to decrease due to the high costs of the war, displacement, lack of qualified staff, and redirection of formerly available GBV services to serve more visible needs of IDPs and other vulnerable groups (UN Ukraine, 2023).

Khersonska Oblast

Currently, support in addressing priority needs, if any, is mainly received from NGOs, and to a lesser extent from the State, depending on the need at stake. People also rely on institutions such as the Church and family/friends to meet their fuel for heating, food and medication needs, while the Hromada sometimes steps in to support families in house repairs. Nevertheless, when comparing the top five priority needs identified by respondents with the support they currently receive, significant gaps can be observed. For example, among those who identified fuel for heating as their main priority need, 88% reported not receiving any support to address this need. Similarly, for building materials, 75% stated that they receive no support. These numbers highlight an ongoing need for assistance in addressing the most pressing needs of people affected by the war (Graph 74).



Graph 74 Gaps in addressing priority needs Khersonska.

Shelter assistance is affirmed in various areas, including Velyko-Oleksandrivska, Vysokopilka, Bilozerska, and Borozenska. The involvement of NGOs, such as 'Tarilka' and 'People in Need, showcases the multifaceted support provided to address

housing needs. Caritas provides roof materials and winterization support. Khersonska Oblast, Velyko-Oleksandrivska THs reports receiving NFI support from the Red Cross and other organizations. The provision of construction materials by NGOs, as seen in Borozenska TH, highlights efforts to address diverse non-food needs.

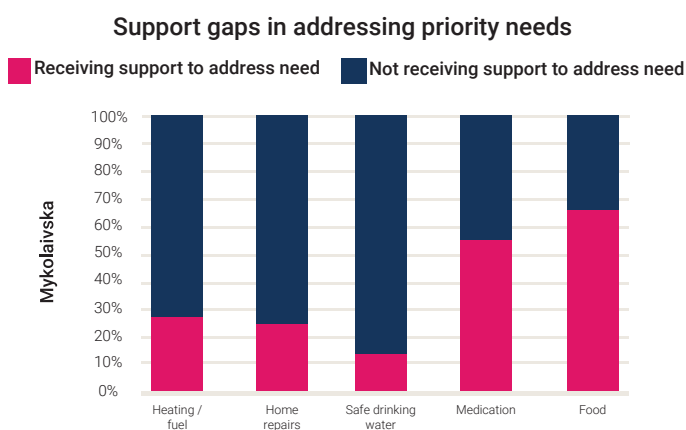
Health care services are consistently reported, with organizations like Alima, Doctors without Borders (MSF), and local Kherson organizations contributing to medical assistance. MHPSS services are delivered in various areas by the same organisations. In Borozenska TH, visiting specialists provide essential psychosocial support once a week.

The Khersonska Oblast region has access to delivery of clean water whenever this is needed. In Borozenska there is no urgent need, but some portable water is supplied in bottles. ADRA provides access in Novo Oleksandrivska TH. Hygiene support is acknowledged in Bilozerska TH, with organizations like 'New Dawn' and local NGOs and volunteers providing sporadic assistance. Education services, including remote learning and occasional educational events, are reported in Vysokopilka and Velyko-Oleksandrivska THs.

Monthly food aid is received in Khersonska, Velyko-Oleksandrivska, Vysokopilka, Bilozerska, Borozenska, and Novo Oleksandrivska Hromadas. NGOs, including 'Leleka,' 'Caritas,' and others, play a crucial role in facilitating food assistance. The regularity and diversity of providers indicate a collaborative approach to addressing food security.

Mykolaivska Oblast

Support from NGOs and institutions like the Church is available to address food needs, and assistance from NGOs and the state is available for medication needs. However, there is a significant lack of support when it comes to house repairs (74%) and fuel for heating (72%), which are identified as the top priorities. Based on the information retrieved from key informant interviews, this gap can be attributed to various reasons, including a lack of resources, priorities relating to the targeted locations (e.g. urban versus rural areas; access), the type of support to be provided, and targeted population (also see Groups with Vulnerabilities). As a result, many individuals find themselves without any form of assistance in these crucial areas (Graph 75). Hence, additional efforts should be made to provide support and resources for these needs to ensure that individuals have safe and adequate housing and access to heating.



Graph 75 Gaps in addressing priority needs Mykolaivska Oblast.

Caritas plays a significant role in providing shelter support, including roof materials. Other organizations like Kubis, Elka Emka, and Vidrodzhennia (Ukrainian organizations) have contributed by providing roof plates. In Murakhivka, Angels of Salvation (AOS) supported some houses, and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) conducted needs assessments for further aid, though not initiated yet.

Artakovo received shelter support from AOS for house restoration. Currently, there are no active organizations working on shelter in the region. The region reports various NFI support. Caritas and other NGOs offer winterization, fuel, and other essential items. In terms of livelihoods, Caritas, NRC, and other organizations provide vouchers, and the FAO gave vouchers for barn reconstruction/repair.

There is a shortage of medicines at health facilities, compounded by difficulties in obtaining prescriptions due to a lack of local doctors. Caritas provides some medical support, and there are periodic visits from MSF and other organizations for consultations and psychosocial support. MHPSS services are available, with MSF conducting sessions with both children and adults. Other NGOs and first aid organizations contribute with periodic visits and rotating specialists.

MSF is involved in water purification projects, while Water Mission and Solidarite contribute to water-related initiatives.

Both Berezhnehuvate and Shevchenkove receive food assistance, however in unpredictable and unreliable manner. The World Food Programme (WFP) provides bread, and other contributors include the Red Cross, volunteering groups from the Church, Vidrodzhennia, Caritas, and various NGOs. Shevchenkove specifically mentions receiving food kits and bread from WFP once per month, occasionally supplemented by World Kitchen and sporadic volunteer groups.





5. Conclusions and recommendations

The need assessments reveal that the top priority needs in both Oblasts include heating/fuel (63%) and house repairs (57%) in the first place, with varying degrees of emphasis on utilities (15%), medication (12%), food (9%) and drinking water (8%). The WHO-5 Psychological Well-Being Index indicates MHPSS needs with 38% of the population reporting the lowest possible quality of life and well-being associated with psychological distress and depressive symptoms.

Based on the findings, it is clear that fuel for heating is a critical ongoing need for a significant proportion of respondents (notably 63%), particularly during winter. According to the findings, people rely predominantly on firewood (71%) and gas (35%) as fuel sources for heating their homes, alongside the prerequisite of having functioning heating facilities and a home to heat. Yet, a fifth of the respondents (18%) say they are currently unable to heat their homes at all. The main barriers preventing them from access to heating is the unaffordable price of fuel in the first place. Damaged homes, limited availability of the required type of fuel, and a lack of functioning heating facilities are also challenges. The presence of EWRs further complicates the situation for those who rely on

collecting firewood or land tenure for income. According to the JMMI, over the past months, fuel for heating is generally reported to be fully available in both oblasts, albeit on order. The recommendation is to provide targeted support to those with the highest fuel and heating needs, focusing on addressing the identified barriers. This can include initiatives such as providing cash for fuel, supporting housing repairs, improving access to appropriate fuel types, and promoting energy-efficient heating solutions.

In terms of shelter, the survey findings highlight the pressing need for home repair and reconstruction efforts. Over half (57%) of the respondents prioritize home repair and reconstruction, with a large proportion (91%) indicating their houses have suffered damage due to military activities.

Besides the link between damaged houses and heating issues earlier discussed, there are also perceived security risks related to damaged/destroyed homes, including the exposure to extreme weather conditions and unsafe/uninhabitable conditions of the house. Furthermore, 18% of the people interviewed reckon their damaged or destroyed houses

is one of the things that worries them most, emphasizing the mental toll it takes on them. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing housing issues and guarantee safe and secure shelter for the affected population. Moreover, looking at the high level of heavily damaged houses in some oblasts, it is recommended to consider the feasibility of supporting people whose houses were heavily damaged. Restoration efforts are ongoing, but a significant gap in addressing the need still exists. Financial assistance for people to afford building materials and hire contractors/labourers is the most valued support to facilitate home repairs improving the shelter conditions of people, especially when combined with cash for fuel for heating. While the construction/building market seems to function well and is generally perceived accessible (apart from the financial barriers faced by 80% of the respondents), it is key to continuously and closely monitor the functioning and accessibility of the construction market to ensure safe and full access to building materials and services for those in need, with a special focus on people with mobility constraints.

Hence, besides providing financial assistance for building/construction materials, it is recommended to make sure that the transfer grant size includes an amount to cover potential costs for hiring workforce and transportation costs/delivery services if required. Furthermore, it is important to offer extra support to people who have difficulties in finding workers (e.g., through brigades, a referral system, or perhaps through livelihood programming in which people in need of income generating opportunities can be trained to support building efforts).

MHPSS needs are high in all assessed areas with 38% of the population reporting the lowest possible quality of life and well-being associated with psychological distress and depressive symptoms according to the WHO-5 Well-Being Index. IDPs seem more impacted than people with other displacement status. The military operations in the area, the damaged and destroyed housing due to the military operations, the economic situation and uncertainty about the future are the

main sources of worries for respondents, and although a quarter of respondents (28%) state that someone in their household would benefit from MHPSS services, 52% do not know how to access this support, because of a lack of information about the services or about mental health or specialists in general. In light of these findings, it seems important to increase the awareness raising effort and activities in these regions, and to provide accessible and appropriate MHPSS services to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of the population. These services should ensure the participation of particularly vulnerable groups within the population, such as IDPs who seem to be more impacted, but also elderly who are more isolated, children, women at risk of GBV, or people from marginalized groups. These services should be integrated to other sectors that may support the improvement of wellbeing and safety among the population, such as shelter, protection, economic inclusion, or livelihood, in order to address the main concerns of the population in these areas.

Looking into WASH, the outcomes highlight the varying levels of access to enough and safe drinking water in the surveyed Oblasts. In total, 8% of the respondents of the needs assessment highlighted clean drinking water and 15% sees utilities (gas, water, electricity) as their primary or secondary need. Half of the respondents (52%) face issues related to water scarcity or having water that is unsuitable for drinking. Factors such as pre-war conditions, remoteness, destruction or contamination of water networks, and the capacity of government and humanitarian actors have influenced the current situation. Efforts to restore access to clean drinking water have been partially successful, yet there is still a need for improvement especially in remote and frontline communities. Sanitation facilities are mostly available, although running water is lacking in many areas, and many households require essential hygiene items (soap in particular). To improve people's access to potable water, close consultation with (local) authorities and enterprises is key to finding sustainable solutions for those areas with limited access to safe drinking water.

The ongoing efforts of the national and local government in the (re)construction and maintenance of water supply networks, needs to be complemented with the support by humanitarian organisations with expertise, especially where gaps arise. Additionally, it is recommended to provide cash-based assistance to people in need of essential hygienic products, including amongst other women's items.

The assessment reveals the significant impact of the conflict on livelihoods related to livestock and crop farming in the rural communities of both Oblasts has been extensive. The reduction in the number of livestock and crop farming is evident, limiting people's ability to feed and support their families. The barriers faced by people in keeping and restoring their livestock include the limited availability of animals, high prices of livestock, and scarcity of fodder and water, whilst access to fields, cost of seeds, and unavailability and unaffordability of fertilizers and seeds are the main barriers to crop farming. The interest in crop farming is high, with potatoes, tomatoes, and cucumbers being the top crops and poultry remains the most popular choice for animal husbandry, with chickens being the preferred animals in both oblasts (often related to the short and efficient cycle, allowing for a quick and worthwhile impact to address food needs). The recommendations to improve the livelihoods of rural communities include considering the feasibility of providing financial support for livestock, seeds, and fertilizers, as well as the repair of stables/animal shelters when needed, while considering the security risks posed by EWRs, water scarcity and overall functioning of the market. Focusing on small livestock (poultry) and small-scale homestead gardening could be a first step to invest in (the recovery of) farming activities for own consumption.

Yet, a more in-depth market analysis for various types of agricultural livelihoods, as well as additional market-based programming are required to increase the impact and sustainability of livelihood programming. At the same time, promotion of alternative income-generating activities and skill training could be further explored, for instance in building/construction work to support home repair efforts in the oblasts with high shelter needs.

Protection needs are prevalent across both oblasts, with communities primarily expressing concerns about physical security, exposure to EWRs, military activities, and adverse weather conditions such as cold and rain. Humanitarian support in these areas should focus on interventions aiming at reducing exposure to these security threats. It is recommended to organize Explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities to reduce the risk of injury from explosive ordnance (EO) by raising awareness of the risks and promoting behavioural change among women, girls, boys, and men in affected communities. Although the percentage of respondents identifying violence as a primary protection concern is lower compared to the aforementioned threats, gender-based violence (GBV) is still reported. The low awareness around the theme of GBV, combined with the fear of stigma, and secondary data suggest that many GBV cases and needs go unreported. Data concerning knowledge on GBV, shows that 58% of the total interviewees reported either a lack of knowledge or insecurity regarding the meaning of GBV. In terms of main barriers reported in the identification of GBV services most of them are related to lack of information (34%) and knowledge about GBV (13%).

Furthermore, there is a great gap in terms of understanding PSEA in all oblasts: 62% of the respondents reported not knowing the meaning of PSEA, 12% are unsure, and only 26% confirming knowing the meaning. Given these findings, there is a crucial need to enhance outreach activities to raise awareness about gender-based violence especially among rural communities. Providing information on specialized services for survivors and individuals at risk is essential, with particular attention to minority groups, people with disabilities, and the elderly. PSEA messages and sensitization sessions on the reporting mechanisms should be prioritized as cross-cutting interventions in programme targeted areas. Alongside outreach programs, it is imperative to ensure the provision of high-quality, safe, accessible, appropriate, and gender-tailored prevention, risk mitigation, and response services. Specific focus should be on risk mitigation activities in various sectors, integrating and mainstreaming gender and gender-based violence considerations. Establishing referral pathways with other sectors

and training all staff in GBV Core Concept and Safe Referral, and PSEA should be prioritized. Additionally, GBV-trained staff should conduct FGDs during implementation to better understand the specific gender challenges faced by women, girls, men, boys, and individuals with specific needs through in-depth gender analysis. Given the reluctance of respondents to discuss the GBV topic, the involvement of women-led organizations and local organizations is crucial to ensuring acceptance within communities and building the necessary trust to engage with community members.

Besides understanding the existing needs within the communities, it is also important to consider specific vulnerabilities in order to identify the target group of a response. Identified groups with vulnerabilities, such as people with disabilities, single pensioners, and those who lost their jobs due to the war, face heightened economic challenges with limited means of subsistence. Inability to afford heating, lack of potable water, and challenges in accessing essential items due to economic constraints further expose individuals to vulnerabilities. The constant stress experienced by the entire population, reflects the psychological toll of economic hardships, destroyed houses and displacement. The survey and qualitative data indicate that the elderly, people with disabilities, those with chronic health problems, and individuals without a source of income are considered the most vulnerable groups in the wider community. Yet, it is noted that young and middle-aged individuals who have lost their jobs due to the war are often overlooked and struggle to find support, which may exacerbate their vulnerability. When designing projects, it is therefore recommended to consider the specific needs and vulnerabilities of all individuals in relation to the type of support at stake, and if relevant, also look beyond age or physical abilities. This can help ensure a more comprehensive, inclusive, effective, and conflict-sensitive approach to addressing the needs of the community.

Moreover, the inclusion of younger and middle-aged people in livelihood programs, for example, can have wider benefits, such as increasing access to food for the entire community. Lastly, given the evident gender inequalities and the intersectional disparities

of the population, collaboration with CSOs, especially Women Led Organizations (WLOs), is deemed highly critical. It is recommended not only to prioritize WLOs in terms of funding for delivering humanitarian aid but also to focus on capacity building, particularly in institutional capacity and leadership strengthening. This strategic approach aims to address gender inequality and ensure access to all segments of the population, particularly those most vulnerable, in the delivery of humanitarian aid.

When designing and implementing assistance programs, it is crucial to take into account the overwhelming preference for cash-based assistance, as expressed by 93% of the respondents. Cash is seen as the most effective and convenient method of support due to its flexibility, speed, and freedom. The preference for cash as a form of assistance suggests that the local markets are functional enough to meet basic needs. This finding is supported by the overall results of the RNA and the JMMI. However, it is important to continue monitoring the availability, accessibility, and functionality of financial services and markets. The JMMI can provide valuable insights, but should be complemented by conducting additional assessments of relevant markets and services to ensure that assistance programs align with the current market conditions and needs of the beneficiaries.

To conclude, it is worth noting that significant gaps in addressing priority needs remain, particularly in heating/fuel and house repairs. NGOs and Hromadas are the primary sources of support, but the current assistance is not sufficient to meet the needs. Hence, additional efforts should be made to bridge the gaps and ensure that people receive the support they require. In doing so, it is recommended to strengthen partnerships between humanitarian actors and local governments and to involve communities to address the identified gaps and ensure that individuals have access to safe and adequate housing, heating/fuel, and other essentialities. It is crucial to consider not only physical needs but also the protection and mental well-being of individuals for a holistic approach towards addressing these issues effectively.



Graph 20 Alyna (15), Bohdan (9), and Sasha (4) pose in their recently repaired home while their father remains hospitalized in Kiev following severe war injuries. While their mother stays with their father, the children take care of their grandmother and home. Prior to the repairs, the house was damp and infested with rats.

Next steps HIAS-ZOA

After conducting the joint needs assessment, HIAS and ZOA will prioritize the following steps:

- Elaboration of Standard Operating Procedures for the implementation of the programme. HIAS will conduct a field visit of ZOA shelter programme in Khersonska Oblast. The field visit will enable field staff and coordinators to facilitate the discussion around the elaboration of joint Standard Operating Procedures.
- Realization of a pilot project in Mykolaivska and Khersonska Oblasts. HIAS and ZOA will finalize the designing and implementation of a joint programme shelter/protection to identify potential synergies, lessons learnt and best practises to incorporate in the programming.
- Gender and GBV mainstreaming interventions: HIAS will organize training sessions to ZOA shelter staff in Gender Based Violence, Core Concepts and Safe Referrals and support in developing and increase awareness on Gender and GBV considerations in Shelter programming.
- MHPSS mainstreaming and duty of care: HIAS MHPSS team will ensure that ZOA field staff are trained in MHPSS Basic Competencies (Psychological First Aid, Basic Communication and Helping Skills, Self-care) and Burnout prevention intervention, in order to facilitate referrals of individuals in need of psychosocial support, vulnerable beneficiaries interacting with ZOA field staff, but also to support ZOA staff and prevent stress-related consequences for field staff.

Pictures



Figure 21 Household survey data collection



Figure 22 Key informant interviews data collection



Figure 23 Gathering for FGDs



Figure 24 Meeting with the head of villages in Mykolaivska Oblast



Figure 25 Meeting ZOA HIAS in office ZOA Kryvyi Rih



Figure 26 Nadiia tells the staff from ZOA about how her roof was destroyed by the fighting and military activities.

Annexes

I. Overview Household Surveys

| Location | #Respondents | % Respondenst |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Berezhuvate | 65 | 16,4% |
| Bila Krynitsa | 8 | 2% |
| Lepetyha | 43 | 10,9% |
| Murakhivka | 13 | 3,3% |
| Ternivka | 1 | 0,3% |
| Bilozerska | 48 | 12,1% |
| Nova Zorya | 3 | 0,8% |
| Pravdine | 26 | 6,6% |
| Tavriyske | 19 | 4,8% |
| Borozenska | 38 | 9,6% |
| Borozenske | 26 | 6,6% |
| Charivne | 3 | 0,8% |
| Kuchers'ke | 5 | 1,3% |
| Nova Kuban | 4 | 1% |
| Novo Oleksandrivka | 26 | 6,6% |
| Bilyaivka | 19 | 4,8% |
| Ukrainska | 7 | 1,8% |
| Shevchenkove | 89 | 22,5% |
| Luch | 17 | 4,3% |
| Lyubomyrivka | 25 | 6,3 |
| Myrne | 46 | 11,6% |
| Ternovi Pody | 1 | 0,3% |
| Velyka Oleksandrivka | 73 | 18,4% |
| Bila Krynytsia | 19 | 4,8% |
| Bilohorka | 1 | 0,3% |
| Davydiv Brid | 7 | 1,8% |
| Kostromka | 1 | 0,3% |
| Mala Oleksandrivka | 1 | 0,3% |
| Tryfonivka | 1 | 0,3% |
| Velyka Oleksandrivka | 42 | 10,6% |
| Velykyy brid | 1 | 0,3% |
| Vysokopil'ska | 57 | 14,4% |
| Pot'omkine | 13 | 3,3% |
| Vysokopil'ska | 44 | 11,1% |
| Grand Total | 396 | 100% |

Table 2 Overview Household Survey
Khersonska and Mykolaivska Oblasts

Source: Database Rapid Needs
Assessment SouthEast Ukraine
December 2023

II. Overview Key Informants Interviews

| # | Hromada | Organisation | Role |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | Velyko Oleksandrivska TH | Village council | Specialist in charge of social work |
| 2 | Vysokopolska TH | Village council | Head of Shelter department |
| 3 | Berezhnevate Hromada | Starostat | Head of Lepetykha Starostat |
| 4 | Bilozerka Hromada | Bilozerka village military administration | Head of Pravdino, Tavriiske and Nova Zoria villages |
| 5 | Borozenska Hromada | Starostat | Head of Nova Kuban village |
| 6 | Biliaivka village, Novo-Oleksandrivska Hromada | Starostat | Head of Bilyaivka village |
| 7 | Shevchenkove Hromada | Starostat villages Liubomiryvke, Myrne, Ternovi Podiy | Head of Starostat villages Liubomiryvke, Myrne, Ternovi Podiy |

Table 3 Overview Key Informant Interviews

Source: Database Rapid Needs Assessment SouthEast Ukraine December 2023

III. Overview Focus Group Discussions

| Focus Group Discussion 1 | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|-----------|---|---------|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| Date | 1/12/2023 | | | | | | | | |
| Project | Needs assessment December 2023 | | | | | | | | |
| Place | Administration building | | | | | | | | |
| Location (Oblast, Hromada, Village) | Liubomyrivka, Shevchenkove, Mykolaivska Oblast | | | | | | | | |
| Facilitator | 1 female international facilitator and 1 male national translator/interpreter | | | | | | | | |
| # Participants | Men <50 | 1 | Women <50 | 0 | Men 50+ | 1 | Women 50+ | 6 | PWD (m/f) |

| Focus Group Discussion 2 | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|-----------|---|---------|-----|-----------|-----------|
| Date | 1/12/2023 | | | | | | | |
| Project | Needs assessment December 2023 | | | | | | | |
| Place | Administration building | | | | | | | |
| Location (Oblast, Hromada, Village) | Liubomyrivka, Shevchenkove, Mykolaivska Oblast | | | | | | | |
| Facilitator | 1 female international facilitator and 1 male national translator/interpreter | | | | | | | |
| # Participants | Men <50 | 1 | Women <50 | 2 | Men 50+ | 50+ | Women 50+ | PWD (m/f) |

Table 4 Overview Focus Group Discussions

Source: Database Rapid Needs Assessment SouthEast Ukraine December 2023

UN Country Team in Ukraine. (2023, December 22). Ukraine Common Country Analysis 2023 - Ukraine. ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-common-country-analysis-2023>

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World Bank. (2021). World Bank Open Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRC.P5?locations=UA>

World Population Review. (2024). Femicide rates by country 2024. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/femicide-rates-by-country>

Біла стрічка в Україні. (2022, March 25). White Ribbon Ukraine Біла стрічка в Україні. <https://whiteribbonukraine.org/en/>

V. Context Characteristics Locations

| Hromada | Settlement | Previously occupied areas retaken by Ukraine | Frontline, were under shelling | Frontline, are still under shelling | Influx IDPs |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Velyka Oleksandrivska TH | Velyka Oleksandrivka | x | x | | |
| | Bila Krynitsa | x | x | | |
| | Bila Horka | x | x | | |
| | Davydiv Brid | x | x | | |
| | Kostromka | x | x | | |
| | Mala Aleksandrivka | x | x | | |
| | Tryfonivka | x | x | | |
| | Velykyi brid | x | x | | |
| Vysokopilska TH | Vysokopilske | x | x | | |
| | Potyomkino | x | x | | |
| Bilozerska TH | Nova Zorya | | x | | |
| | Pravdine | x | x | | x |
| | Tavriyske | | x | | |
| Borozenske TH | Borozenske | x | x | | x |
| | Charivne | x | | | |
| | Kucherske | x | | | |
| | Nova Kuban | x | x | | |
| Novo Oleksandrivska TH | Novo Oleksandrivka | x | x | | |
| | Belyaevka | x | x | | |
| | Ukrainska | x | x | | |
| Bereznehuvate TH | Bila Krynitsa | x | x | | x |
| | Lepitiha | | x | | x |
| | Murahivka | | x | | |
| | Ternivka | | x | | |
| Shevchenkove TH | Shevchenkove | | x | | |
| | Luch | | x | | |
| | Lyubomyrivka | x | x | | |
| | Myrne | x | x | | |
| | Ternovy Pody | x | x | | |

Table 5 Overview Locations context characteristics

Source: Database Rapid Needs Assessment SouthEast Ukraine December 2023

VI. Humanitarian Stakeholder Mapping

| Description of the activity | Total (nationwide) | Khersonska | Mykolaivska |
|---|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Info dissemination to the community | 18 | 6 | 6 |
| Specialized clinical management of mental disorders | 4 | - | 2 |
| General MHPSS activities | 25 | 5 | 5 |
| Community mobilization/ organization | 11 | 3 | 3 |
| Strengthening community and family support | 15 | 7 | 5 |
| Safe spaces | 11 | 3 | 4 |
| Psychosocial support in education | 20 | 4 | 5 |
| Inclusion of MHPSS considerations in different sectors (e.g., protection, nutrition, shelter, etc). | 12 | 1 | 2 |
| Person-focused psychosocial work | 24 | 7 | 9 |
| Psychological intervention | 24 | 7 | 8 |
| Non-specialized clinical management of mental disorders | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| Total number of organizations supporting and/or providing MHPSS-related services per oblast | 37 | 8 | 10 |

Table 6 Main MHPSS activities in Ukraine

Source: MHPSS Technical Working Group (2023)

| Description of the activity | Total (nationwide) | Khersonska | Mykolaivska |
|---|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Awareness raising on GBV prevention, risk mitigation and dissemination of life-saving information on GBV services and referrals | 66 | 14 | 14 |
| Provision of dignity kits | 57 | 16 | 6 |
| Provision of GBV psychosocial support | 57 | 12 | 12 |
| Legal aid and counselling on GBV | 31 | 5 | 5 |
| Women and girls' safe spaces | 31 | 2 | 4 |
| Train GBV service providers to meet GBV in emergencies minimum standards | 27 | 4 | 3 |
| Train humanitarian actors on GBV risk prevention and mitigation | 23 | - | 1 |
| Cash and voucher assistance through specialized care for GBV survivors and those at-risk | 11 | - | - |
| Provision of services in GBV shelters | 11 | - | 2 |
| Provision of services in GBV day care centres | 10 | - | 2 |
| GBV safety audit in collective/ transit centres, border crossings, and other areas identified as high risk | 9 | - | 2 |
| GBV hotlines | 7 | - | - |
| Establish and update functional inter-sectoral GBV referral pathways | 6 | - | - |
| Advocacy on GBV issues | 5 | - | 2 |
| GBV assessments conducted for gap identification | 5 | - | 1 |
| Provision of services in GBV crisis rooms | 3 | - | - |
| Total number of GBV organizations per oblast | - | 24 | 26 |

Table 7 Main GBV activities in Ukraine

Source: GBV Area of Responsibility Ukraine Protection Cluster (2023)



ZOAC

from relief to recovery

HIAS

Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

