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# **Research on the Needs and State of Activity of Youth Workers and Prospects for the Development of Youth Work in Ukraine during the War and Post-War Period**

Draft Report

The research findings are based only on the responses of youth workers who participated in the survey and focus group discussions, and solely on their perception of the circumstances in which they work. Therefore, the research findings are subject to probability in terms of reflecting the actual situation. The Council of Europe, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, the All-Ukrainian Youth Centre, the Association of Youth Workers of Ukraine and the research team are not liable for the accuracy of the information obtained during the research.

The opinions expressed in this publication are responsibility of the author(s) and might not coincide with the official policy of the Council of Europe.

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### **Abbreviations used in the text**

AUYC shall mean All-Ukrainian Youth Centre  
AYWU shall mean Association of Youth Workers of Ukraine  
CSO shall mean civil society organisation  
HL shall mean healthy lifestyle  
IDP shall mean internally displaced person  
LSGB shall mean local self-government bodies  
Media shall mean mass media  
PTSD shall mean post-traumatic stress disorder  
SMM shall mean social media marketing  
TC shall mean territorial community  
YC shall mean youth centre  
YS shall mean youth space

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## INTRODUCTION

### Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine is the main body in the system of central executive authorities that ensures the formation and implementation of state policy in the areas of youth policy, physical culture and sports, and the establishment of Ukrainian national and civic identity.

### All-Ukrainian Youth Centre

The All-Ukrainian Youth Centre is an expert and resource centre for youth work that works to develop youth infrastructure and youth work in Ukraine.

The mission of the All-Ukrainian Youth Centre is to increase the capacity of youth centres and spaces and to implement state policy.

The Centre is working to build a strong network of youth centres and spaces across the country.

The Centre's goal is to provide young people with access to resources that promote their comprehensive development and active participation in public life. By providing the necessary tools, resources and knowledge, the Centre enhances the capacity of YCs and YSs to effectively implement state policy, advocate for youth and promote their involvement in solving pressing social issues. Through this, the Centre aims to create a solid foundation for the development of a responsible, innovative and active youth environment that will contribute to the sustainable development and well-being of our society.

### *All-Ukrainian Youth Centre Programmes*

The AUYC programmes are aimed at raising the professional level of specialists working with young people, developing the competencies of youth centre staff, and engaging young people in socially important initiatives through the restoration of youth spaces and the promotion of community cohesion. These programmes support professional development, facilitate youth networking, and promote the activities of youth organisations.

#### *State Programme “Youth Worker”*

The Youth Worker programme was launched in 2014 by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine in co-operation with the State Institute for Family and Youth Policy with the support of the United Nations Development Programme in Ukraine. In 2022, the administration of the programme was transferred to the All-Ukrainian Youth Centre.

The idea of creating a special training programme arose after a review of Ukraine's youth policy by a group of international experts from the Council of Europe commissioned by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine in 2012.

The programme is designed for representatives working with young people from all regions of Ukraine from the state and civil society sectors.

The main requirement is experience in working with young people.

The programme has three levels: basic, specialised and training of trainers.

To date, more than 6,000 people have completed the basic level, specialised trainings have been developed, and now graduates of the basic level can improve their knowledge and skills on the following topics:

- “Youth Resilience in Crisis 2.0”;
- “Engaging and co-ordinating volunteers”;
- “Formation of a healthy lifestyle for youth”;
- “Advocacy of youth policy in the community”;
- “Approaches and tools of public administration in the youth sector”;
- “Trauma-informed youth work”;
- “Digital tools for youth work”;
- “Civic education for youth workers”;

- “Barrier-free environment in the youth sector” (the training is scheduled to start in 2025, after the recruitment and training of trainers).

Online resources of the programme:

- website: <https://youth-worker.org.ua>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/youth.worker.ua>

A new profession – a youth specialist (youth worker) – was introduced. Thanks to the updated structure of the programme, the active participation of international partners and the development of an occupational standard of youth worker, the programme has become an important tool for the development of youth work at the local and national levels.

In 2020, the alumni and trainers of the programme established the CSO “Association of Youth Workers of Ukraine”.

*“VidNOVA:UA”*

The programme of engaging young people in the restoration of Ukraine through youth exchanges provides an opportunity for young people to travel across Ukraine. Through the exchanges, young people can visit different communities in different regions of our country, take part in the restoration of premises for youth centres and spaces, engage in volunteering and develop social cohesion. The initiative arose in response to the challenges posed by the outbreak of full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The programme is currently being implemented as part of the state strategy “Youth of Ukraine” for 2025.

*“MIST” (Youth Infrastructure Created by You)*

The programme focuses on the development of new specialised trainings and aims to increase the competencies of employees of youth centres and youth spaces and develop skills in management, goal setting, and planning work with youth. Participants learn to research the needs of young people and build effective communication using basic tools.

#### ***Other areas of work of the AUYC***

*Strengthening Ukrainian national and civic identity*

The institution promotes the formation of Ukrainian national identity and the development of civic identity, focusing on practical skills. The projects help to acquire important knowledge in tactical medicine, security and military training and help to strengthen family ties. Besides, the AUYC develops board games that help young people get to know Ukraine, its history, culture and traditions better.

*All-Ukrainian Forum of Youth Work*

Every year, the institution organises a forum that brings together employees of institutions working with young people in different regions of Ukraine for one event to network and discuss topical issues of youth policy. The forum provides an opportunity to establish new partnerships, attend panel discussions with experts, gain practical knowledge, and learn about grants and other opportunities that will help improve the activities of YCs/YSs. Until 2024, the event was held in two separate formats: for youth workers and for representatives of youth centres and spaces. Since 2024, a new unified format has been introduced to comprehensively cover all key aspects of youth work and promote active co-operation and cohesion in the field.

*Competition of best practices in youth work in Ukraine*

This is an initiative aimed at identifying, supporting and disseminating the best examples of youth work in communities, organisations and other structures. The competition is part of the Youth Worker programme and is aimed at developing youth policy and promoting effective approaches to youth work.

*Information system*

A state database of youth centres in Ukraine in the format of a digital platform where details about the youth centre, its capabilities and activities can be posted. The information system allows for centralised management of resources, co-ordination of activities, collection of statistical data and communication between different youth centres. The use of this information system

contributes to transparency, the development of youth infrastructure and effective communication between all stakeholders.

### **The Council of Europe and Youth Policy**

The Council of Europe is the leading human rights organisation on the continent. It advocates for freedom of expression and media, freedom of assembly, equality, protection of minorities and campaigns on the issues of child protection, hate speech on the internet, Roma rights, and more. All the member states of the Council of Europe have acceded to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty aimed at protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights supervises implementation of the Convention. Ukraine became a member of the Council of Europe in November 1995.

The Council of Europe defends human rights by means of such international conventions as the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the Convention on Cybercrime. It monitors the progress achieved by the member states in these areas and provides recommendations by means of independent expert monitoring bodies.

[The Youth Department](#) is a part of the Directorate of Democratic Participation of the Directorate General of Democracy of the Council of Europe and is responsible for implementing the youth policy in the Council of Europe.

The Department develops the guidelines, programmes and legal documents to develop the consistent and efficient youth policy at the local, national and European levels. Its purpose is to consolidate and disseminate the knowledge and experience related to life situations, aspirations and expression of opinions of the European youth.

The stability of the democratic society is based on creativity, dynamics, social responsibility and competence of young people. At the same time, demographic changes, technological development and increasing social inequality are exposing the young Europeans to difficulties. Some of them face challenges in full-scale exercise of human rights, personal development, meaningful civic participation and integration into the society as well as unhindered transition to independent life; the vulnerable and marginalised youth groups are especially at risk.

Civic participation of young people plays a key role in any youth policy. This is reflected in two important Council of Europe standards – [Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#) and [Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on young people's access to rights](#). The participation of young people in community life is a human right and a prerequisite for their successful integration and independence as active, autonomous and responsible citizens, now and in the future. In January 2020 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted [the Youth sector strategy 2030](#), which without limitation contains answers to new questions and challenges faced by the young people all over Europe.

### **The Council of Europe Project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase III”**

The Project [“Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase III”](#) was launched as part of the Council of Europe’s Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction” for 2023–2026. The project is based on the results and experience of the Council of Europe Project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine” in 2020–2022.

The third phase extends the systematic impact by strengthening youth policy based on participatory approaches and enhancing youth work during war and in the post-war context, taking into account the needs of young people.

The project is implemented in co-operation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine in three components: 1) participatory youth policy; 2) recognition of youth work in wartime (including trauma-informed youth work); and 3) support for youth centres and youth organisations as platforms for civic engagement and democratic participation.

The project emphasises the importance of [the Council of Europe’s Youth Sector Strategy until 2030](#) and reflects [the National Strategy for State Youth Policy until 2030](#), [the State Targeted Social Programme “Youth of Ukraine” for 2021–2025](#).

The project encourages youth policy stakeholders in Ukraine to implement and disseminate Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to member States: [on the access of youth from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights, CM/Rec\(2015\)3](#); [on young people's access to rights, CM/Rec\(2016\)7](#); [on youth work, CM/Rec\(2017\)4](#); [on Roma youth participation CM/Rec\(2023\)4](#); [on protecting youth civil society and young people, and supporting their participation in democratic processes CM/Rec\(2022\)6](#).

### **Association of Youth Workers of Ukraine**

The Association of Youth Workers of Ukraine is a civil society organisation established in 2020 by trainers and alumni of the Youth Worker programme.

The Association of Youth Workers is a community of experts involved in youth work who want to share their experience to strengthen each other’s capacities.

The main goal of the AYWU is advocacy and socio-political recognition of youth work and youth workers in Ukraine.

The organisation was created for networking and co-operation between Ukrainian youth workers and their organisations or projects, for sharing experiences and establishing partnerships and international relations, representing Ukrainian youth workers on the global map of youth work, developing professional competencies of Ukrainian youth workers and creating opportunities for their professional growth.

Today, the Association is able to provide certain services on an ongoing basis. The members of the organisation are youth work practitioners, trainers, and mentors of youth programmes.

The projects implemented by the Association are aimed at organising and conducting trainings for youth workers within the framework of the Youth Worker programme, advocacy of youth policy in communities, etc.

Website: <https://uywa.com.ua/>



## ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The research of the needs and state of activity of youth workers and the prospects for the development of youth work in Ukraine during the war and in the post-war period was conducted by [the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine](#), [the All-Ukrainian Youth Centre](#) together with the [Council of Europe project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase III”](#) in co-operation with the [Association of Youth Workers of Ukraine](#).

**The aim of this research** was to characterise the state of activities, needs of youth workers, and identify opportunities for the development of youth work in Ukraine during the war and post-war period.

In accordance with the aim, the following **tasks** were outlined:

- to identify successes, obstacles and difficulties that youth workers in Ukraine may face during the war and the post-war period;
- to analyse the state of activities and identify the needs of youth workers in Ukraine during the war, including training, competence development, qualification confirmation and regulatory support, as well as communication and networking;
- to investigate the impact of the basic training of the state programme “Youth Worker” on the further professional activities of alumni;
- to analyse the role of various organisations and institutions in supporting the professional activities of youth workers;
- to formulate directions for the development of youth work in Ukraine during the war and in the post-war period: introduction of non-formal education and outreach to different categories and groups of young people; involvement of new people in the youth sector, educational and project support for them; study of Ukrainian and European experience.

**The target group of the research** is youth workers (graduates of the state programme “Youth Worker”; specialists working in the position of “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)”; representatives of authorities responsible for youth policy, youth CSOs, youth centres and spaces, youth advisory bodies; people working with young people).

The research report contains a comparison with the results of the 2022 research conducted by the Council of Europe project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase II” in co-operation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine and the United Nations Development Programme to identify the needs and challenges of youth workers in Ukraine.

The research methodology was based on the methods of participatory research, which provided for participation of representatives of the target groups in the research; inclusion of common ideas and practices in the research; focus on expanding opportunities of the participants of the research; no hierarchy to consider interests and opinions of those with less power or representation authority; value-based attitude to different views and opinions.

**The methods** used in the research are as follows:

- **The desk review** provided for an analysis of the documents that define, govern and regulate the activities of youth workers in Ukraine. The research analysed the Law of Ukraine “On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy” dated 27 April 2021 No. 1414-IX; the Plan for the Recovery and Development of Ukraine (as part of the United24 initiative of President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyy); standards and approaches of the Council of Europe, in particular the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on young people’s access to rights, CM/Rec(2016)7, on the access of youth from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights, CM/Rec(2015)3, on youth work, CM/Rec(2017)4, on Roma youth participation CM/Rec(2023)4, on protecting youth civil society and young people, and supporting their participation in democratic processes CM/Rec(2022)6;
- **The online survey** (Google form), in which 483 youth workers took part. The questionnaire is presented in Annex 1 hereto and contains both closed questions (participants were offered

options for answering) and open-ended questions (participants could write their own answers);

- Three *focus group discussions*, involving 14 youth workers.  
The research was conducted in September and October 2024:
- survey of youth workers – from 20 September to 10 October 2024;
- focus group discussions – on 18 October 2024 at 10:00 a.m. (1 male participant and 2 female participants representing local self-government bodies working with youth in communities that are or were under occupation) and 3:00 p.m. (4 female participants who are representatives of local self-government bodies working with youth with experience of one to two years) and on 23 October 2024 at 11:00 a.m. (7 female participants, including 2 representatives of CSOs working with young people and 5 representatives of local self-government bodies working with young people; mostly people with extensive experience in the field of youth policy/youth work). The average duration of the focus group discussions was 50 minutes.

The research was conducted remotely (by means of the online questionnaire, audio and/or video calls and conferences).

An invitation to participate in the survey was published on the website of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine, (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv/-/invitation-for-youth-workers-to-participate-in-the-research-of-their-needs-and-state-of-activity>), the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, (<https://mms.gov.ua/events/zaproshuiemo-molodizhnykh-pratsivnykiv-ta-pratsivnyts-do-uchasti-v-doslidzhenni-ikhnikh-potreb-ta-stanu-dzialnosti>), and on the Facebook pages of [the All-Ukrainian Youth Centre](#), [the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine](#), and the [Youth Worker group](#).

A total of 483 people took part in the research, 319 of whom were trained under the state programme “Youth Worker” and 164 who were not.

The key findings of the research were publicly presented at the [All-Ukrainian Forum of Youth Work “United by Light” in Kyiv on 29 November 2024](#) and at the [reporting conference of the CSO “Association of Youth Workers of Ukraine” in Kyiv on 31 January 2025](#).

## KEY FINDINGS

In accordance with the defined aim and tasks of the research, the results of the online survey and focus group discussions allow us to formulate the following key findings.

*Task 1. To identify successes and obstacles that youth workers in Ukraine may face during the war and the post-war period.*

**Changes in youth work during the war** (based on the results of focus group discussions):

- Some youth workers were forced to change their place of residence and work after 24 February 2022. For many, activities started from scratch in new places, which required adaptation and the search for new solutions.
- Participants from the occupied or de-occupied territories noted that they had to start from scratch, for example, in the Kherson and Luhansk regions, youth centres were destroyed and activities started anew after relocation or remotely, with a focus on community support and reconnecting with young people.
- In frontline communities, there is a lack of safe places to hold youth activities, and many youth centres remain closed due to the lack of bomb shelters.
- In communities further from the frontline, youth work continues with a focus on building national identity and supporting local initiatives. Many participants highlighted the development of youth councils and centres that engage young people in volunteering, community projects, and national identity building activities.
- Some employees noted the positive experience of integrating IDPs into new communities, sharing experiences with local youth and implementing joint projects.
- Young people are actively involved in volunteering, which has become one of the main forms of participation in public life. This helps to maintain connections between young people from different regions and contributes to their development.

**The main challenges of youth work in wartime** (based on the results of an online survey):

- **Lack of financial and material support.** A significant number of respondents to the survey pointed to a lack of funding for youth programmes, low salaries, and a lack of resources for project implementation. This creates obstacles to sustainable youth work, especially in times of war.
- **The need for professional development and training.** Youth workers feel the need to acquire new knowledge and skills, including project management, psychological support, and working with young people in times of war. This is due to new challenges that have emerged during the war.
- **Lack of safe spaces for working with youth.** The war has led to a decrease in the number of safe spaces for youth work, especially in the regions affected by the hostilities. This creates additional challenges for organising youth events and programmes.
- **Young people leaving the country or their displacement.** The massive displacement of young people due to the war has a negative impact on sustainable work with young people, as it reduces opportunities for engaging them in civic activities.
- **Burnout of youth workers.** Respondents report a high level of emotional stress and burnout due to the constant stresses and challenges of working in war.
- **Lack of proper recognition and support from the authorities.** Youth workers note that their activities are often underestimated by state and local authorities, which leads to insufficient support and recognition of their contribution to youth development.

**The main challenges of youth work in wartime** (based on the results of focus group discussions):

- **Dispersed youth and limited access to resources in displaced communities.** The main difficulties are related to the dispersion of young people in different regions of the country and abroad, which makes it difficult to conduct systematic work and unite young people

around common initiatives. In addition, access to grant funds is limited due to the lack of legal status of displaced communities and organisations in new communities.

- **Financial barriers for youth initiatives.** Youth councils and organisations face difficulties in financing projects, as most grant programmes are aimed at officially registered CSOs, which creates barriers for youth initiative groups. Due to the complex bureaucratic requirements associated with funding through the State Treasury, organisations face challenges in attracting grants and other forms of support.
- **Burnout of youth workers.** Youth workers, especially in occupied or frontline areas, face burnout due to constant stress and high demands. This challenge highlights the need for psychological support programmes and stress management techniques. Lack of funding is also a critical issue for these regions, especially for small towns. Youth workers have difficulty engaging young people in activities, as many young people have left the country and those who remain are tired of online work.
- **Legal restrictions and the need to update the regulatory framework.** Participants noted that legislative requirements often do not meet the needs of youth work in local communities, and model regulations do not meet the needs of young people and the needs of communities, and stressed the need to update regulations to govern the activities of youth councils and centres at the local level.

Thus, **the common challenges** identified in both stages of the research (survey and focus group discussions) are **financial difficulties** – lack of funding and limited access to resources, which complicates the implementation of youth initiatives; **burnout of youth workers**, which indicates a high level of stress and emotional burden due to the war; **displacement of young people**, which highlights the problem of young people moving abroad or to other regions, which complicates the sustainability of youth work.

The main **differences** in the results of the research of the challenges of youth work during wartime are that the responses to the online survey are more focused on the **needs for professional development of youth workers** (training, advanced training), **lack of safe spaces and insufficient recognition of youth work by the authorities**, while the participants in the focus group discussions emphasise **legislative barriers** and the need to overcome **bureaucratic difficulties**.

**Successes and opportunities for implementing youth work in wartime** (based on the results of focus group discussions):

- **Preservation of the activity of youth councils and spaces.** Despite the difficulties, youth workers note that youth councils remain active, new youth spaces are being created, and projects are being implemented even in difficult conditions.
- **Availability of successful practices.** Volunteer campaigns, the creation of volunteer centres, and internships for young people in local authorities were recognised as successful practices.
- **Youth adaptability and active role in community development.** Most participants stressed that young people adapt to change faster and are the main drivers of change in communities.
- **Mobility of youth workers, creation of new networks.** Youth workers who have moved due to the war note that their experience of volunteering and humanitarian aid is one of the most successful examples. Thanks to their relocation, they shared their knowledge with young people from other regions, facilitating their integration into new communities. They are working to create a network of youth organisations in the new communities, re-register CSOs to attract funding, and actively engage with international partners to support youth projects.
- **Inclusion of young people in decision-making and community development.** Respondents with a consistent area of operation stressed the importance of including young people in decision-making processes at the community level. They noted that supporting

youth spaces and volunteer projects in their communities helped to keep young people active and would be a valuable experience for the country's recovery in peacetime.

*Task 2. To analyse the state of activities and identify the needs of youth workers in Ukraine during the war, including training, competence development, qualification confirmation and regulatory support, as well as communication and networking.*

The analysis of the topics of in-service training mentioned by the respondents shows the following **relevant areas of advanced training for youth workers**:

- work with young people in times of war;
- development and implementation of the youth policy;
- project activities and grants;
- involvement of youth in community development;
- organisation of youth space;
- leadership and management;
- digital technologies and media;
- psychology and interpersonal relations;
- training and self-development; prospects for the development of youth work in the community.

The following trends have been identified with regard to **the use of the occupational standard “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)”**:

- **Widespread recognition but limited use:** 13% of respondents constantly use the occupational standard in their work; 29% use the standard from time to time, which indicates its partial integration into work processes.
- **A significant proportion of respondents have limited awareness or do not see the need for the standard:** 17% use the standard occasionally; 13.5% are aware of it, but do not see the possibility or need to apply it in their work; 25% of respondents do not know anything about the standard at all, which indicates a gap in the information and promotion of this document.

**Needs for certification of youth worker qualifications** (based on the results of the online survey):

- **High level of interest in certification:** 29% of respondents are waiting for the opportunity to get a certificate, and 33% believe that it would be useful to have a confirmation of qualification. In total, this is more than half of all respondents, which indicates a significant demand for the introduction of certification.
- **Low level of indifference or refusal:** 10% indicated that they did not see the need for certification; 4.5% indicated that there were no resources and conditions for obtaining qualifications, which indicates the need to create affordable certification mechanisms.
- **At the same time, some respondents were undecided:** 21% of survey participants said that they had not considered this issue, which may be due to lack of awareness or lack of urgency in this matter.

**Difficulties related to the legal framework in the field of youth work** (based on the results of focus group discussions):

- **Insufficiency or imperfection of legal acts:** 1) some legal acts, for example, the Model Regulation on Youth Councils, do not take into account current realities (e.g., participation of representatives of military administrations or other structures, which does not meet the purpose of the youth council); 2) the lack of clear norms that would determine the number of youth workers depending on the number of young people in the community increases the workload of existing workers and slows down the implementation of youth policy.
- **Need to improve the regulatory framework:** 1) the need to create more standardised, unified documents adapted to the post-war period, taking into account the specifics of

modern youth work; 2) the lack of legislative provisions that would encourage communities to create youth centres and other spaces for youth work.

- **Problems of financing and budgeting related to the activities of the authorities:** 1) difficulties in using grant or earmarked funds due to the complexity of procedures at the State Treasury. This is especially true for international projects, such as youth exchanges; 2) lack of transparent mechanisms for funding youth programmes at the local level, even if there are approved youth development programmes.
- **Low executive discipline on the part of the authorities and local self-government bodies:** Despite the existence of regulations, the lack of responsibility for their implementation leads to neglect of their requirements, especially in communities where youth work is not a priority.

*Task 3. To investigate the impact of the basic training of the state programme “Youth Worker” on the further professional activities of alumni.*

The key findings for this task are based on responses from an online survey of youth sector representatives who have completed the basic training programme. The respondents included alumni of all years of the training – from 2015 to 2024, but more than half of them studied in 2023-2024. The group of 2022 alumni is the least represented, which is quite natural, as the educational process in the programme was less intensive during this period due to the full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

For a little more than half (56.4%) of the respondents who graduated from the basic training, working with young people turned out to be the main activity (main job), with 8% of them working as “youth specialists (youth workers)”.

The survey also included those who had previously worked with young people but had now stopped doing so (2%). The reasons for this were as follows: leaving a position that involved such activities; the outbreak of full-scale military aggression; lack of support from local authorities; and the need to pay more attention to their families.

The vast majority of respondents (98.4%) said that the basic training programme had an impact on their professional activities. Most of them specified this impact as follows: the knowledge gained allowed them to increase the effectiveness (efficiency) of their work; it allowed them to expand their circle of professional contacts; the information received during the training expanded their awareness of youth work. Also, for more than a fifth of the respondents (21.3%), obtaining a certificate of participation in the basic training contributed to their further career; for 17.8%, this training was the beginning of their activities in youth work.

Less than a half (45.1%) of respondents-alumni of the basic training took the opportunity to deepen their knowledge through gaining knowledge at various specialised trainings of the Youth Worker programme. Among them, more than a third (38%) attended the Trauma-Informed Youth Work training programme.

Almost three quarters of respondents (74.3%) indicated that they need to be trained in specialised training programmes. The majority of responses regarding the desired topics for additional training were related to the issues covered by the existing specialised training programmes. The leaders of the request among the available trainings were: “Digital tools for youth work”, “Public administration tools in the field of youth policy” and “Advocacy in ATC (amalgamated territorial communities)”.

Outside of the programme coverage, respondents are mainly interested in the following topics: psychological support for young people in times of war; preservation of mental health; work with IDPs, veterans and their families; inclusive work with young people.

The vast majority (93.1%) of graduates of the basic training would recommend it to their colleagues or friends. In their opinion, the training programme will allow them to both acquire new and deepen existing knowledge necessary for work in the youth sector; gain a clear understanding of youth policy; share experiences; establish new contacts and co-operation with

like-minded people. All of this, in turn, will help to increase work efficiency and possible career growth.

For most of the participants who did not attend the basic training programme, youth work is an additional activity or one of many areas of their main activity. Therefore, the main reasons for not receiving such training are quite understandable: they have not heard anything about it (34.1%) or they could not attend the training due to their own employment (26.8%). 8.5% of respondents had previously applied for training but were not selected, and 6.7% did not know how to apply.

Slightly more than half of the respondents (59%) who did not attend the basic training programme said that they do not need any further training/additional education at the moment. And those respondents who do have such a need, in almost half of the responses, said that they would like to receive training on the issues covered in the Youth Worker programme.

*Task 4. To analyse the role of various organisations and institutions in supporting the professional activities of youth workers.*

The majority of youth workers in the focus group discussions **confirmed that they receive support from the authorities, youth centres, educational and cultural institutions**. Co-operation with local administrations and international organisations is particularly important. Successful examples include the creation of youth centres with grant support, partnerships with CSOs, and adaptation of activities through the relocation of organisations. During the focus group discussions, the respondents noted the following positive cases of support and co-operation: creation of youth spaces and hubs in communities that allow for the implementation of youth initiatives even in difficult conditions; active work with international donors and attraction of grants; implementation of educational programmes for youth workers and youth.

**The main shortcomings of co-operation** identified during the focus group discussions are: 1) limited interaction with CSOs, which often operate autonomously and do not always seek partnerships; 2) some communities face a lack of financial support because they are located in the occupied territories or are not experienced enough in writing grant proposals.

**Current problems** identified during focus group discussions: 1) a significant number of youth workers emphasise the lack of specialised staff in villages, which limits the possibilities of implementing youth policy; 2) the lack of centralised mechanisms for professional development of youth workers, which leads to an insufficient level of professionalism; 3) the departure of young people abroad and to other regions of Ukraine makes it difficult to form a stable youth community.

Among the activities organised and implemented by the project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine”, the most supportive for the survey participants were:

- **trauma-informed youth work** (participants noted that trainings and education on trauma-informed youth work were key in working with young people, especially during the war; it provided an opportunity to understand the specifics of the psychological state of young people in conflict and provided practical tools for support);
- **social cohesion and barrier-free environment** (social cohesion trainings helped participants to strengthen the sense of unity and mutual understanding in youth groups, creating an atmosphere of support where everyone has the opportunity to speak up and be understood);
- **Strengthening the competences of those who work with young people** (introduction to training, training course for trainers in the youth sector);
- **“Access to Youth Work” — a long-term programme on open youth work for newly established CSOs working with young people** (mentoring support for newly established CSOs, as well as access to methodological materials, manuals and literature have become an important resource for the establishment and further activities of organisations supporting young people);

- **training and exchange of experience** (participants noted the particular benefit of events that facilitated the exchange of experience and acquaintance with youth centres; this helped to establish new partnerships and adopt best practices to improve the quality of work);
- **Civic education and human rights** (programmes related to civic education and human rights gave participants an enhanced understanding of rights of young people, which was important in supporting active citizenship and engaging young people in socially useful activities).

*Task 5. To formulate directions for the development of youth work in Ukraine during the war and in the post-war period: introduction of non-formal education and outreach to different categories and groups of young people; involvement of new people in the youth sector, educational and project support for them; study of Ukrainian and European experience.*

According to the results of the online survey, the generalised answers to the open question “In your opinion, what are the three main steps to be taken to support the activities of youth workers in Ukraine during the war and post-war period?” indicate the following **priority areas and directions for the development of youth work**: financial support; support for professional development and confirmation of qualifications of youth workers; support from the state/authorities; psychological support; communication and information support; ensuring personal and workplace safety; creation and development of youth centres and spaces; attention to young people; methodological support; mentoring; and taking into account the needs of youth workers.

According to the results of the survey, important **aspects that need to be taken into account in the future**, in particular in the post-war period of youth work, are

- safety and protection;
- psychological support;
- flexibility and adaptation;
- inclusiveness and support for vulnerable groups;
- social activity and volunteering;
- leadership development;
- decentralisation of initiatives;
- education and employment;
- digital transformation;
- international co-operation.

**Ideas for strengthening the role of youth work in Ukraine during the war and post-war period** (based on the results of the online survey) relate to the following areas and activities:

- expansion of youth centres and mobile hubs;
- information campaigns and media advertising;
- financial, educational and psychological support;
- youth engagement in decision-making processes.

**Ideas for strengthening the understanding of the role of youth work beyond youth workers** (based on the analysis of the answers of respondents to the online survey):

- Regional forums with the participation of local authorities and businesses.
- Active social networking and promotion of youth work achievements.
- Conducting workshops, trainings and creating platforms for experience exchange.
- Training programmes for public officials and the inclusion of youth work in university majors.
- Certification of youth workers and social advertising.
- Integration of youth work into educational programmes, internships in authorities and involvement in volunteer initiatives.
- Public events and media campaigns.



- Supporting youth centres, youth work ambassadors and engaging celebrities.
- Co-operation with business and educational institutions, mentoring and internship programmes.
- Information campaigns using social networks, media and success stories.

**Ideas for strengthening the understanding of the role of youth work beyond youth workers** (*based on the results of focus group discussions*):

- Internally displaced territorial communities emphasise the importance of **co-operation with local administrations and CSOs** to promote youth work. They consider it effective **to involve young people in promotional campaigns on social media**, which allows them to reach young people from different regions. Besides, they propose joint events with IDPs and local youth to emphasise the importance of youth work for integration and interaction in communities.
- Communities far from the frontline highlight the importance of creating information campaigns at the local level through **official events** and **co-operation with local media**. They suggest **involving young people in the work of local authorities and civic engagement events**, which would help make youth work more visible and attractive to a wider range of people.
- Participants emphasise the need **to involve local authorities as much as possible in youth work**, as small and remote communities lack mechanisms for implementing youth policy; they suggest spreading mobile youth work.

Thus, the **common results** for both research methods (surveys and focus group discussions) of ideas for strengthening the role of youth work are ideas for **promoting youth work**, such as the importance of information campaigns on social media, mass media, public events and media campaigns to spread knowledge about youth work; **involving young people in decision-making** by emphasising the need for active participation of young people in state and local self-government bodies and civic activities; **expanding the network of youth centres and spaces and mobile youth work**, as well as **co-operation and partnership with the authorities**.

**The differences** between the survey results and focus group discussions are that the ideas for strengthening youth work in the survey are more focused on **educational initiatives** (training programmes, certification of youth workers, inclusion of youth work in university majors) and **co-operation with business** through mentoring programmes, internships, and partnerships with educational institutions. In contrast, focus group discussions focused more on the **needs of internally displaced communities** and integration activities for young people with IDP status and local youth. Focus group participants also drew attention to remote communities and the lack of mechanisms for implementing youth policy. They suggested **mobile youth work** as a solution to this problem, while the survey did not highlight this aspect separately.

**COMPARISON OF KEY RESULTS OF THE 2022 AND 2024 RESEARCH**  
**Challenges of youth work in times of war**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Common</b>	<b>Security of personal and professional life</b>	
	In 2022 and 2024, youth workers reported threats to their own and their families' safety. Personal insecurity and the need for protection during work remain important aspects.	
	<b>Forced displacement and lack of a stable place of residence</b>	
	In 2022, the displacement of young people within the country and abroad, as well as the displacement of youth workers, was reported. In 2024, this problem remains one of the key issues (forced departure of youth and relocation of teams).	
	<b>Burnout</b>	
	In both years, burnout became a significant challenge, in particular due to constant work in extreme conditions, lack of psychological support, and changes in professional priorities.	
	<b>Lack of professional communication and unity in the youth sector</b>	
	In 2022, a lack of communication between colleagues and a lack of unity among professionals was mentioned. In 2024, this is also a significant problem, limiting opportunities for experience exchange and consolidation.	
<b>Different</b>	Considerable attention was paid to working in new spaces, in particular due to temporary occupation or damage to infrastructure. Youth workers were also often distracted by humanitarian work, which led to a loss of focus on youth work.	Lack of funding is also highlighted, both in terms of salaries and organisational development.
	Challenges are related to the lack of methodological materials and the absence of clear guidelines for working with young people during the war, especially in the context of shelling and other threats.	New challenges have emerged: lack of understanding of the priority of youth work among leaders, limited access to safe conditions for working with young people.
<b>Particular</b>	Difficulties in ensuring safety for young people during events and work with the target audience were highlighted.	The growing importance of state programmes to support the youth sector.
	The spread of pro-Russian narratives in the public sector has become a particular problem.	The issue of insufficient recognition of youth work by the state is raised.

**Areas of support for youth workers  
and development of youth work**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Common</b>	<b>Financial and organisational support</b> The results of the surveys of both years show the need for financial support for youth workers and organisations. In 2022, the focus was on salaries, and in 2024, on funding for institutional activities.	
	<b>Communication support and consolidation of the professional community</b> In 2022, there were proposals to create a single communication channel to unite employees, and in 2024, this need becomes more urgent. Sharing experiences and joining efforts of youth workers both in Ukraine and abroad remain important.	
	<b>Psychological support and prevention of professional burnout</b> There was a demand for psychological support, support groups and burnout prevention in 2022, and it remained important in 2024.	
<b>Different</b>	The need for specific instructions on how to conduct youth work in the event of displacement and the provision of humanitarian support was emphasised.	State support programmes for youth workers were among the top priorities requested.
	It was proposed to create a platform for co-ordinating the work of volunteers and sharing experiences during the war.	There is a growing demand for administrative support and support for organisations that have been forced to move to other territories.
<b>Particular</b>	More attention is paid to humanitarian support and adaptation to work in a rapidly changing environment.	There is a growing demand for educational events and consultations to develop the professional competences of youth workers and to obtain grants.

A comparative analysis of the results of youth work research shows that the situation and priorities have changed somewhat from 2022 to 2024, but the main problems – security, financial instability, burnout and the need for consolidation – remain paramount. In 2024, the role of state support and the need to develop professional competencies increased, while in 2022, youth workers focused more on finding safe spaces and adapting to emergency work conditions.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### General information about the respondents

Fig. 1. Breakdown of respondents by gender (number), N = 483

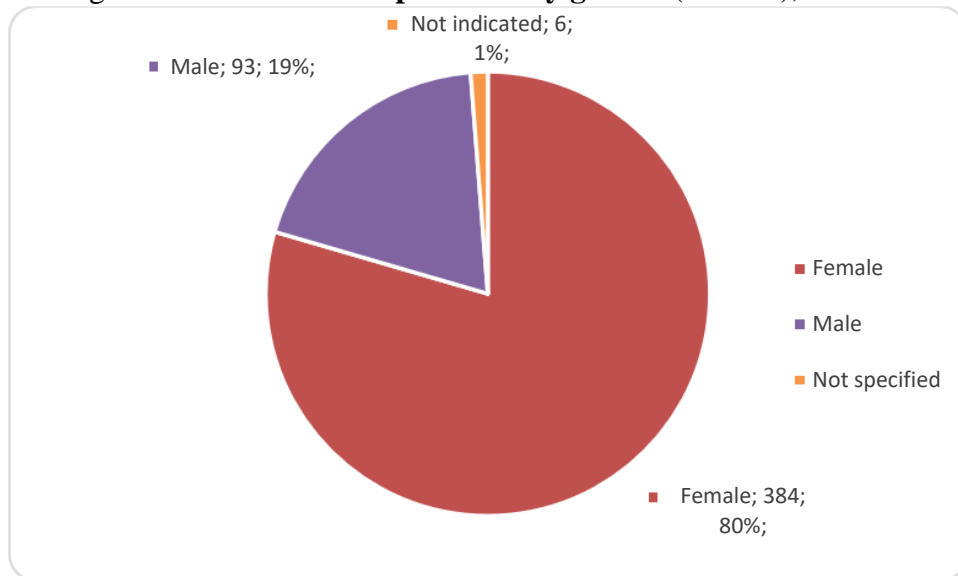
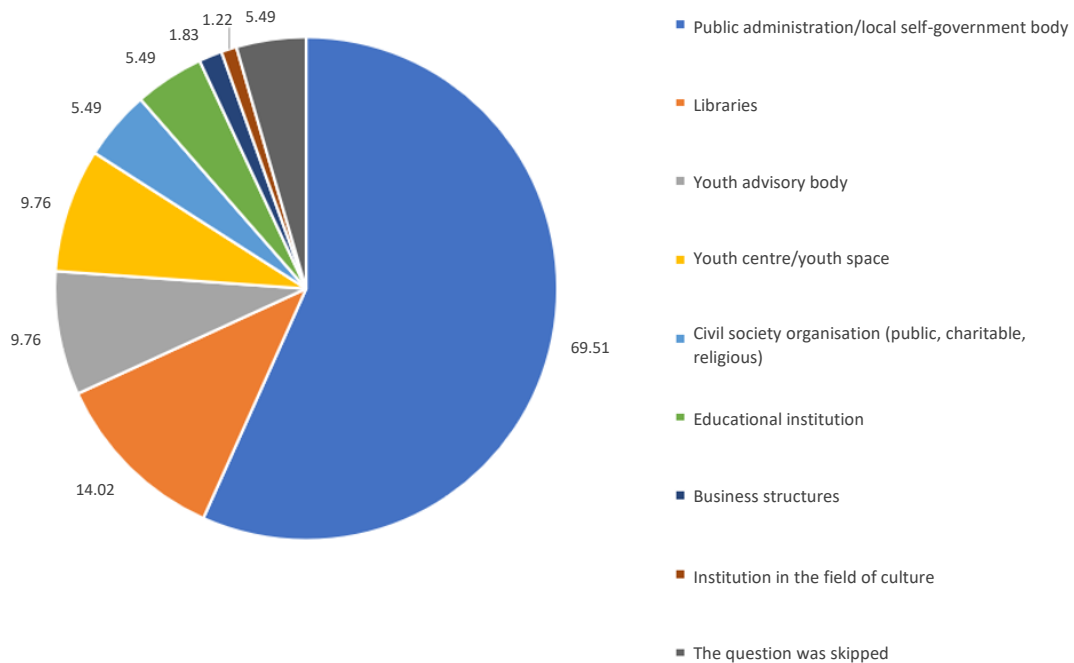


Fig. 2. Breakdown of respondents depending on the representation of organisations, institutions, establishments (%)\* (those who did not receive basic training under the state programme “Youth Worker”), N = 164



\* Multiple answers are possible

**Fig. 3. Breakdown of respondents by organisation, in which they work at their main place of work (%)**  
(those who received basic training under the state programme “Youth Worker”),  
N = 319

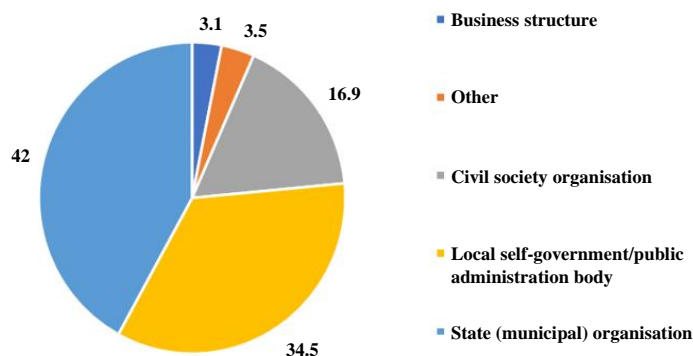


Table 3

**Breakdown of respondents by experience of working with young people**  
(those who did not receive basic training under the state programme “Youth Worker”),  
N = 164

From 1 to 3 years	53
Up to 1 year	46
More than 10 years	38
From 4 to 10 years	27

Table 4

**Breakdown of answers to the questionnaire  
“Youth work for you is”**

(those who did not receive basic training under the state programme “Youth Worker”),  
N = 164

Additional activity	92
Main activity	48
Other*	13
The question was skipped	11

\*Answer options for “Other”: “Both the main activity (as I constantly work with young people in the field of education) and an additional one in terms of training activities with this category of people”; “I am responsible for the state family policy, policy on combating human trafficking, gender equality, combating violence, state sports policy, health improvement and youth policy”; “Sometimes I come across this activity”; “It is almost my life”; “Not a specialised area”; “I do not do youth work, only indirectly”; “I did not work with it”; “This is my work”; “Combination, as TC is under occupation and the staff of the Internal Audit Service does not allow hiring a separate employee to work with youth”; “One of the areas of my work”; “One of the main areas in the community”; “Part of the work in general” [Quotes from the online survey].

Fig. 4. Breakdown of answers to the question “Do you currently work with young people?” (those who received basic training under the state programme “Youth Worker”), N = 319

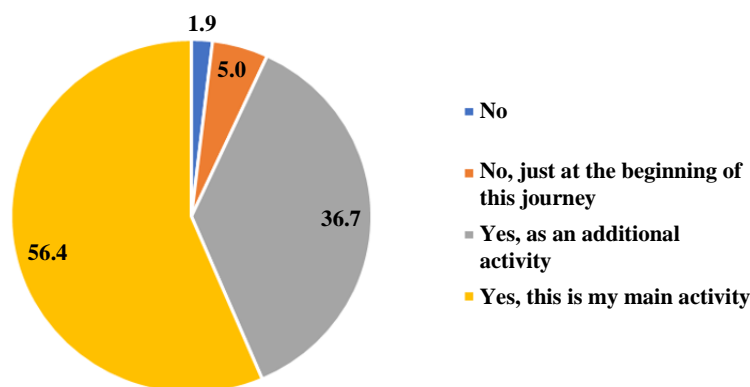


Table 5

**Breakdown of respondents depending on education in the field of youth work/youth policy** (those who did not receive basic training under the state programme “Youth Worker”)\*

Higher or vocational education in areas related to youth work and youth policy (e.g. pedagogy, social work, psychology, management, etc.)	69
Non-formal education: Participation in trainings, educational projects, courses in specific areas of youth work and youth policy	56
Self-education	52
Other**	12
Higher or professional education in the field of youth work and youth policy	7
The question was skipped	11

\* Multiple answers are possible

\*\* Answer options for “Other”: “hard to answer”; “higher economic education”; “higher education”; “no education in youth work/youth policy”; “cultural worker”; “law” [Quotes from the online survey].

Table 6

**Breakdown of respondents depending on the change of the territory where the organisation mainly carried out youth work due to military operations**

(those who did not receive basic training under the state programme “Youth Worker”),  
N = 164

Territory changed after 2014	9
Territory changed twice (after 2014 and 2022)	1
Territory changed after 2022	42
Territory has not changed	102
Occupied community	1
Other	2
The question was skipped	7

*“Our community is under occupation for a year and a half. Out of 14 schools, only one hub school remains open, and not a single cultural institution. Our culture and libraries are not working”; “Culture and youth centres in the occupied territories are not functioning, which limits opportunities for young people” [Quotes from the focus group discussion].*

Table 7

**Breakdown of respondents depending on the territory where the organisation mainly carries out youth work\***

(those who did not receive basic training under the state programme “Youth Worker”)

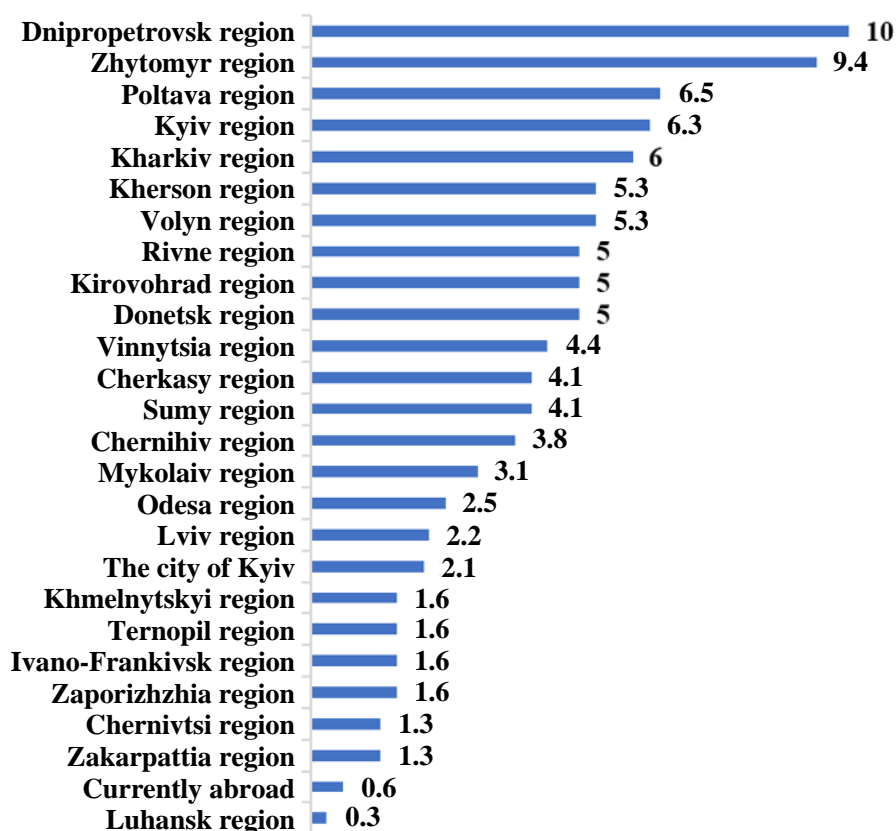
	Quantity	%
Vinnitsia region	18	10.98
Volyn region	18	10.98
Dnipropetrovsk region	57	34.76
Donetsk region	17	10.37
Zhytomyr region	38	23.17
Zakarpattia region	8	4.88
Zaporizhzhia region	5	3.05
Ivano-Frankivsk region	12	7.32
Kyiv region	24	14.63
Kirovohrad region	17	10.37
Luhansk region	2	1.22
Lviv region	12	7.32
Mykolaiv region	36	21.95
Odesa region	10	6.10
Poltava region	29	17.68
Rivne region	17	10.37
Sumy region	21	12.80
Ternopil region	6	3.66
Kharkiv region	58	35.37
Kherson region	35	21.34
Khmelnitskyi region	7	4.27
Cherkasy region	30	18.29
Chernivtsi region	5	3.05
Chernihiv region	16	9.76
The city of Kyiv	13	7.93
Entire Ukraine	6	3.66

Abroad	1	0.61
Other (occupied community, remotely, online)	9	5.49
The question was skipped	4	2.44

\* Multiple answers are possible

The respondents who completed the basic training of the Youth Worker programme represent almost all regions of Ukraine, but most of them are from the Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr, Poltava, Kyiv, and Kharkiv Regions (Fig. 5). Two respondents are also currently living abroad.

Fig. 5. **Region of residence of the respondents** (those who studied under the basic training programme of the state programme “Youth Worker”),  
%, N = 319



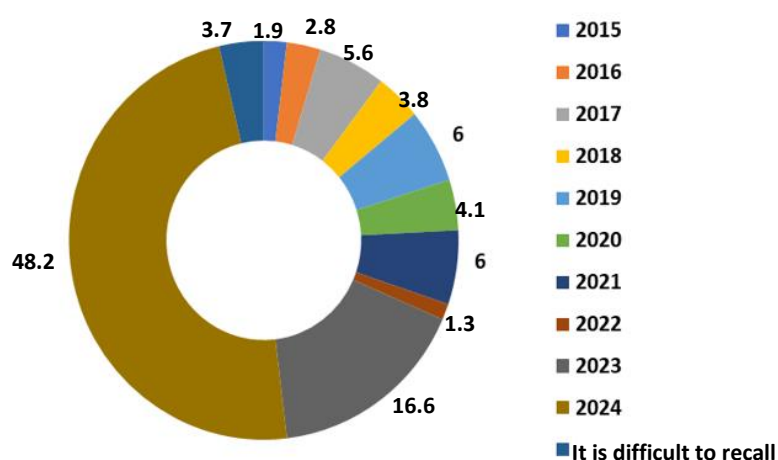


## State Programme “Youth Worker”

One of the target audiences of the online survey was *graduates of the basic training of the state programme “Youth Worker”*, who accounted for two-thirds of all respondents (66%, 319 people).

Graduates of the basic training of all years — from 2015 to 2024 — took part in the survey, but more than half of them (64.8%) studied in the last two years (48.2% in 2024, 16.6% in 2023). (Fig. 6). The small proportion (1.3%) of respondents who studied in 2022 is quite natural, as the full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine began in that year and the educational process in the programme was less intensive. There are also respondents who could not recall the year of their training because it was a long time ago (3.7%).

**Fig. 6. Year of study under the basic training programme of the state programme “Youth Worker”, %, N = 319**



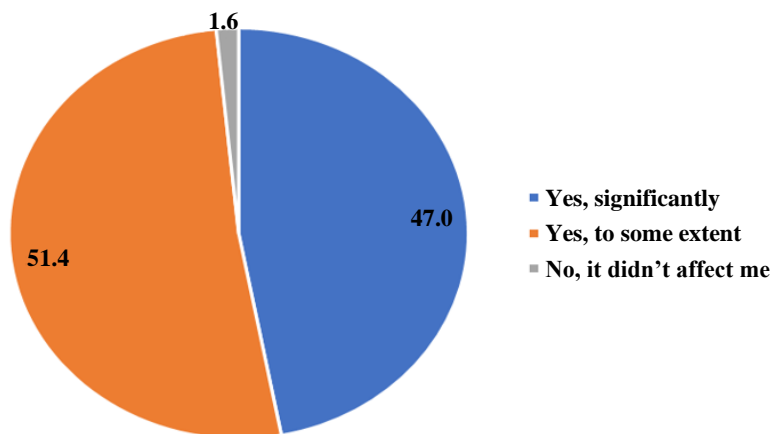
For more than a half (56.4%) of the graduates of the basic training, work with youth is their main activity (main job), for a little more than a third of the respondents (36.7%) it is an additional activity (Fig. 4). Every twentieth respondent (5%) indicated that they are just starting their path in this area, and only a few (1.9%) no longer work with young people, although they had such experience in the past.

Such a small number of respondents who no longer work with young people may be due to the fact that over time, some graduates for one reason or another change their occupation to one that is not related to the youth sector and, accordingly, stop following the processes in it, or their contact details have changed since then, which prevented them from receiving an invitation to our survey. The respondents of this group named the following as the main reasons for stopping their work with youth: leaving a position that involved such activities; the outbreak of full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine; lack of support from local authorities; and the need to pay more attention to their families. This is illustrated by the following answers: “*My work with young people ended in 2021. The lack of support for my work from the village council authorities, the need to feed my family, and quarantine were the main factors that made me leave this volunteer work. In addition, educational institutions are now given maximum opportunities to do all this during working hours and for a salary. But where are these teachers?*” [Quote from the online survey].

Taking into account the type of activity of the respondents, it is quite natural that the vast majority of them (86.2%) consider themselves youth workers. Only one in nine (11.6%) hesitated to answer.

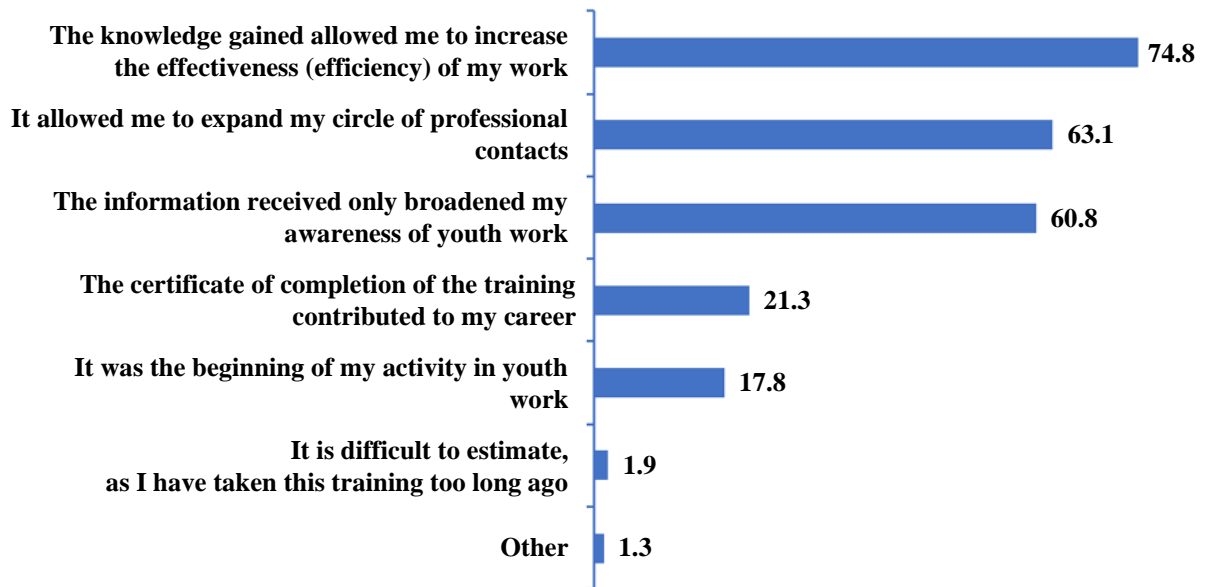
The vast majority of respondents said that the basic training programme (affected) their professional activities. At the same time, for 47% of respondents it was significant, and for 51.4% — to some extent (Fig. 7).

**Fig. 7. Breakdown of answers of respondents to the question “In your opinion, did the training under the Basic Training Programme of the state programme “Youth Worker” affect your professional activity?”,**  
%, N = 319



They specified this impact of the training mainly as the fact that the knowledge gained allowed them to increase the effectiveness (efficiency) of their work (74.8%); it allowed them to expand their circle of professional contacts (63.1%); the information received during the training expanded their awareness of youth work (60.8%)(Fig. 8). Also, one in five respondents noted that obtaining a certificate of participation in the basic training helped them in their future career. And almost one in six (17.8%) of those who felt the impact of this training said that it was the beginning of their activities in youth work. Among other influential factors, the respondents noted the following: “*It shaped my personal value and sustainability in youth work*”, “*It motivated me to stay in the civil service*” [Quotes from the online survey].

**Fig. 8. Impact of study under the basic training programme of the state programme “Youth Worker”\*, %, N = 314**

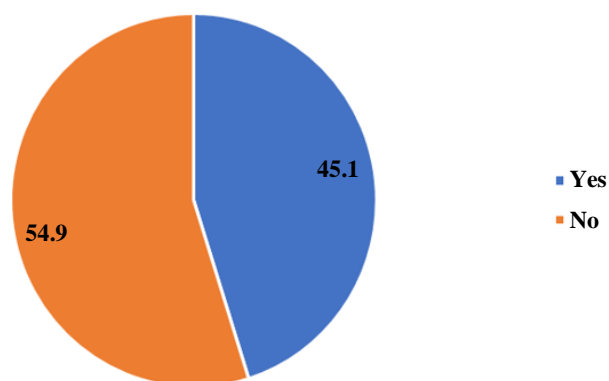


\* Multiple answers are possible

The main reasons why a few respondents (1.6%) did not feel that the training had any impact on their professional activities were that they were already sufficiently aware of these issues or expected to focus more on the practical component or to receive information only on certain aspects of work with children.

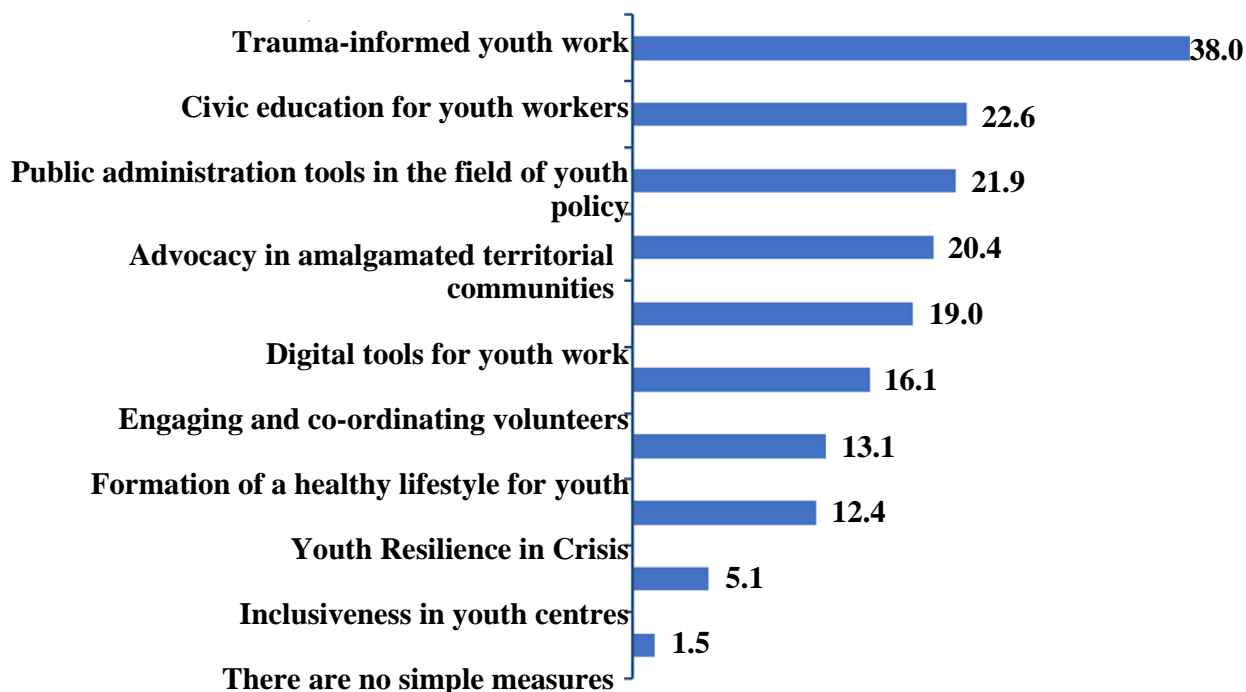
The state programme “Youth Worker”, in addition to the mandatory basic training programme, provides for further deepening of knowledge during specialised training. Slightly less than half of the respondents (45.1%) who participated in the basic training also attended such specialised training programmes (Fig. 9).

**Fig. 9. Participation in specialised trainings under the state programme “Youth worker”, %, N = 319**



More than one third of respondents (38%) who participated in specialised trainings were trained under the programme of specialised training “Trauma-informed youth work” (Fig. 10).

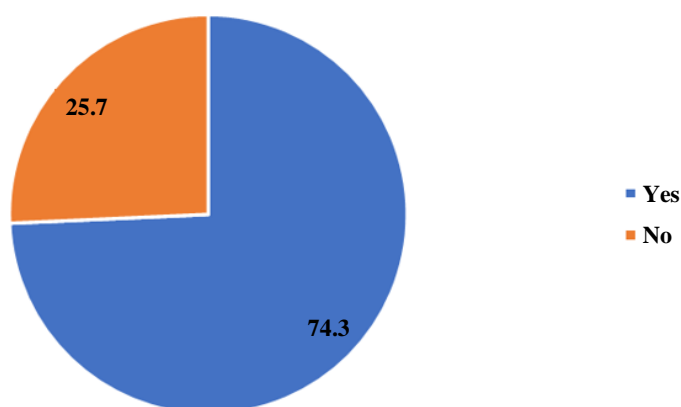
Fig. 10. Topics of training in specialised trainings under the state programme “Youth Worker”, %, N = 137



\* Multiple answers are possible

At the same time, the majority (74.3%) of graduates of basic trainings still need to be trained in specialised training programmes (Fig. 11).

Fig. 11. The need for specialised training programmes, %, N = 319



In the responses of those respondents who need training under specialised training programmes, the most frequently mentioned topics of the available training programmes are: “Digital tools for youth work”, “Public administration tools in the field of youth policy” and “Advocacy in ATC” (Table 8).

Table 8

**Breakdown of respondents’ answers about the need for training on the topics of the available trainings of the programme**

No.	Topics of available specialised trainings	% of all responses from respondents (N = 336)
1	Digital tools for youth work	11.6
2	Public administration tools in the field of youth policy	10.0
3	Advocacy in ATCs	8.9
4	Youth Resilience in Crisis	7.1
5	Formation of healthy lifestyles of young people	6.0
6	Engaging and co-ordinating volunteers	5.7
7	Trauma informed youth work	4.2
8	Civic education for youth workers	3.6
9	There are no simple measures	2.7

\* Multiple answers are possible

Among other topics of specialised trainings that would be interesting for respondents, the most frequently mentioned were “All topics related to youth work, youth policy” (6.8%), “Mental health, psychological support...” (6.5%) (Table 9).

Table 9

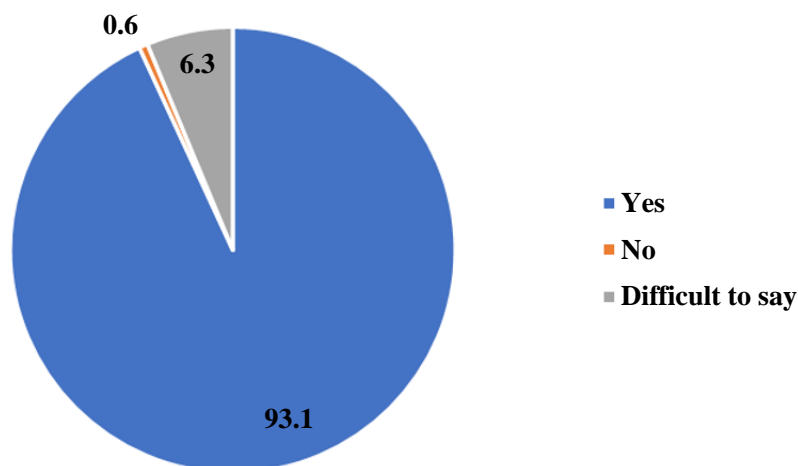
**Breakdown of respondents’ answers about the need for training on the topics that are not part of the programme**

No.	Desired topics of specialised trainings	% of all responses from respondents (N = 336)
1	Everything that is available now, as well as all topics related to the development of youth work and youth policy	6.8
2	Psychological support for young people in times of war; preservation of mental health; work with IDPs, veterans and their families; inclusive work with young people	6.5
3	Inclusiveness, in particular in youth centres	5.3
4	Modern, new, interesting forms and methods of working with young people	4.2
5	Project activities, grant writing, fundraising	3.6
6	Engagement and activation of youth	3.0
7	Career guidance, career counselling	3.0
8	Youth councils: creation, activities	1.5
9	Activity of public organisations	1.5
10	Youth leadership	1.2
11	Sex education	1.2
12	Facilitation and mentoring	0.9
13	Overcoming conflicts, combating bullying	0.9
14	Establishment and operation of youth centres	0.6

It is noteworthy that The vast majority (93.1%) of graduates of the basic training would recommend it to their colleagues or friends. Only 6.3% of them could not decide on the answer to

this question (Fig. 12). Only two respondents would not recommend undergoing such training, and they did not provide any reasoning for their answer.

Fig. 12. Willingness to recommend to acquaintances/colleagues the basic training programme of the state programme “Youth Worker”,  
%, N = 319



The following key phrases were used by the respondents in their recommendations for the basic training programme: “gaining new knowledge/deepening knowledge”, “gives a clear understanding of youth policy”, “new acquaintances/establishing co-operation”, “exchange of experience”, “it is the beginning of work with young people”, “it is the basis/base of work with young people”, “will increase the effectiveness of your activities”, “it is professional development after completion of the courses”, “they teach really useful things” [Quotes from the online survey].

Here are some of these recommendations:

### KNOWLEDGE/UNDERSTANDING

[Quotes from the online survey]

- ✓ “The best opportunity to gain fundamental knowledge about youth work.”
- ✓ “A cool programme that gives new knowledge and skills that work for the result.”
- ✓ “The opportunity to gain basic knowledge to understand the specifics of youth work, it is useful for volunteers of youth centres, teachers, social workers and community professionals.”
- ✓ “This is a great opportunity for co-working, which allows you to see that you are not alone in your desire to develop and grow. Here you can meaningfully understand for yourself what youth policy and youth work are, understand how to advocate and expand the influence of young people on the ground. Here I saw that local officials can be contacted, and I agreed on collaboration with them in future events.”
- ✓ “The training opens up the possibility of improving work with young people.”
- ✓ “The basic training “Youth Worker” is primarily an opportunity for a person who is starting to work with young people to understand the very essence and basics of youth work. This training provides motivation to create new youth projects and activities.”
- ✓ “This is one of the important steps to understanding the importance of youth influence on decision-making at the local level, improving the living conditions of young people in the community.”

- ✓ *“To understand who a youth worker is, everyone should take a training. The training contains all the basic concepts, legislative norms and has very cool speakers who share their valuable experience.”*
- ✓ *“There is the best non-formal education programme in the world for people working with young people (youth workers). You should get to know this programme better. And then you will have a much broader vision of what youth work is, how to implement it properly and what is needed for the quality formation of youth policy in the community, in the region, in Ukraine.”*
- ✓ *“This is one of the most fundamentally necessary trainings that will help to build youth work on the basis of normative documents and current approaches to youth work.”*

## **NETWORKING/EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE**

[Quotes from the online survey]

- ✓ *“This training will provide an opportunity not only to expand my own knowledge of youth work, but also to meet specialists in this field from other communities and learn from their experience.”*
- ✓ *“An interesting event where you can find new acquaintances, like-minded people, opportunities and knowledge.”*
- ✓ *“The basic training is a place where your mistakes are not important, it is important how you work with young people. Both during the training and during the breaks, participants share their own experiences and think about how they might use it. And it is precisely because you can gain a lot of experience in three days that I want to recommend this training to my friends and acquaintances.”*
- ✓ *“The basic training can be a great opportunity to delve deeper into youth work and establish co-operation across the country.”*
- ✓ *“It’s a great opportunity to find like-minded people and expand your circle of professional acquaintances.”*

## **FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

[Quotes from the online survey]

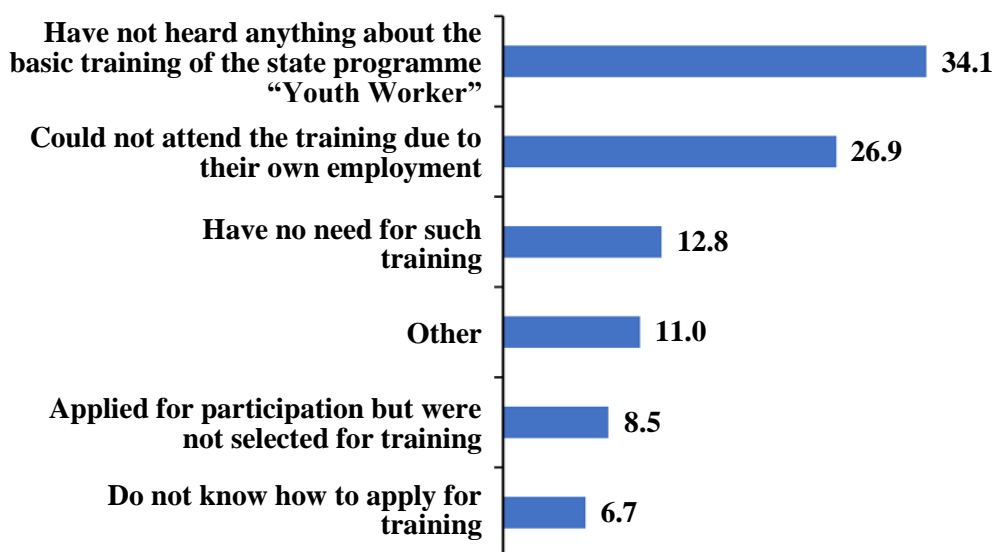
- ✓ *“It’s a good opportunity for self-realization.”*
- ✓ *“If a person sees themselves in youth work, if they are interested, then the Youth Worker programme is the place to start. It makes it easier to continue working with young people. And, of course, it means that you become a certified worker from the Ministry of Youth and Sports.”*
- ✓ *“This is a great opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in youth work, to find new acquaintances and partnerships, to get a state certificate that can be used to get a job even without a degree.”*
- ✓ *“I would share my experience, tell you about different tools and how they can affect your future career.”*
- ✓ *“This is important for those who have just started and want to work with young people and acquire the status of a youth worker. At the training, you will learn the “base” with which you can confidently walk the steps of youth work!”*
- ✓ *“The training improves all personal competences for working with young people and gives an impetus for further development.”*
- ✓ *“The basic training “Youth Worker” was the beginning of my professional activity. During this training, I learnt a lot of new useful information and got acquainted with new definitions that I did not know about before. Moreover, this training introduced me to people who have been working in this field for a long time, so I have established connections and now often meet my colleagues at other events. The certificate is also a big plus for participating in other events and trainings, as it proves my professional skills.”*
- ✓ *“‘Youth Worker’ has changed my life, my work and my place of residence.”*

- ✓ *“I am grateful to the Youth Worker programme and all the trainers for the impetus for my big changes. I definitely recommend everyone to take the basic training “Youth Worker” and rethink their own idea and understanding of what youth policy is.”*
- ✓ *“This is a very cool programme, and I personally changed my place of work and occupation thanks to this programme, and I have no regrets. It was a step forward.”*

Among those who took part in the online survey, **one third of the respondents** (34%, 164 people) **had not been trained under the basic training programme**. The reasons they gave most often were they have not heard anything about it (34.1%) or they could not attend the training due to their own employment (26.8%) (Fig. 13). The latter is quite understandable, since for the majority of respondents (61.4%) who did not attend the basic training programme, youth work is an additional activity and for 6% it is one of many areas of their main activity. Among those respondents who indicated that they had not heard about the possibility of studying under the Youth Worker programme, the majority had little experience in the youth sector (up to three years). There are also respondents who had previously applied for the programme but were not selected (8.5%). About 6.7% of those who did not attend the basic training programme do not know how to apply for this training. One in eight (12.8%) of those who did not attend the basic training indicated that there was no need for it. These are mainly respondents with significant experience in the youth sector.

Fig. 13. **Reasons for not attending the basic training programme of the state programme “Youth Worker”**

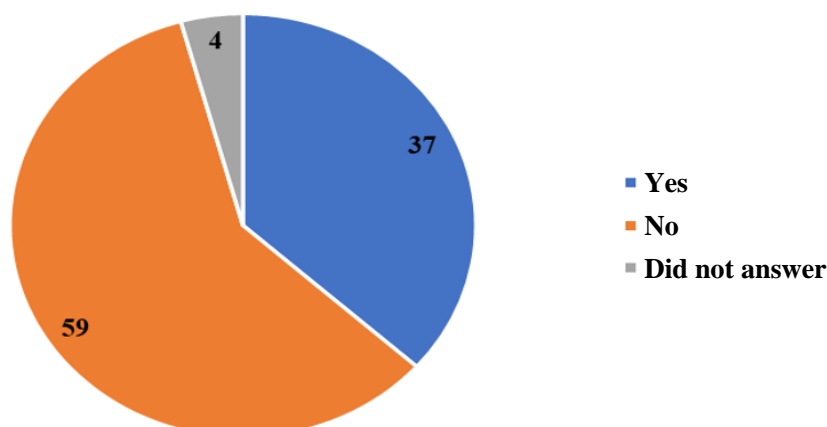
(those who did not undergo basic training), %, N = 164



At the same time, more than a third (37%) of these respondents still need advanced training/additional education (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14. **Need for advanced/additional training**  
(those who did not undergo basic training), %, N = 164



It is noteworthy that among the desired topics for this additional training, almost half of the responses mentioned issues that are covered in the “Youth Worker” programme (Table 10). The next most important block of training needs, similar to those of graduates of the basic training, is related to working with young people during the war, communication with defenders, etc.

Table 10  
**Breakdown of answers of respondents who did not receive basic training on topics for additional training\***

No.	Desired topics for additional training	Number of answers
1	General issues of youth policy and youth work, including basic training of the Youth Worker programme	21
2	Youth development during the war; culture of communication with defenders; work with young people in temporarily occupied communities on the territory controlled by Ukraine	6
3	Writing and implementing projects and grants	3
4	Establishment of youth councils or areas of their activity in the community	2
5	Organisation of youth space	2
6	Management and HR policy	2
7	Establishment of youth organisations	2
8	Psychology of relationships in the youth environment	1
9	SMM	1
10	Pedagogy	1
11	Foreign language	1
12	Interesting activities, forms of work	1

\*The colour indicates the position that is the subject of the trainings of the Youth Worker programme

## The Council of Europe Project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine”

Table 11

### Breakdown of respondents depending on their participation in the activities of the Council of Europe project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine”

Participated	47
Did not participate	463

Table 12

### Breakdown of answers to the question “If yes, please rate on a five-point scale how well the project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine” meets the needs of youth workers? (including during the war)”

5	34
4	11
3	1
2	0
1	1
The question was skipped	436

*The average score is 4.64.*

#### **Project activities that supported professional work with young people during the war:**

- **Trauma-informed youth work** (respondents noted that trainings and education on trauma-informed youth work were key in working with young people, especially during the war; it provided an opportunity to understand the specifics of the psychological state of young people in conflict and provided practical tools for support);

*“Pretty much all of them, especially the trauma-informed approach”, “‘Trauma-informed youth work’ has been very helpful in working with young people in times of war”* [Quotes from the online survey].

- **Social cohesion and barrier-free environment** (social cohesion trainings helped participants to strengthen the sense of unity and mutual understanding in youth groups, creating an atmosphere of support where everyone has the opportunity to speak up and be understood).

*“The social cohesion training gave me valuable tools to build trust and understanding among young people in our youth centre. Thanks to the knowledge I gained, I was able to create an environment where everyone feels supported and has the opportunity to express their opinions. This has helped to strengthen the team spirit among the participants of our activities and contributed to better understanding between different youth groups”* [Quote from online survey].

- **Strengthening the competences of those who work with young people** (introduction to training, training course for trainers in the youth sector);
- **“Open Youth Work” – a long-term programme on open youth work for newly established CSOs working with young people** (mentoring support for newly established CSOs, as well as access to methodological materials, manuals and literature have become an important resource for the establishment and further activities of organisations supporting young people).

*“Mentoring support for our newly established CSO, training of trainers, methodological base (manuals, additional literature)”* [Quote from the online survey].

- **Training and exchange of experience** (participants noted the particular benefit of events that facilitated the exchange of experience and acquaintance with youth centres; this helped to establish new partnerships and adopt best practices to improve the quality of work).

“Getting acquainted with youth centres with the quality label was very useful for further co-operation”; “International experience in Budapest in supporting mental health” [Quotes from the online survey].

- **Civic education and human rights** (programmes related to civic education and human rights gave participants an enhanced understanding of rights of young people, which was important in supporting active citizenship and engaging young people in socially useful activities).

“Compass, Human Rights for Youth” [Quote from the online survey].

### Occupational standard “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)” and regulations on youth work and youth policy

Table 13

<b>Breakdown of answers to the question “Do you use the occupational standard “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)” and methodological recommendations for its implementation?”</b>	
Yes, I use them all the time	63
Yes, I use them from time to time	140
I use them occasionally	82
I know these materials, but I do not see any opportunities/need to use them in my work	65
I do not know anything about these materials	121
The question was skipped	12

Table 14

<b>Breakdown of answers to the question “Do you have a need to obtain a certificate of awarding/confirming the professional qualification “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)”?”</b>	
Yes, I have such a need, I am waiting for such an opportunity	140
Rather yes, it would be good to have confirmation of qualification	158
It is difficult to say, I have not considered this issue	103
Rather no, the qualification is needed, but there are no resources and conditions for this	22
No, I do not see such a need	49
The question was skipped	11

## State of activity and needs of youth workers in Ukraine during the war and post-war period

Table 15

### Breakdown of answers to the question “In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges for youth workers during the war in Ukraine? (please select three options)”\*

Young people leaving abroad or being forced to move to other regions	265
Lack of or insufficient salaries	208
Lack of or insufficient space for youth work	173
Lack of or insufficient safe conditions for working with young people	157
Constant changes in the situation and working conditions due to the war	137
Emotional burnout	129
Lack of or shortage of professionals in the youth sector	115
Lack of understanding of the priority of youth work by decision-makers	111
Lack of or insufficient recognition of youth work	104
Lack of psychological support	91
Remote work	69
Lack of or insufficient methodological support	54
Lack of understanding of the difficulties of youth work during the war	51
Lack of unity in the professional community	50
Personal safety and safety of my family	41
Lack of insufficient professional communication	40
Lack of home	39
Displacement of team members	39
Limited mobility outside the country	23
Restrictions in the work of educational institutions	20
Limited access to the internet and networks	7
The question was skipped	9

\* In descending order of the number of times being opted for

Quotes from the focus group discussion:

*“In my opinion, today, there is a lack of people who would like to implement this area of work. I believe that we need to raise the prestige of youth work to a higher level.”*

*“There should be a centralised requirement... every two years every youth worker should take some kind of training, some courses.”*

*“It is necessary to undergo retraining because new challenges require new knowledge.”*

*“We are very afraid that many young people have left and will not return home... We need to do everything we can to bring them back to develop the community.”*

*“In youth policy, a lot of people come for a short period of time. There are few people who stay for a longer period, because this work is not easy and requires their own desire, their own initiative.”*

*“The exhaustion is very high. People burn out quickly due to stress and working conditions.”*

Table 16

**Breakdown of answers to the question “Please indicate which type of support is most relevant for you personally (please select three options)”\***

State programmes to support youth workers during the war	192
Funding programmes for youth initiatives	159
Communication support from the authorities	152
Exchange of experience with other organisations/youth workers (both in Ukraine and abroad)	145
Financial support for the institutional activities of the organisation and team support	116
Educational support/development of professional competences	108
Information support on current opportunities in the youth sector	107
Financial support for programme activities (non-humanitarian aid)	101
Monitoring of needs in the youth sector	92
Implementation of measures to prevent and overcome professional burnout of youth workers	84
Mentoring and/or supervisory support for youth workers	83
Ensuring communication between youth workers in Ukraine and abroad	82
Conducting events on the specifics of youth work during war and work with young people affected by war	82
Consolidation of youth workers and their communication support in the professional community	76
Psychological support/psychological support groups	69
Consultations on receiving and processing financial aid and charitable contributions	50
Financial support for the implementation of humanitarian aid	50
Networking and association of youth workers	49
Administrative support	48
Consultations on the organisation of humanitarian aid programmes	41
Ensuring personal and family safety	28
Supporting the organisation’s life after moving to another territory	26
Other: <i>Introduction of a separate position for the relevant employee</i>	1
The question was skipped	13

\* In descending order of the number of times being opted for

Table 17

**Generalised answers to the open question “In your opinion, what are the three main steps to be taken to support the activities of youth workers in Ukraine during the war and post-war period?”\***

Sphere/area of activity	Quantity	Quotes from the online survey
Financial support	29	<p><i>“Providing funding for the implementation of programmes and projects aimed at helping young people during the war and post-war period. This may include grants for the implementation of social initiatives, the purchase of necessary materials and resources for working with young people, and the provision of safe conditions for events.”</i></p> <p><i>“Financial and institutional support: It is important to provide youth organisations with stable funding and access to grants to implement projects that support young people at critical times.”</i></p> <p><i>“Provide organisational and financial support for youth initiatives”.</i></p>

		<p><i>“Financial and resource support for youth initiatives”.</i></p> <p><i>“Attracting humanitarian aid”.</i></p> <p><i>“Introduce grants and state financial support for youth workers”.</i></p> <p><i>“After the war, it is important to continue to provide resources for the restoration and development of youth programmes that will help adapt young people to new socio-economic realities.”</i></p> <p><i>“Financial and material support for youth programmes and initiatives.”</i></p> <p><i>“Financial and logistical support. Youth centres and organisations need funding to implement projects aimed at supporting young people during the war and in the recovery process. This also includes technical assistance for organising events and programmes in difficult conditions.”</i></p> <p><i>“Economic stability.”</i></p> <p><i>“Remuneration”; “formation of higher salary”; “decent salary”; “to have competitive salary for youth workers.”</i></p> <p><i>“To have space for the implementation of ideas and resources for their implementation.”</i></p>
<p>Support for professional development and confirmation of qualifications of youth workers</p>	<p>20</p>	<p><i>“Organisation of trainings, seminars and workshops for youth workers aimed at developing new skills that can be useful in the context of war and recovery, including crisis management, project management, communication with young people and working under stress. Such training will increase the efficiency of their work and allow them to adapt to changes in society.”</i></p> <p><i>“Establishment of exchange programmes for youth workers.”</i></p> <p><i>“Strengthen the effectiveness of the state programme “Youth Worker” by identifying its strengths and weaknesses.”</i></p> <p><i>“Training of youth workers.”</i></p> <p><i>“Support for professional development and in-service training.”</i></p> <p><i>Youth workers need to be provided with access to trainings, webinars and non-formal education to enable them to adapt to the new challenges of war and the post-war period. This includes training in crisis management, psychological support for young people, and project management for resource mobilisation.”</i></p> <p><i>“Training of employees during their work for the benefit of youth policy.”</i></p> <p><i>“Educational programmes and professional development. War requires new skills and approaches to working with young people, in particular in the areas of social integration, conflict resolution, and psychosocial support. Investing in training programmes, online courses and professional development will ensure that youth workers are ready to adapt to the challenges and implement innovative approaches.”</i></p> <p><i>“Teaching youth workers how to raise funds for their initiatives.”</i></p> <p><i>“Remote exchange of experience.”</i></p> <p><i>“Introduction of new specialised training courses for education.”</i></p> <p><i>“Professional training.”</i></p> <p><i>“Studying Ukrainian and European experience.”</i></p> <p><i>“Online and offline training in crisis management.”</i></p> <p><i>“Exchange of experience.”</i></p>

Support from the state/authorities	15	<p><i>“Extending the state programme to youth workers is essential, as in reality this programme applies only to certain categories of people: police, doctors, military, teachers.”</i></p> <p><i>“Interest and support of local executive authorities and local self-government bodies.”</i></p> <p><i>“Government and youth.”</i></p> <p><i>“Promotion of youth work among local authorities.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assistance from the authorities in establishing a youth council.”</i></p> <p><i>“Social guarantees of the state.”</i></p> <p><i>“Introduce a staff unit.”</i></p> <p><i>“Monitoring of needs.”</i></p> <p><i>“Audit of the activities of youth workers based on regular reporting (free form).”</i></p> <p><i>“Comfortable working conditions and regulatory framework.”</i></p> <p><i>“Strategic planning.”</i></p> <p><i>“Introduce youth workers to government programmes that are relevant in times of war.”</i></p>
Psychological support	15	<p><i>“Psychological support and resources for self-preservation. Providing youth workers with access to psychological counselling, stress and burnout management training. This will help them cope with the emotional stress caused by the war and maintain their own mental health. It is important to create safe spaces for sharing experiences and feelings, where youth workers can receive emotional support.”</i></p> <p><i>“Providing psychological support and training in crisis skills.”</i></p> <p><i>“Psychological support and resilience development. Youth workers play an important role in maintaining the morale of young people in times of war. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that they have access to psychological support and resources to develop personal resilience. This could include training in emotional support, stress management and crisis communication, which will allow them to help young people more effectively.”</i></p> <p><i>“Psychological and emotional support. Youth workers often work with children and adolescents who have gone through traumatic experiences. Providing resources for professional psychological assistance, training on psycho-emotional resilience, and creating safe spaces for their own psychological rehabilitation are essential to support their emotional health.”</i></p> <p><i>“Psychosocial support. It is important to organise mental health support programmes for youth workers so that they can cope with stress and emotional burden. This could include trainings, seminars and support groups.”</i></p> <p><i>“Promote psychological support for youth workers.”</i></p> <p><i>“Hold retreats for psycho-emotional recovery more often.”</i></p> <p><i>“To prevent burnout, because, unfortunately, a large number of youth workers, in my opinion, work almost without days off and overtime due to the challenges associated with the war and local situations in communities.”</i></p> <p><i>“Help with psychological support for youth workers. Unfortunately, in my opinion, very little attention is paid to this aspect. It is youth workers who very often create the conditions and find opportunities</i></p>

		<p><i>for psychological support for young people, but at the same time they are often left without this support. Especially given the conditions of war.</i>”</p> <p><i>“Implementation of measures to prevent and overcome professional burnout.”</i></p>
Communication and information support	14	<p><i>“Expanding the network of co-operation.”</i></p> <p><i>“Creation of platforms for mutual support between youth workers where they can share their experiences. Creation of a support network and communication platform. It is necessary to ensure constant communication between youth workers, exchange of experience and resources. This could be an online platform for networking, sharing information and tools to support youth work in war.”</i></p> <p><i>“Provide more information about youth work.”</i></p> <p><i>“Creation of support and exchange of experience networks.”</i></p> <p><i>“Provide constant information about the work of youth workers.”</i></p> <p><i>“To unite youth workers to increase communication, exchange of experience and knowledge.”</i></p> <p><i>“Sustainable communication, exchange of experience.”</i></p> <p><i>“Creating a network of co-operation.”</i></p> <p><i>“Conducting intersectoral communication events.”</i></p>
Personal and workplace safety	10	<p><i>“Reservation [from military service].”</i></p> <p><i>“Security guarantees.”</i></p> <p><i>“Ensuring a safe environment between youth organisations, organising the work of the youth centre at the new location.”</i></p> <p><i>“Safe environment.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assistance in building or equipping shelters at youth centres/spaces.”</i></p> <p><i>“End of hostilities.”</i></p> <p><i>“The town of Nikopol is under shelling, so safety is more important now.”</i></p>
Youth centres and spaces	8	<p><i>“Creation of youth spaces and centres.”</i></p> <p><i>“To help create appropriate conditions (spaces) with proper equipment.”</i></p> <p><i>“Provision of youth spaces.”</i></p> <p><i>“Development of youth infrastructure to improve the situation with employment of youth workers in these institutions.”</i></p> <p><i>“To model a promising and effective network of youth centres/spaces in the community”.</i></p> <p><i>“Provision of premises.”</i></p>
Young people	8	<p><i>“To involve young people with disabilities.”</i></p> <p><i>“Co-operation with educational institutions to engage young people in active civic engagement.”</i></p> <p><i>“Interesting clubs, encouragement, sightseeing tours.”</i></p> <p><i>“Conducting constant monitoring of the needs of young people.”</i></p> <p><i>“To convey to society that young people have a voice and are an element of society with creative views.”</i></p> <p><i>“Consolidation of the youth.”</i></p> <p><i>“Helping to engage young people.”</i></p>
Methodological support	7	<p><i>“Ensure that the definition of ‘youth worker’ is consistent.”</i></p>



		<p><i>“To focus on strengthening the post-war situation in the country with youth proposals.”</i></p> <p><i>“Planning, management.”</i></p> <p><i>“Analysing the time spent on activities, whether it is the main job or a hobby in your free time.”</i></p> <p><i>“Sustainability of the community, activity in events, forms of activity: state institution, local self-government, or CSO.”</i></p> <p><i>“Development and support.”</i></p> <p><i>“Curbing nepotism.”</i></p>
Methodic support	3	<p><i>“Drawing up a long-term work plan.”</i></p> <p><i>“Organisational and methodic support.”</i></p> <p><i>“Developing resources and tools for remote work.”</i></p>
Mentorship support	2	<p><i>“Mentorship support”</i></p> <p><i>“Facilitation.”</i></p>
Addressing the needs of youth workers	1	<p><i>“To analyse the state of activities and identify the needs of youth workers in Ukraine during the war and in the post-war period, including training, competence development, qualification confirmation and regulatory support, as well as communication and networking.”</i></p>

\* In descending order of the number of mentions

## Prospects for the development of youth work in Ukraine during the war and post-war period

**Experiences and conclusions of youth work during martial law that should be taken into account for the future, in particular in the post-war period** (answers to an open question in the online survey):

- **Safety and protection.** Ensuring the physical and psychological safety of young people should remain a priority.
- **Psychological support.** War leaves deep psychological trauma, so it is important to continue psychological support programmes, particularly for young people who have experienced war. Supporting mental health, dealing with PTSD and stress are key to youth adaptation.
- **Flexibility and adaptation.** It is important for youth work programmes to remain flexible and able to respond quickly to changing conditions. Martial law has shown the importance of rapid adaptation to crises.
- **Inclusiveness and support for vulnerable groups.** Attention should be paid to supporting vulnerable categories of young people, such as: IDPs, people with disabilities, or bereaved. It is important to develop programmes to ensure equal opportunities.
- **Social activity and volunteering.** Young people have demonstrated a high level of volunteerism, which should be supported in the post-war period. Volunteering and civic engagement will help rebuild the country and integrate young people.
- **Leadership development.** It is important to continue to nurture youth leaders through educational programmes and initiatives that promote civic responsibility and social engagement.
- **Decentralisation of initiatives.** Supporting local youth initiatives that can respond quickly to community needs will be an important tool for post-war recovery.
- **Education and employment.** Access to quality education and vocational training for young people should be ensured, which will help them integrate into the labour market and restore the economy faster.
- **Digital transformation.** The war has accelerated the process of digitalisation, so it is worth developing online platforms and digital tools to support youth work.
- **International co-operation.** Maintaining and developing international connections to share experiences and attract resources will be important for recovery.

*“In addition to internal displacement and occupation, the biggest challenge is that young people are dispersed all over the territory of Ukraine and have left abroad”; “We are afraid that many young people have left and will not return home... We need to do everything we can to bring them back to develop the community.”* [Quotes from the focus group discussion].

**Ideas for strengthening the role of youth work in Ukraine during the war and post-war period** (based on the results of the online survey) relate to the following areas and activities:

- **Expanding the network of youth centres and mobile hubs** — establishing youth centres in small communities and mobile support points will help reach young people from remote regions and war-affected areas. Interaction platforms will provide for the exchange of experience, training, and volunteering and restoration initiatives.
- **Information campaign and media advertising** — information support for youth work should be strengthened through national media to raise awareness of available resources and opportunities and to engage young people in activities.
- **Financial, educational and psychological support** — youth workers should be provided with stable funding, training programmes and psychological support to work with young people in crisis to facilitate their rehabilitation and professional development.

- **Youth engagement in decision-making processes** — it is important to provide young people with opportunities to participate in public and political processes, develop entrepreneurial and leadership skills, which will contribute to the reconstruction and active development of the country in the post-war period.

Quotes from the focus group discussion:

*“In my opinion, today, there is a lack of people who would like to implement this area of work. I believe that we need to raise the prestige of youth work to a higher level.”*

*“There should be a centralised requirement... every two years every youth worker should take some kind of training, some courses.”*

*“It is necessary to undergo retraining because new challenges require new knowledge.”*

**Ideas for strengthening the understanding of the role of youth work beyond youth workers** (based on the results of focus online survey):

- Regional forums with the participation of local authorities and businesses will help to spread the understanding of the importance of youth work and engage young people in community development, especially in depressed regions.
- Active social networking and promotion of youth work achievements will make it more visible and understandable to the public, attracting a wider audience.
- Conducting workshops, trainings and creating platforms for experience exchange will raise awareness among young people about the role of youth work and opportunities for personal development in civic activities.
- Training programmes for government officials and the inclusion of youth work in university majors will help to better understand its role at different levels of government.
- Certification of youth workers and social advertising would raise the status of the profession, promote its recognition and help attract new people to the field.
- Integration of youth work into educational programmes, internships in government and involvement in volunteer initiatives will help to build an active civil society among young people.
- Public events and media campaigns that bring together government, business and civil society representatives to discuss the role of youth work will increase understanding and support for youth work.
- Supporting youth centres, youth work ambassadors and engaging celebrities will help to increase public interest in youth work and promote its positive perception.
- Co-operation with businesses and educational institutions, mentoring and internship programmes will help young people develop leadership and professional skills that will be useful for the country’s development.
- Information campaigns using social networks, media and success stories will help the public better understand the contribution of youth work to social development.

Quotes from the focus group discussion:

*“It seems to me that one of these areas could be mobile youth work on the basis of districts. Not every community may have the opportunity to have a youth worker or open a youth space, or attract funding. But somehow youth work has to be started even where it does not exist. Perhaps you know of an example where the state allocates funding for communities to have a person who will promote sports and physical culture among the population, among young people. Perhaps, at least at the district level, such a programme of mobile youth work could be implemented to start this process where it has not started at all.”*

*“I can say that in these circumstances, our communities are trying to realise the potential at their disposal as much as possible. That is, they invest what they have in co-operation with young people.”*

*“A youth programme is very much needed, but it needs to be based on research of the community’s youth. If it is written on the basis of the regional programme, it will not be effective. That is, we have a tendency among officials: when the region gives us a project in a certain area for approval, we approve it often without reading it, because we do not understand the systematic work with either youth councils or other advisory bodies that should co-ordinate all this and do it in the interests of our target audiences.”*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations based on the research findings for the development of youth work and support for youth workers in the war and post-war period:

### **Financial and material support**

- Develop national and international financial support programmes for youth organisations, including through grants and institutional funding.
- Introduce mechanisms to increase the salaries of youth workers to ensure their motivation and sustainable activities.
- Consider opportunities for financial support for youth councils, as most grant competitions are open only to legal entities.

### **Safe spaces for working with youth**

- Support initiatives to develop youth spaces.
- Create safe youth centres and spaces, especially in remote regions, using mobile hubs or mobile youth centres.
- Involve international partners to finance the reconstruction or creation of new youth spaces.

### **Work with young people who have moved abroad or moved within the country**

- Develop programmes to engage displaced young people in youth initiatives and civic activities in new regions.
- Introduce support programmes for young people abroad to maintain their connection with Ukraine and facilitate their return.
- To ensure stable youth work in the post-war period, the initiative and activity of young people should be preserved, and conditions should be created for their return to their home communities after the war.

### **Psychological support for youth workers**

- Create psychological support programmes for youth workers, including through the organisation of support groups and retreats.
- Introduce training in stress management and self-regulation techniques to prevent emotional burnout.
- Introduce mentoring for youth workers, especially for newcomers.

### **Proper recognition and support from the authorities**

- Develop policies to increase the recognition of youth work through government programmes and media.
- Develop integration programmes for IDPs and unite local youth with displaced youth.
- Develop comprehensive programmes aimed at developing social cohesion among young people, especially in communities where youth centres are just starting to operate.
- Establish youth councils at local authorities to facilitate co-operation between youth workers and the authorities.
- Actively involve young people in decision-making at the community level, and facilitate their internships in local authorities.
- Diversify the resources used to promote youth work.

### **Support for youth work and youth policy in wartime**

- Establish a centralised training system for youth workers that includes regular professional development.

- Include a section on youth policy in community development strategies to facilitate participation in grant programmes.
- Develop youth policy in villages through the involvement of specially trained workers.
- Strengthen support for CSOs working with young people through joint projects with the authorities and international partners.

### **Developing the regulatory framework for youth work**

- Simplify the procedure for financing projects through the state treasury.
- Develop new legislative initiatives to support youth councils, centres and spaces.
- Enshrine in the legislation clear standards for the number of youth workers per community.
- Improve mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of existing regulations.

### **Professional development and training**

- Create comprehensive training and professional development programmes covering crisis management, psychological support, and project management.
- Introduce a system of continuous learning: online courses, workshops, exchange of experience between youth workers.
- Promote the occupational standard through additional information campaigns and trainings to explain the benefits of the standard.
- Develop accessible certification programmes. Given the significant interest in certification, it is necessary to create a mechanism for its implementation, taking into account accessibility for workers with different resources.
- Provide clear recommendations and practical cases that demonstrate the effectiveness of using the standard in different areas of youth work.
- Introduce programmes to exchange experience between regions and countries.

To provide more youth workers with the opportunity to undergo training under the **state programme “Youth Worker,”** it is advisable to

- strengthen information support for the implementation of this programme;
- establish close co-operation with partner organisations and local self-government bodies to organise and conduct the required number of trainings in accordance with the demand in the regions;
- develop new specialised trainings in accordance with the requests and needs of youth workers;
- ensure continuous monitoring of the needs and demands of youth workers for advanced training through non-formal education.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1. Questionnaire for youth workers

#### Section 1

Have you completed the basic training programme of the state programme “Youth Worker”?

- yes (go to section 4)
- no (go to the next section)

#### Section 2

If no, what was the reason?

- Applied for participation but was not selected for training
- Do not know how to apply for training
- Could not attend the training due to my own employment
- Have not heard anything about the basic training of the state programme “Youth Worker”
- Have no need for such training
- other

Optionally, indicate what you know about the state programme "Youth Worker."

#### Section 3. General information about the respondents

You represent (multiple answers are possible):

- Civil society organisation (public, charitable, religious)
- Youth centre/youth space
- Youth advisory body
- Public administration/local self-government body
- Business structure
- other

Please indicate your position according to the staff list.

Please indicate your experience of working with young people:

- up to 1 year
- From 1 to 3 years
- From 4 to 10 years
- more than 10 years

For you, youth work is:

- main activity
- additional activity
- other

Please indicate your education in the field of youth work/youth policy (multiple answers are possible):

- Higher or professional education in the field of youth work and youth policy
- Higher or vocational education in areas related to youth work and youth policy (e.g. pedagogy, social work, psychology, management, etc.)
- non-formal education: Participation in trainings, educational projects, courses in specific areas of youth work and youth policy
- Self-education
- other

Do you currently have a need for advanced training/additional education?

- yes
- no

If yes, in what area?

Has the area where you/your organisation mainly carried out youth work changed?

- Yes, after 2014
- Yes, after 2022
- no
- other

The area where you/your organisation is currently working with youth (multiple answers are possible)

- Vinnytsia region
- Volyn region
- Dnipropetrovsk region
- Donetsk region
- Zhytomyr region
- Zakarpattia region
- Zaporizhzhia region
- Ivano-Frankivsk region
- Kyiv region
- Kirovohrad region
- Luhansk region
- Lviv region
- Mykolaiv region
- Odesa region
- Poltava region
- Rivne region
- Sumy region
- Ternopil region
- Kharkiv region
- Kherson region
- Khmelnytskyi region
- Cherkasy region
- Chernivtsi region
- Chernihiv region
- The city of Kyiv
- Entire Ukraine



- Abroad
- Other

Your gender:

- female (go to section 17)
- male (go to section 17)
- I do not want to specify

#### Section 4. State Programme “Youth Worker.”

This state programme aims to update the data on its alumni for the purpose of further co-operation, so the questions in this block contain personal information

Please indicate in which year you studied under the basic training programme of the state programme “Youth Worker”

- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023
- 2024
- It is difficult to recall

Full name

Region of residence:

- Vinnytsia region
- Volyn region
- Dnipropetrovsk region
- Donetsk region
- Zhytomyr region
- Zakarpattia region
- Zaporizhzhia region
- Ivano-Frankivsk region
- Kyiv region
- Kirovohrad region
- Luhansk region
- Lviv region
- Mykolaiv region
- Odesa region
- Poltava region
- Rivne region
- Sumy region
- Ternopil region
- Kharkiv region
- Kherson region
- Khmelnytskyi region
- Cherkasy region

- Chernivtsi region
- Chernihiv region
- The city of Kyiv
- Currently abroad
- Other

The organisation where you work at your main place of work is:

- Local self-government/public administration body
- State (municipal) organisation
- Civil society organisation
- Business structure
- Other

What is your job title? (please specify your position according to the staff list).

Do you consider yourself a youth worker?

- Yes
- No
- Difficult to answer

Do you currently work with young people?

- Yes, this is my main activity (go to section 6)
- Yes, as my additional activity (go to section 6)
- No, just at the beginning of this journey (go to section 6)
- No (go to the next section)

#### Section 5

If you are not currently working with young people, have you had such experience in the past?

- yes, a lot
- yes, a little bit
- no, it did not work out

Please indicate the reasons why you no longer work with young people or what prevented you from getting involved in youth work.

#### Section 6

In your opinion, did the training under the Basic Training Programme of the state programme “Youth Worker” affect your professional activity?

- Yes, significantly (go to the next section)
- Yes, to some extent (go to the next section)
- No, it didn’t affect me (go to section 8)

#### Section 7

If yes, please specify how (multiple answers are possible):

- It was the beginning of my activity in youth work
- The knowledge gained allowed me to increase the effectiveness (efficiency) of my work
- The information received only broadened my awareness of youth work
- The certificate of completion of the training contributed to my career
- Training allowed me to expand my circle of professional contacts
- It is difficult to estimate, as I have taken this training too long ago

- other

#### Section 8

If no, please indicate why.

#### Section 9

Have you participated in specialised trainings under the state programme “Youth Worker”?

- Yes (go to the next section)
- No (go to section 11)

#### Section 10

If yes, please specify which ones (multiple answers are possible):

- “Engaging and co-ordinating volunteers”
- “Civic education for youth workers”
- “Inclusiveness in youth centres”
- “Advocacy in amalgamated territorial communities”
- “Formation of a healthy lifestyle for youth”
- “There are no simple measures”
- “Digital tools for youth work”
- “Public administration tools in the field of youth policy”
- “Trauma-Informed Youth Work”
- “Youth Resilience in Crisis”

#### Section 11

Do you currently have a need for specialised training programmes?

- Yes (go to the next section)
- No (go to section 13)

#### Section 12

If yes, please indicate in what area.

#### Section 13

Would you recommend to your friends/colleagues to attend the basic training programme of the state programme “Youth Worker”?

- Yes (go to the next section)
- No (go to section 15)
- Difficult to say (go to section 16)

#### Section 14

If yes, please indicate what you would tell them (your feedback on the basic training).

#### Section 15

If not, please indicate what arguments you would give.

#### Section 16

If you wish, please leave your feedback on the state programme "Youth Worker."

#### Section 17. The Council of Europe Project "Youth for Democracy in Ukraine."

Have you participated in the activities of the Council of Europe project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine”?

- Yes (go to the next section)
- No (go to section 19)

### Section 18

If yes, please rate on a five-point scale how well the project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine” meets the needs of youth workers (including during the war):

- 1 — the lowest score, does not meet the needs at all
- 5 — the highest score, fully meets the needs

Which project activities supported your professional work with young people during the war?

What requests and needs of the professional activities of youth workers remain unanswered by the project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine”?

If you have any ideas that will help make the activities of the project “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine” more useful for youth work practitioners, please indicate them.

### Section 19. Occupational Standard “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)”

Do you use the occupational standard “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)” and methodological recommendations for its implementation in your work?

- Yes, I use them all the time
- Yes, I use them from time to time
- I use them occasionally
- I know these materials, but I do not see any opportunities/need to use them in my work
- I do not know anything about these materials

Do you have a need to obtain a certificate of awarding/confirming the professional qualification “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)” which is issued by the qualification centres of the National Qualifications Agency through the assessment and recognition of learning outcomes (including non-formal learning)?

- Yes, I have such a need, I am waiting for such an opportunity
- Rather yes, it would be good to have confirmation of qualification
- It is difficult to say, I have not considered this issue
- Rather no, the qualification is needed, but there are no resources and conditions for this
- No, I do not see such a need

### Section 20. State of activity and needs of youth workers and prospects for the development of youth work in Ukraine during the war and post-war period

“In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges for youth workers during the war in Ukraine? (please select three options):

- Lack of or insufficient space for youth work
- Lack of psychological support
- Young people leaving abroad or being forced to move to other regions
- Lack of or insufficient safe conditions for working with young people
- Lack of or insufficient methodological support
- Lack of or shortage of professionals in the youth sector
- Lack of or insufficient salaries
- Lack of or insufficient recognition of youth work
- Lack of insufficient professional communication
- Lack of home

- Remote work
- Emotional burnout
- Lack of understanding of the priority of youth work by decision-makers
- Lack of unity in the professional community
- Lack of understanding of the difficulties of youth work during the war
- Limited access to the internet and networks
- Limited mobility outside the country
- Restrictions in the work of educational institutions
- Personal safety and safety of my family
- Displacement of team members
- Constant changes in the situation and working conditions due to the war
- other

Please indicate which type of support is most relevant for you personally (please select three options):

- Administrative support
- State programmes to support youth workers during the war
- Ensuring communication between youth workers in Ukraine and abroad
- Information support on current opportunities in the youth sector
- Communication support from the authorities
- Consolidation of youth workers and their communication support in the professional community
- Consultations on receiving and processing financial aid and charitable contributions
- Consultations on the organisation of humanitarian aid programmes
- Mentoring and/or supervisory support for youth workers
- Monitoring of needs in the youth sector
- Networking and association of youth workers
- Exchange of experience with other organisations/youth workers (both in Ukraine and abroad)
- Educational support/development of professional competences
- Supporting the organisation's life after moving to another territory
- Ensuring personal and family safety
- Conducting events on the specifics of youth work during war and work with young people affected by war
- Implementation of measures to prevent and overcome professional burnout of youth workers
- Psychological support/psychological support groups
- Funding programmes for youth initiatives
- Financial support for the institutional activities of the organisation and team support
- Financial support for programme activities (non-humanitarian aid)
- Financial support for the implementation of humanitarian aid
- other

In your opinion, what are the three main steps to be taken to support the activities of youth workers in Ukraine during the war and post-war period?

What idea would you like to propose to strengthen the role of youth work in Ukraine during the war and post-war period? What would be important to consider/do?

If you have any ideas on how to strengthen the understanding of the role of youth work beyond the youth workers' community, please share them.

In your opinion, what experiences and conclusions about youth work during martial law should be taken into account for the future (in the post-war period)?

**Section 21. End**

If you would be interested in participating in further research (interviews or focus group discussions) on the needs and state of activity of youth workers in Ukraine during the war and post-war period and the prospects for the development of youth work, please leave your contact details: Name, email or phone number.

## Annex 2. Questions for the focus group discussion

Introduction, getting to know each other

Matters to be discussed:

1. What significant changes have you seen in your youth work activities over the past two years? What is successful in youth work in wartime? What lessons of current youth work should be taken into account for the future, in the post-war period?
2. What obstacles and difficulties in youth work over the past two years can you identify?
3. Are there any difficulties in your work due to imperfections or lack of legal acts on youth work and youth policy? What changes or updates are needed in the legal framework for youth work?
4. What opportunities do youth workers have to counteract the previously mentioned obstacles and difficulties?
5. Do you receive support in your activities from different organisations and institutions (e.g. government authorities, youth councils, youth centres and spaces, educational and cultural institutions, CSOs, international organisations)? What is this support like? What support do you lack to carry out youth work now?
6. What areas of youth work development in Ukraine can be effective in responding to the needs of different categories/groups of young people, in your opinion?
7. What ideas do you have for promoting youth work and understanding its role beyond the youth worker community (what new areas and tools and actions to promote youth work seem attractive and effective to you)? How to expand the circle of people involved in youth work?

Debriefing, questions and comments.