



A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW:

# Youth Visions for Rebuilding Ukraine

EUROPEAN **YOUTH** PARLIAMENT



Schwarzkopf   
Foundation  
YOUNG EUROPE 



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## FOREWORD

As an alumna of the European Youth Parliament (EYP), I am immensely proud to see my organisation taking on vital work to support Ukraine. The EYP Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors Vision Paper is not just a document of ideas. It is a symbol of hope, resilience, and determination. It is also deeply heartening to see this Vision Paper evolve into an annual tradition following the success of the inaugural edition in 2023.

This Vision Paper encapsulates the exceptional efforts of young leaders from Europe and Ukraine who have united to address the critical challenges of rebuilding a nation. Their commitment is evident in the thorough analysis and innovative solutions proposed across key areas: cultural preservation, energy security, cybersecurity, education, and urban development. By balancing immediate recovery needs with long-term goals, the Vision Paper offers a clear and inspiring roadmap for Ukraine's sustainable future.

The work of the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors exemplifies the core values

of the European Youth Parliament: empowering youth to engage with and shape responses to pressing global issues. I am particularly inspired by the dedication shown by the authors to champion Ukraine's integration into the European community while emphasising modernisation and sustainability.

The continuation of this initiative demonstrates the European Youth Parliament's unwavering dedication to empowering youth and fostering solidarity across borders. The continuity of this project demonstrates the enduring commitment of young Europeans and Ukrainians to shaping a brighter future together.

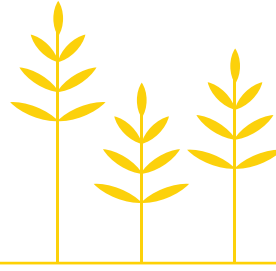
I wholeheartedly commend the European Youth Parliament and the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors for their extraordinary work. I encourage all readers to engage with this Vision Paper and its recommendations and to support its mission of turning these inspiring ideas into transformative action.

*Roksolana Pidlasa, Member of Parliament of Ukraine*

*Chair of the Budget Committee in the Parliament of Ukraine  
Member of EYP Ukraine (2011-2014)*

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Amid the ongoing war and the urgent need for Ukraine's reconstruction, a group of passionate young Ukrainians and other Europeans came together for the "Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors" programme to shape a vision for a sustainable rebuilding process with a long-term focus. The European Youth Parliament (EYP) launched this initiative in 2023 with support from the E.ON Foundation and continued it in 2024 with backing from the German Federal Foreign Office. Around 20 young people, aged 17 to 27, from Ukraine and several other European countries were selected to serve as Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors 2024.

The process was facilitated by EYP alumnae Kristina Chelmakina and Anastasiia Ianovytska. This vision paper presents the formulated visions and ideas for a brighter future for Ukraine and its people, crafted by the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors 2024.

The group focused on Cultural Preservation and Identity Reinvention explored Ukraine's efforts to digitise its heritage, such as virtual museums, to preserve cultural memory during war. They emphasise revitalising indigenous languages, strengthening diasporic connections, and empowering creative industries as key drivers of cultural and economic renewal for long-term resilience.

The group dealing with Energy Security and Efficiency outlines a vision to modernise and decentralise energy infrastructure to create a resilient, cost-effective, and sustainable system. Key priorities include workforce development, energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption, European integration, and stimulating economic growth through investment expos and energy export potential.

The Cybersecurity for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) group emphasises the need to bridge gaps in digital adoption and cybersecurity awareness among such enterprises. They propose solutions like workforce training, financial support, collaborative ecosystems, simplified guidelines, and infrastructure strengthening to ensure SMEs can secure their digital transformation effectively.

The School Education group highlights the urgent need to rebuild schools and infrastructure, disrupted by the war. Their vision includes integrating modern, energy-efficient technologies, enhancing digital learning platforms, and supporting non-formal education hubs. They emphasise the importance of effective donor coordination for impactful contributions.

Finally, the Urbanisation and Smart Cities Technologies group highlights the importance of integrating local voices into planning processes. Their vision includes fostering citizen engagement through education, establishing representative bodies, ensuring transparency in financial transactions, and preserving cultural heritage to drive sustainable, inclusive urban development and economic growth.

Beyond the joint determination of these young Ukrainians and other Europeans to conceive a sustainable future for Ukraine, based on a long-term approach and an exchange between different nationalities, this project is a message of solidarity and advocacy for the rebuilding of the country. Through their commitment, all the people involved in this project express that they stand and will continue to stand alongside the people of Ukraine.

*The views and opinions expressed in this vision paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the European Youth Parliament and the Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe.*

# INTRODUCTION

The “**Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors**” programme aimed to give a platform to young perspectives on the country’s reconstruction following russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022—a war that began with russian aggression in 2014. It brought together 20 young leaders dedicated to addressing the critical challenges of Ukraine’s post-war reconstruction. Three years on, tragically, the war persists. It continues to devastate Ukraine’s economy, environment, and society—especially its youth.

This makes the conversation around Ukraine’s reconstruction more urgent than ever. Each passing day adds to the destruction, deepening the need for recovery and renewal. While the nature and timing of the end of the war remain uncertain, one thing is clear: Ukraine and its resilient people will endure and emerge victorious.

When the war ends, having a vision for reconstruction that integrates sustainability from the outset will be crucial. This approach will not only restore what has been lost but also transform Ukraine into a shining example of sustainable infrastructure, energy, culture, education, and cybersecurity for the rest of Europe.

Even though the war is still going on, reconstruction in certain regions of Ukraine has already begun. A sustainable process with a long-term focus can enable modernisation, innovation, and less dependence on exhaustible natural resources. Such positive change is best enacted through a process that involves young civil society, which is why the European Youth Parliament (EYP) initiated the “Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors” programme.

Focusing on the issues of economic recovery with social and environmental considerations in the context of Ukraine’s post-war

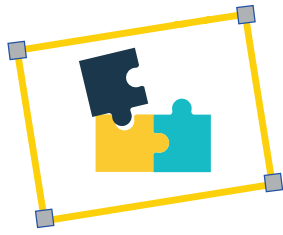
reconstruction and rapprochement with the European Union, the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors are 20 young Europeans who are passionate about making a meaningful contribution to Ukraine’s recovery. They range in age from 17 to 27 and study or work in various fields that impact their perspectives in differing ways.

More than half of the ambassadors are Ukrainian and the rest come from all over Europe. Therefore, this publication is a product of pan-European cooperation that aims to support Ukraine, encourage youth to reflect and take action, and discuss their ideas with decision-makers. It presents a youth-driven vision for the sustainable reconstruction of Ukraine, focusing on specific policy areas. It offers a perspective of an integrated future between the EU, Ukraine, and the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

A central part of the programme is the Rebuild Ukraine Lab, a three-day workshop that brought together around 20 participants in person. The last Rebuild Ukraine Lab was held on 10–13 October 2024 in Berlin.

*Please note that throughout this paper, we will be using the term “russia” when referring to the Russian Federation. This is a way of expressing the Ambassador’s disdain of russian acts of unprovoked violence vis-à-vis Ukraine.*

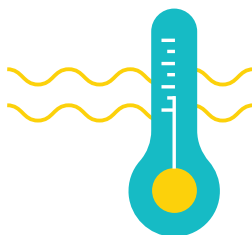
Under the guidance of EYP alumnae and Ukrainian professionals Anastasiia Ianovytka and Kristina Chelmakina—experts in civil society, communications, and work with EU and international organisations—the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors dedicated their time to collaborative group work, insightful exchanges with experts, and dynamic interactive sessions. Together, they developed targeted goals and solutions across five key areas.



## Education



## Cultural Heritage



## Energy Security



## Urbanisation



## Cybersecurity

We thank you for reading this publication and supporting youth in their efforts towards the sustainable reconstruction of Ukraine. We hope it will motivate as many people as possible to become change-makers and advocates of Ukraine's reconstruction.

*The Rebuild Ukraine Lab is supported by the German Federal Foreign Office in the framework of the project "Resilient Youth Civic Spaces for All". The "Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors" programme is also part of the Climate Youth Action Plan, which aims at encouraging young people across Europe to explore, discuss, and ultimately bring about climate action. It is sponsored by the E.ON Foundation.*



# Preserving and Promoting Ukrainian Culture

Anna Mamedova | Aybars Önder | Liudmyla Haliulko | Marijn Rijk

## PREAMBLE

Amid the ongoing Russian invasion, Ukraine's cultural sector endures severe disruptions, with more than 1,100 heritage sites damaged and numerous cultural landmarks critically endangered. The invasion has exacerbated historical vulnerabilities, especially impacting indigenous groups such as the Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks, and Karaites. These communities encounter unique challenges in preserving their language, traditions, and cultural identity under increased aggression.


This chapter focuses on strategies for Ukraine to safeguard its cultural heritage while redefining its national identity within a modern and resilient framework. Its scope includes examining the roles of digital platforms in promoting Ukrainian culture globally, identifying support mechanisms from international partners for Ukraine's cultural recovery, and analysing approaches to enhance the cultural sector's resilience through a combined digital and physical preservation model.





## ABOUT THE AUTHORS


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 Currently engaged in the sphere of youth activism and event management

 Favorite Thing About Ukraine:  
With every book I read and every story I hear, I discover new reasons to love Ukraine even more deeply.

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 Favorite Thing About Ukraine:  
The friendly and amiable people



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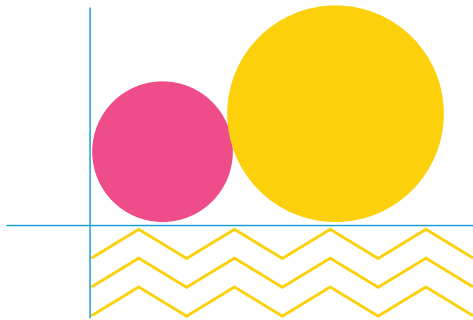
 West Ukrainian National University

 National Coordinator of Understanding Europe Ukraine

 Favorite Thing About Ukraine:  
Freedom of expression

**The chapter aims to answer three central questions:**

- 1** How can Ukraine preserve its cultural heritage while reinventing its identity for the future?
- 2** What role do digital platforms and creative industries play in promoting Ukrainian culture globally?
- 3** How can international partners support the recovery of Ukraine's cultural sector?



The objective is to strengthen Ukraine's creative sector by providing critical insights, resources, and networks that can enhance the resilience and sustainability of Ukrainian cultural heritage. Targeted at Ukrainian and European policymakers, international organisations, cultural institutions, and researchers, this paper advocates a coordinated, multifaceted approach to build a secure and enduring foundation for Ukraine's cultural preservation and global cultural engagement.

## **S U M M A R Y**

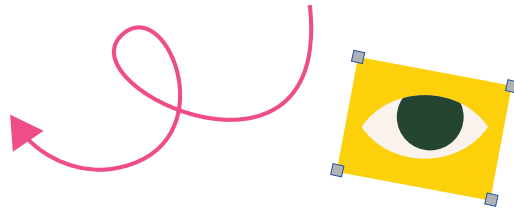
This chapter explores Ukraine's approach to cultural preservation and identity reinvention amid the ongoing war, focusing on digital innovation, inclusivity, and economic resilience. Ukraine's efforts to digitise its heritage, including through virtual museums and partnerships with tech companies, are essential to preserving cultural memory and reaching global audiences, especially when access to physical sites is limited.

A key focus is the preservation of indigenous heritage, which plays an integral role in redefining Ukraine's national identity.

Revitalisation programmes for indigenous languages and traditions, alongside strengthened diasporic connections, underscore Ukraine's commitment to inclusivity and multiculturalism.

The creative industries are positioned as catalysts for cultural and economic renewal. Targeted grant programmes, mentorships, and expanded global outreach aim to empower young entrepreneurs, laying the groundwork for a resilient cultural sector that supports long-term economic growth and international cultural engagement.

## ANALYSIS



The Russian invasion has exacerbated long-standing vulnerabilities in Ukraine's cultural sector, posing unprecedented threats to tangible and intangible heritage. Since the war began, over 1,100 heritage sites and more than 2,000 cultural infrastructure objects have been damaged or destroyed.<sup>1</sup> The physical erasure of cultural landmarks, along with the forced-assimilation tactics that began under the Russian Empire and continued during the Soviet era, has left many indigenous peoples in Ukraine—including the Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks, and Karaites—struggling to preserve their cultural heritage, language, and traditions.<sup>2</sup> The occupation authorities inflicted irreparable damage on Bağçasaray,<sup>3</sup> and they left the kenesa in Aqmescit in disrepair.<sup>4</sup> The number of Crimean Karaites in Ukraine has declined by 83% since 1893, and most of the Crimean Tatar population was displaced.<sup>5</sup> Crimean Tatars were deported or killed during the genocide in 1944, and they only began to return in 1991.<sup>6</sup> The threats are not merely physical and extend to broader cultural suppression as many communities are forced to navigate the loss of their cultural heritage in an environment that challenges their survival.

Ukraine's creative industries are similarly vulnerable economically. Despite the sector's potential, it remains underdeveloped compared to the EU member states, generating 4.2% of GDP.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, the EU countries average a 6.2% of GDP contribution from creative industries.<sup>8</sup> This highlights Ukraine's struggle to financially sustain cultural initiatives. Following the start of the full-scale invasion, cultural institutions were earning 50-60% less than what they could earn prior to it,<sup>9</sup> and they have received 30-40% less financial support from the government, par-

ticularly in war-torn regions.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the cultural sector faces a shortage of skilled personnel<sup>11</sup> as many have left the country or focus on immediate survival needs. This has hindered the development of cultural products, limiting accessibility and reducing opportunities to build local cultural resilience.

Despite these setbacks, Ukraine is reimagining its cultural identity through innovation and inclusivity. Digital preservation efforts, led by the Ministry of Culture, include a digital catalogue, a heritage registry, and collaborations with Google Arts & Culture to provide global audiences with virtual access to heritage sites, such as St Sophia's Cathedral and Chernivtsi National University.<sup>12</sup> The "Museum of Stolen Art" initiative further contributes to this mission by creating digital replicas of Ukrainian artworks that have been lost or stolen during the invasion.<sup>13</sup>

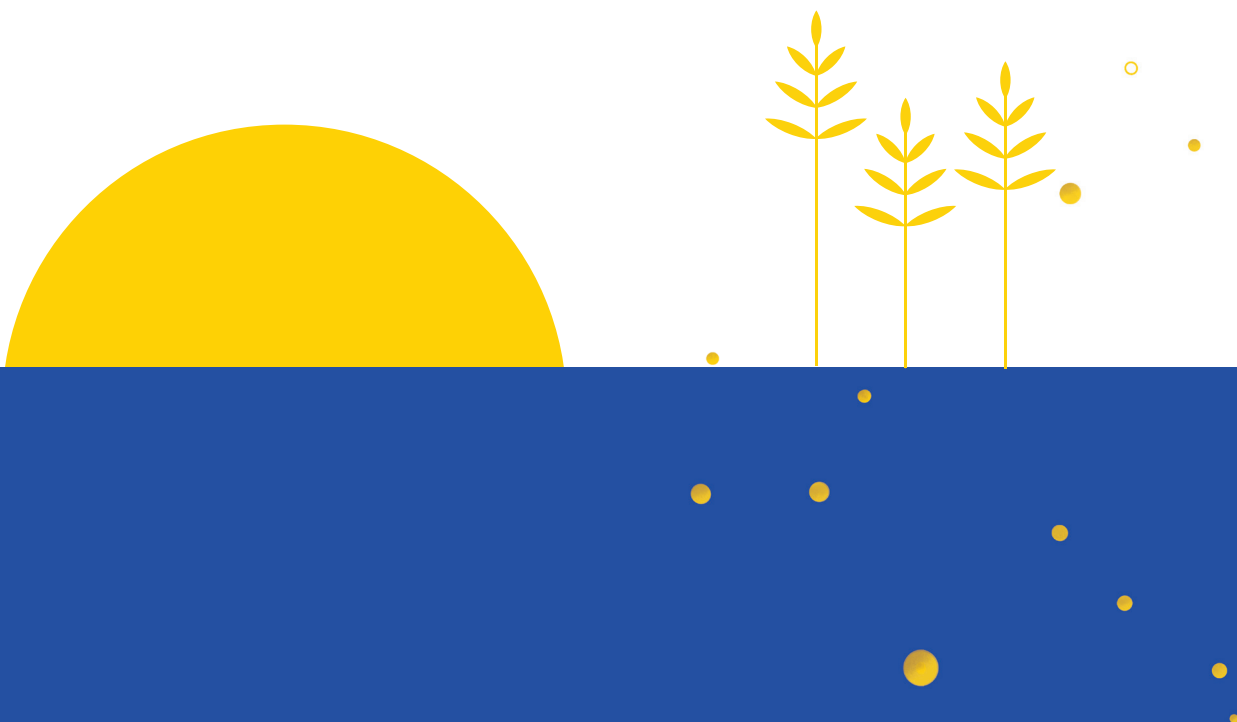
These digital efforts are crucial for preserving cultural memory, especially when physical access to heritage sites is restricted. However, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the irreplaceable value of in-person cultural experiences, emphasizing the need for a hybrid approach that combines virtual and physical methods.<sup>14</sup> Such an approach, backed by international actors like USAID, UNESCO, and the EU, is essential for safeguarding Ukraine's cultural identity.<sup>15</sup>

In Ukraine, the cultural resurgence of indigenous communities—notably the Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks, and Karaites—represents a powerful aspect of cultural preservation and of the country’s attempt at a reinvention of its identity. Since 2014, indigenous cultural organisations like the World Congress of Crimean Tatars, Marifet, the National Congress of Crimean Karaites, Ullu Biylik, the Crimean Karaites Association, Cıyın Ansambli, Qırım Haber Ajansı, the Emel Qırım Foundation, the Crimean Tatar Resource Center, and Crimean Tatar foundations all around the world have promoted cultural preservation domestically and abroad, despite limited funding.<sup>16</sup> The Mission of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea has been involved in efforts to revitalise indigenous cultures.<sup>17</sup> Ukraine has reverted the names of administrative units to their indigenous variants and allowed native-language education.<sup>18</sup> This has spurred society to evolve towards a more civic and multicultural conception of identity. These efforts have been supported by a resurgent Crimean Tatar diaspora.<sup>19</sup> However, these organisations continue to face obstacles, including insufficient international recognition, limited funding, and the risk of language loss in diasporic communities and in Ukraine. Furthermore, all these improvements have limited impact since Crimea is under Russian occupation.

Key international and domestic players, including the United States embassy and USAID, have also implemented programmes such as the “Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries” grant programme to support creative entrepreneurs with financial resources.<sup>20</sup> These programmes, along with other community-driven initiatives, empower local groups to preserve and adapt cultural traditions to contemporary needs. Modelled after successful initiatives backed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), these public-private partnerships not only provide sustainable funding but also allow corporations to benefit from positive brand visibility as cultural stakeholders.<sup>21</sup>

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In summary, while the Russian invasion has intensified the challenges facing Ukraine’s cultural sector, innovative solutions and resilient partnerships offer pathways to preservation. By bolstering digital preservation efforts, fostering public-private partnerships, and supporting community-led initiatives, Ukraine is taking meaningful steps towards cultural resilience. This multifaceted approach not only safeguards its heritage but also strengthens its distinct national identity amid ongoing adversity.



### **Ukraine becomes a regional leader in the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, ensuring its accessibility and resilience for future generations.**

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- Ukrainian cultural agencies, in collaboration with indigenous communities, digitally preserve cultural heritage sites and artifacts using virtual and augmented reality and other advanced technologies.
- The Ministry of Culture, alongside local and international partners, expands its virtual museum initiatives, developing more immersive experiences and 3D reconstructions of cultural landmarks.

These projects further engage local and global audiences, deepening public understanding and support for cultural preservation efforts.

- Artists, supported by municipal governments, use public art projects such as murals to reclaim and revitalise war-affected spaces.
- International cultural institutions and tech leaders from the digital economy will collaborate with Ukrainian preservationists to build expertise and expand digital preservation methods across cultural projects.

### **Ukraine redefines its national identity as resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking by preserving and revitalising its cultural heritage, even amid ongoing adversities.**

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- Ukrainian cultural organisations, in partnership with international cultural institutions, enhance public engagement in heritage preservation through community-driven projects, educational programmes, and interactive platforms, fostering local resilience and global awareness.
- Ukrainian diaspora organisations, supported by international NGOs and friendly governments, lead cultural programmes abroad to sustain and share Ukraine's heritage within diaspora communities, reducing the risk of cultural erosion.

- Public-private partnerships with international funding bodies, modelled on successful UNDP-backed programmes, provide consistent resources for community-led cultural initiatives, enabling long-term resilience and preservation of cultural identity.
- The Ministry of Culture, along with indigenous cultural organisations, fosters initiatives to document and revitalise indigenous languages, traditions, and arts, strengthening Ukraine's multicultural heritage.

## **The cultures of Ukraine’s indigenous peoples are revitalised, ensuring their heritage thrives and gains global recognition, contributing to a vibrant and diverse national identity.**

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- Existing diaspora organisations, including the Crimean Tatar Resource Center, the World Congress of Crimean Tatars, and the National Congress of Crimean Karaites conduct outreach efforts to expand their influence, combat assimilation, and foster cooperation between different diasporic communities, such as between the Crimean and Ukrainian diasporas.
- International media organisations, Ukrainian cultural organisations, and cultural NGOs collaborate to raise global awareness of indigenous cultures through media campaigns, cultural showcases, and platforms such as Google Arts & Culture.
- Ukrainian filmmakers, in partnership with international film industries and major streaming platforms, promote Ukrainian cinema and indigenous storytelling at major international film festivals, increasing global visibility for indigenous narratives.
- Ukrainian entertainment producers, in collaboration with foreign counterparts, create and distribute TV series centred on the lives and heritage of the indigenous peoples of Ukraine, including Crimean Tatars, Karaites, and Krymchaks, showcasing their stories on international platforms.
- The government, alongside international cultural organisations such as UNESCO and USAID, promotes indigenous music through international events like the Eurovision Song Contest, raising awareness and appreciation of indigenous musical traditions worldwide.

## **Ukraine’s cultural industry establishes a strong presence in new global markets, sharing the nation’s diverse heritage and supporting economic resilience through cultural exports.**

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- Ukrainian cultural organisations and industry leaders expand their reach by promoting heritage-rich products—including indigenous art, design, and crafts—in new international markets, with a special focus on the cultural heritage of the Crimean Tatars, Karaites, and Krymchaks, and their ties to other regions.
- Ukrainian diaspora organisations, including various Crimean Tatar foundations all around the world, the Emel Qırım Foundation, the Ukrainian World Congress, and the World Congress of Crimean Tatars, collaborate with local cultural bodies abroad to increase interest in and consumption of Ukrainian cultural products, helping them gain traction in foreign markets.
- The Ukrainian Institute and Ukrainian embassies introduce Ukrainian cultural products—including indigenous arts and fashion—to new markets in the Middle East, Africa, the Balkans, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, with particular emphasis on connecting with audiences in the Global South.

**Ukraine is a global leader in fostering an inclusive civic identity that celebrates the diversity of its culture and people, serving as a model for coexistence and cooperation in an increasingly multicultural world.**

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- Civil society actors, including the Crimean Tatar Resource Center, Marifet, and the Ukrainian Institute, promote multilingual publications, such as books and newspapers like Qırım inciri, to foster cultural exchange and understanding across diverse communities.
- Ukrainian and European humanities and social science university departments, in collaboration with the Ukrainian Institute, increase academic focus on under-represented aspects of Ukrainian history—such as the impacts of colonialism

**State-level and international actors play a pivotal role in preserving Ukraine’s cultural heritage, supporting fiscal policies and investments that make cultural preservation financially sustainable and foster resilience within the cultural sector.**

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- State-level actors such as the EU implement tax incentives for citizens and businesses contributing to Ukrainian cultural preservation projects, making it financially viable for commercial organisations to invest in the cultural sector.
- Governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as international cultural organisations provide training programmes in cultural management and

and the histories of indigenous peoples—and promote these findings globally with the help of international and local media organisations to enhance understanding and counter misinformation.

- The government, in partnership with indigenous organisations such as the Mejlis and the National Congress of the Crimean Karaites, establish programmes to revive and sustain indigenous languages at risk of extinction, integrating language preservation in cultural education and public life.
- Diaspora organisations create joint initiatives and communication networks, strengthening collaboration between Ukrainian and indigenous diaspora communities to promote an inclusive narrative of Ukraine’s identity abroad.

digitalisation of culture for Ukrainian institutions. These programmes focus on building digital infrastructure to help Ukraine manage, digitise, and protect its cultural assets more effectively.

- Multinational corporations incorporate Ukrainian cultural preservation into their corporate social responsibility frameworks, investing in restoration, creative sponsorship, and tech solutions for digital preservation, thereby contributing to Ukraine’s cultural resilience.
- By 2032, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine’s allies advocate its cultural interests on the global stage, funding preservation projects and promoting partnerships to help safeguard the country’s cultural legacy and support broader socio-economic recovery.

**Ukrainian creative products are competitive on the international stage, with a notable contribution from the country's youth.**

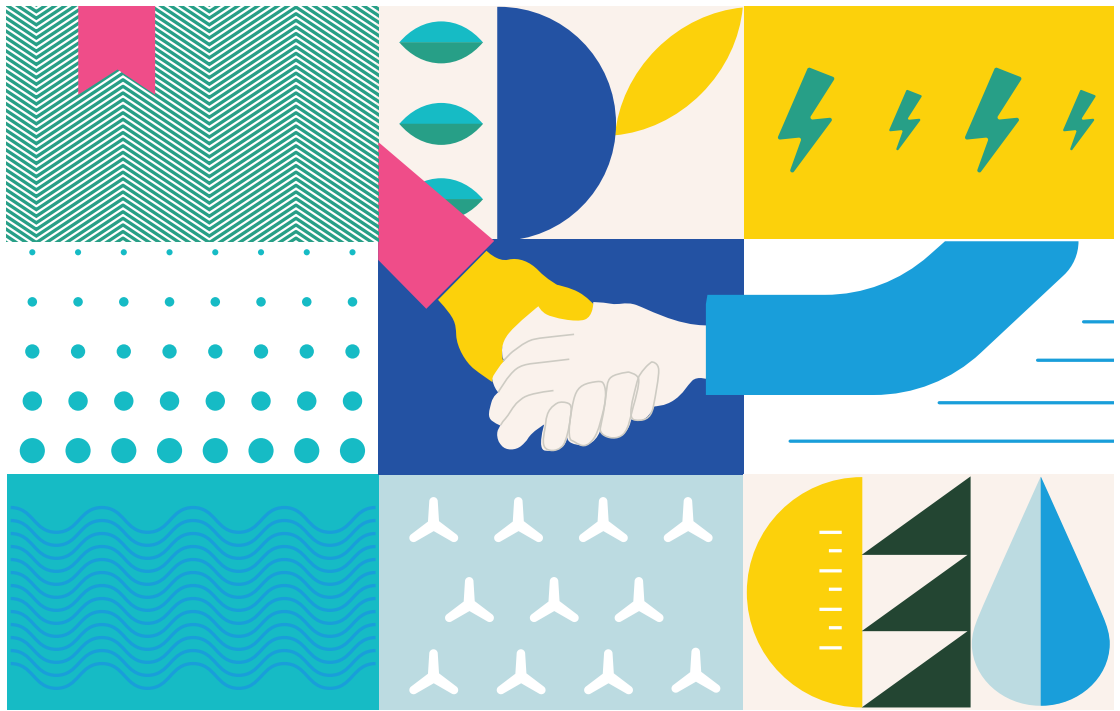
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- The government, in collaboration with international partners, operates a special grants programme aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs in the creative industries.
- Centres of creative economy across Ukraine, in partnership with Ukrainian business schools, operate a mentorship programme for recent university graduates to assist them in establishing their ventures.
- By 2030, National and international institutions organise experience-exchange programmes to equip young creative entrepreneurs with essential enterprise management skills, contributing to the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).
- A visionary management programme is introduced by Ukrainian foundations and NGOs to provide young creative entrepreneurs with insights into value-driven, socially responsible, and sustainable enterprise practices.









# Energy Security and Efficiency

Marta Leshyk | Nazarii Pomohaibo

## P R E A M B L E

The destruction of Ukraine's energy infrastructure by Russia has been catastrophic not only for the country and its citizens, but also for other European countries dependent on its energy exports. Major cities, including Kyiv, have endured severe blackouts after relentless missile strikes as 100% of the country's energy facilities have been damaged or destroyed. The loss of output from the occupied Zaporizhia nuclear plant, which previously provided a fifth of Ukraine's annual generation, is being weaponised by Russia, which uses the facility as a potential nuclear threat. Faced with severe financial

constraints, the government is working to restore basic electricity service, while implementing the comprehensive reforms needed to build a modern, resilient energy system. Post-war sustainable reconstruction will require unprecedented collaboration between Ukraine, its international partners, and the private sector.

This chapter is targeted at policymakers in Ukraine and abroad, major energy businesses and investors, international organisations, and diplomatic actors capable of strengthening bilateral collaboration.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### Marta Leshyk, 19 y.o.

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Favorite Thing About Ukraine:

Brave, resilient, and freedom-loving  
people

### Nazarii Pomohaibo, 19 y.o.

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Student



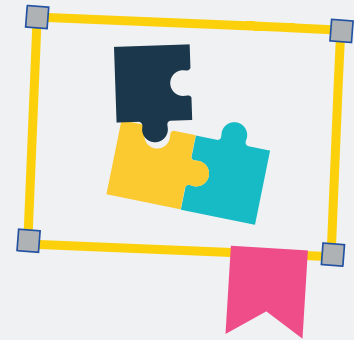
Jagiellonian University



Favorite Thing About Ukraine:

We fight. Against all odds, we fight.

This chapter explores how governments, international institutions, and the private sector can work together to rebuild Ukraine's energy system, while ensuring financial stability, protecting vulnerable populations, and enabling integration into the European energy market. It also examines policy and infrastructure changes necessary to develop a more efficient, resilient, and self-sufficient energy model for the future. The focus is on decentralisation, diversification, and efficiency, which are necessary for initial reconstruction efforts that will ensure swift energy transition in the future.



## SUMMARY

The chapter on Ukraine's energy sector reconstruction and development focuses on several key areas. The aim is the modernisation and decentralisation of the energy infrastructure to develop a resilient, cost-effective, and sustainable system. This includes introducing gas turbines for decentralisation and modernising equipment and transmission capabilities to increase electricity import capacities. Workforce development is another crucial aspect, with staff training through state reform and support from international companies. This strategy aims to create incentives to prevent brain drain and to develop a skilled local workforce. Energy efficiency is a priority, with plans to rebuild destroyed buildings using energy-efficient standards and to provide additional subsidies for energy efficiency from the European Union. The focus is on leapfrogging to modern, renewable, and sustainable energy production methods, and on supporting the formation and development of local energy cooperatives.

European integration and partnerships play a significant role, with efforts to align Ukrainian policy with EU legislation for further integration. This includes building and modernising trans-European partnerships in energy sectors and achieving full integration of energy-sector policy in the EU-Ukraine association agreement by 2027.

To stimulate economic growth, at least three major investment expos should be organised annually for Ukrainian small and medium-sized enterprises and foreign businesses. The energy export potential to position Ukraine as a regional energy leader should be explored.

The chapter also emphasises climate commitments, setting specific goals, and renewing commitments to international climate agreements.

## ANALYSIS

Ukraine's energy sector faces severe challenges, with \$486 billion needed for reconstruction over a decade, including \$48.6 billion for energy recovery.<sup>22</sup> With 61%<sup>23</sup> of electricity capacity damaged, resulting in \$56.5 billion<sup>24</sup> in losses, key issues include infrastructure attacks, power deficits, and gas reliance for heating. Despite \$1 billion<sup>25</sup> in aid and ongoing solutions like localised grids, gaps remain in long-term security, sustainable financing, and balancing recovery with sustainability. Key actors include the Ukrainian government, international institutions, EU, and energy companies. The sector grapples with extensive damage across all power generation types, including 90% of wind and 75% of thermal capacity. An acute power deficit is expected, with demand exceeding supply by 2.3 GW in summer 2024. International support, including €300 million from EBRD, focuses on grid upgrades and infrastructure reconstruction.<sup>26</sup> Significant challenges persist, including protecting infrastructure against future attacks, securing sustainable financing, and aligning reconstruction with eco-friendly standards. Energy independence and reducing centralised system reliance are critical objectives, requiring diversification of energy sources and reimagining distribution networks. Key actors navigate complex reconstruction while maintaining essential services. The EU provides policy support and integration efforts, while private companies bring innovation and expertise.

On the policy side, significant progress was made, outlined by its 78% compliance with EU energy-sector requirements<sup>27</sup> even during times of war. However, over 70% of import dependency for nuclear fuel, gas, and petroleum products still calls for urgent policy

transformation and the creation of new partnerships, already highlighted in the National Economic Strategy, urging for diversification of energy sources (under 30% dependency on a single supplier).<sup>28</sup> Energy resilience was also boosted by decisions such as the 2024 acquisition of full ENTSO-E membership<sup>29</sup> and a secured €50 billion from the Ukraine Facility programme.<sup>30</sup> Energy efficiency has also been accounted for by the new energy labelling system, setting requirements for energy-consuming products in accordance with EU legislation.<sup>31</sup> One of the current aims of mutual work is increasing the competitiveness of Ukraine in the energy sector, taking into account long term decarbonisation commitments taken on by Ukraine in the Paris Agreement and Montreal Protocol, keeping in mind Ukraine's greenhouse gas emissions could increase by 2030 after the restoration of the country's territorial integrity and economy.<sup>32</sup> To ensure that this process also keeps in mind the human resources factor, Ukraine, Germany and international partners launched a Skills Alliance for Ukraine to help train the skilled workers that Ukraine needs for reconstruction, with Germany and international partners announcing investments of over €700 million.<sup>33</sup>



## VISION OF THE TEAM

### **Strengthen Ukraine's energy sector through modernised equipment, decentralised infrastructure, and a skilled workforce, while supporting both immediate recovery and long-term sustainable development plans.**

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A resilient, cost-effective, and sustainable energy infrastructure is developed that encourages efficient consumption patterns, bolsters transmission capabilities, and pursues energy independence while exploring opportunities for energy exportation. This comprehensive approach creates a robust energy ecosystem that can withstand challenges, meet domestic needs, and potentially contribute to regional energy security. The proposed solutions include:

- Staff training through state reform and support from private international companies create homegrown workforce incentives that prevent brain drain.
- Ensuring that destroyed buildings are rebuilt using energy-efficient standards (Directive 2010/31/EU transposed by the Law of Ukraine “On Energy Efficiency of Buildings”), providing additional subsidies for energy efficiency funded by the EU.
- Introducing gas turbines provided by partners as an interim way of decentralisation, producing an additional 200 MW+ of energy.
- Focusing reconstruction on the principle of leapfrogging to replace outdated and damaged systems with modern, renewable and sustainable means of energy production.

### **Ukraine creates an efficient and affordable energy system that promotes responsible consumption, enhances transmission capabilities, and strives for self-sufficiency, while exploring export potential.**

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The energy landscape is a resilient and sustainable ecosystem. By prioritising efficiency and affordability, energy accessibility is ensured while encouraging responsible usage. Enhanced transmission capabilities creates robust infrastructure to meet growing demands. Striving for self-sufficiency boosts energy security and national resilience. Exploring export potential can position Ukraine as a regional energy leader, contributing to European energy security and economic growth. This approach addresses reconstruction needs while laying the foundation for a green, innovative energy sector that drives long-term prosperity. The proposed solutions include:

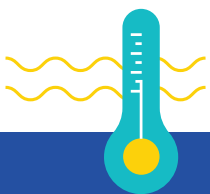
- Self-sufficient energy supply and accessibility of sustainable energy devices through supporting the formation of the local energy cooperatives and their further development, while also lessening the governmental and bureaucratic pressure on the cooperatives.
- Modernisation of equipment and transmission capabilities, further enlarging the throughput of electricity for higher import capacities through finishing outdated grid renovation.

## Ukraine's policy aligns with EU legislation, allowing for further integration and partnership.

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It takes into account Ukraine's national strategies and interests while ensuring the advancement of competitiveness and climate policy objectives. The energy system is independent, resilient, renewable, and attractive to foreign investors. The proposed solutions include:

- Building, developing, and modernising trans-European partnerships and networks in the transport, energy, and digital sectors by promoting cross-border cooperation in renewable energy, considering long-term decarbonisation commitments and the objectives of increasing European competitiveness.
- Providing for the unified legislative system and achieving full integration of energy policy in the EU-Ukraine association agreement by 2027, supporting the review of pending draft laws that are derived from EU directives.
- Organising at least three major expos per year for Ukrainian small and medium-sized enterprises and foreign businesses to showcase investment opportunities and to stimulate investment in the energy sector.
- Setting specific goals and renewing commitments to international climate agreements, such as the Paris Agreement and the Montreal Protocol, as well as the adoption of their corresponding laws.





# Resilient Networks: Safeguarding Ukrainian SMEs from Cyber Threats

Mariia Kalashnyk | Szymon Górny | Yuliia Pavlenko

## PREAMBLE

As Ukraine navigates an era of profound digital transformation, its small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) urgently need to strengthen their cybersecurity. With the rise of digital threats accelerated by geopolitical tensions, they face an evolving landscape where cybersecurity is not just an operational


requirement but also a critical component of business resilience. The Russian full-scale invasion has underscored the strategic importance of secure digital infrastructures, propelling Ukraine's SMEs to adopt robust cybersecurity measures to safeguard their assets and data.





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**Against this backdrop, this chapter seeks to answer these key questions:**

- 1** How to facilitate the digital transformation of SMEs to implement best international practices and frameworks for cybersecurity?
- 2** How to increase the share of SMEs that proactively implement cybersecurity measures?
- 3** Drawing on lessons learned from the invasion, how can Ukraine and global actors build a more secure and resilient cybersecurity infrastructure, particularly for SMEs?



The aim is to empower SMEs with the knowledge, tools, and networks necessary to secure their digital operations and withstand cyber threats. Fostering collaboration among government agencies, international organizations, cybersecurity firms, and educational institutions will lay the foundation for a resilient cybersecurity ecosystem that promotes sustainable growth for SMEs.

This chapter targets a diverse audience—including CERT-EU, the European Union Agency

for Cybersecurity (ENISA), the European Commission, the Council of Europe, Ukrainian government bodies, private-sector firms, academic researchers, and NGOs—to support a coordinated effort in strengthening Ukraine’s cybersecurity landscape. This collaborative approach envisions a future where Ukrainian SMEs thrive within a secure and resilient digital economy, safeguarded from cyber threats and fortified by international best practices.

## SUMMARY



Despite their economic significance, Ukraine's SMEs show limited digital adoption, especially in cybersecurity—a critical gap given the rising cyber threats. Various initiatives support this transition, such as the NATO-Ukraine Cyber Defence Fund, OECD collaborations, and USAID's "Cybersecurity for Critical Infrastructure Activity", which aim to bolster digital resilience. Additionally, the government has adopted strategies to promote SME digital transformation and cybersecurity up to 2027. However, challenges persist, particularly in low SME engagement, limited cybersecurity awareness, and gaps in accessible, affordable security resources.

Key issues include a shortage of qualified cybersecurity professionals, lack of awareness of available cybersecurity initiatives, and insufficient access to secure cloud solutions

### To address these, the following solutions are proposed:

**Human Resources:** Establish cybersecurity audits, training, and a checklist for SMEs to proactively manage cyber threats. Intensive boot camps aim to increase the workforce of qualified cybersecurity professionals available to SMEs.

**Funding:** Provide financial support through grants, vouchers, and loans, enabling SMEs to afford cybersecurity expertise and tools.

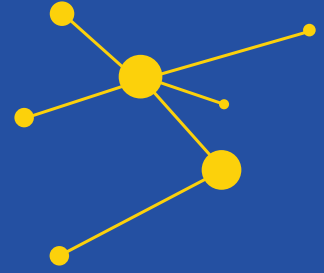
**Collaboration:** Build a cybersecurity ecosystem involving partnerships among SMEs, tech startups, and educational institutions. This fosters innovative solutions through shared knowledge, hackathons, and mentorship.

**Simplification and Access:** Simplify cybersecurity guidelines and ensure SMEs access real-time government-led threat detection and response systems through an online portal.

**Education and Awareness:** Update educational programmes to reflect global cybersecurity standards, establish continuous learning for experts, and launch awareness campaigns for SMEs.

**Infrastructure:** Strengthen digital infrastructures by promoting secure cloud services, implementing virtual private networks, and utilising artificial intelligence (AI) for automated threat response.

In summary, while existing frameworks and international support systems are enhancing Ukraine's cybersecurity landscape, the main challenge lies in making these resources accessible, affordable, and practical for SMEs.



Small and medium-sized enterprises represent 99.9% of all enterprises in Ukraine, contributing 81.6% of total business employment, generating 70.2% of added value.<sup>34</sup> Despite their economic significance, SMEs show a limited uptake of digital tools, with only 47% of medium-sized businesses and 30% of small businesses having websites.<sup>35</sup> This digital gap highlights the need for targeted initiatives to support SME digital transformation.

The Second National Security Strategy (2020-2025)<sup>36</sup> provides the legal framework for national security efforts, including in cybersecurity. International support plays a critical role in enhancing cyber defence capabilities. For example, the NATO-Ukraine Trust Fund on Cyber Defence aims to strengthen the country's cyber resilience by providing hardware, software, technical assistance, advisory services, and training.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, the OECD, in partnership with the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the Entrepreneurship and Export Promotion Office, is promoting digital transformation among SMEs.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, USAID's "Cybersecurity for Critical Infrastructure Activity" programme focuses on bolstering Ukraine's critical infrastructure against cyberattacks through collaboration between the government, private sector, academia, and civil society.<sup>39</sup> The EU Cyber Rapid Response Team also contributes by cooperating with Ukraine to support its cybersecurity efforts.<sup>40</sup>

The government has approved the Strategy for the Recovery, Sustainable Development, and Digital Transformation of SMEs until 2027,<sup>41</sup> along with an action plan for its implementation between 2024 and 2027.

In addition, the Ministry of Digital Transformation, alongside its partners, has launched a cyber diagnostics programme to assist businesses in strengthening their cybersecurity defences.<sup>42</sup>

International collaborations also play a pivotal role, with the EU's Cyber Rapid Response Team and the US Cyber Command's "Hunt Forward" teams working to safeguard financial networks from cyber intrusions.<sup>43</sup> Private-sector giants like Amazon, Google, and Microsoft contribute by helping to migrate critical data and services to secure cloud platforms.<sup>44</sup>

Many cybersecurity initiatives have been introduced in Ukraine, but they are not yet widely adopted, particularly among SMEs. For example, "Bug Bounty Programs", which invite ethical hackers to identify vulnerabilities in company systems and offer solutions



to secure them, are primarily used by large companies, with limited adoption among SMEs.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, the “Cybersecurity Mentorship Program for SMEs” is used sporadically,<sup>46</sup> often following a top-down approach, and many small businesses remain unaware of its existence.

International best practices offer valuable insights. For instance, the US National Institute of Standards and Technology’s “Cybersecurity Framework 2.0” project helps businesses of all sizes manage and reduce cybersecurity risks effectively.<sup>47</sup> The Zero Trust security model, which emphasises strict access controls, user-identity verification, and comprehensive network monitoring, is already widely used by SMEs globally to enhance cybersecurity practices, but it has yet to gain significant traction in Ukraine.

Ukraine’s SMEs have access to numerous recommendations from governmental and non-governmental organisations, but they often find it overwhelming to implement all of them and may still remain unaware of potential cybersecurity risks. Furthermore, many small businesses are isolated from government efforts in threat detection and incident response, leaving them vulnerable to attacks without access to timely intelligence.

Moreover, SMEs frequently lack access to qualified cybersecurity consultants, regular audits, and training resources, making it difficult for them to maintain strong security measures even when solutions exist.<sup>48</sup>

The cybersecurity support infrastructure for SMEs is also underdeveloped. The market for cybersecurity specialists remains uncertain in terms of supply and accessibility, and there is weak collaboration between SMEs, startups, and educational institutions. Additionally, SMEs often lack the expertise and prioritisation needed to implement secure cloud solutions effectively, and AI integration remains underutilised, with limited access to tools that could enhance their cybersecurity posture.<sup>49</sup>

The key actors that can help address these challenges include the Ministry of Digital Transformation, the State Service of Special Communications and Information Protection, and CERT-UA.



## Human Resources

### **Strengthen Cybersecurity Resilience for SMEs.**

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By 2030, 50% of Ukrainian SMEs conduct regular (at least once a year) cybersecurity audits and ensure comprehensive training for employees on responding to and preventing cybersecurity threats.

- CERT-UA and the State Service for Government Communication and Protection design and distribute a streamlined cybersecurity audit checklist to SMEs, helping them systematically identify potential vulnerabilities. SMEs use this checklist to prioritise actions, assess immediate cybersecurity needs, and facilitate access to professional audit services.

### **Enhance Access to Qualified Cybersecurity Professionals for SMEs.**

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Within the next five years, Ukraine expands training programmes and facilitates SMEs' access to new qualified cybersecurity staff members to meet the growing demand for this expertise.

- Cybersecurity NGOs launch intensive boot-camp programmes that provide practical, hands-on training, equipping participants with the skills necessary to quickly enter the cybersecurity workforce.

## Funding

### **Improve Affordable Access to Cybersecurity Expertise and Solutions for SMEs.**

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By 2028, Ukraine implements initiatives to provide SMEs with affordable access to cybersecurity experts and solutions.

- International donors and organisations offer grants and vouchers that enable SMEs to carry out cybersecurity audits and implement necessary solutions.
- Local governments and the parliament establish subsidy programmes to assist SMEs in hiring cybersecurity experts for comprehensive risk assessments and security enhancements.
- Ukrainian banks develop loan programmes specifically designed to finance cybersecurity audits and the subsequent implementation of recommended protective measures.

# Collaboration

## **Foster a Collaborative Cybersecurity Ecosystem for SMEs.**

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There is an established cybersecurity ecosystem in which SMEs can collaborate with cybersecurity tech startups, experts, and foreign educational institutions to access cutting-edge technologies and best practices over the next decade.

- NGOs and large private companies organise hackathons and competitions that promote teamwork among SMEs, startups, and students from educational institutions to create innovative cybersecurity solutions.
- Partnerships are formed between SMEs and tech startups to facilitate knowledge exchange and resource-sharing, enhancing the development of advanced cybersecurity tools.

## **Simplify Cybersecurity Guidelines for SMEs.**

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Over the next seven years, governmental and non-governmental bodies collaborate to simplify cybersecurity guidelines for SMEs, aiming to raise awareness of potential risks and to facilitate the adoption of regulations.

- CERT-UA and the State Service for Government Communication and Protection develop a standardised cybersecurity audit checklist, allowing SMEs to easily assess vulnerabilities and prioritise necessary improvements.

## **Ensure Access to Government-Led Threat Detection and Incident Response Systems for SMEs.**

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By the year 2030, Ukraine undertakes a coordinated effort to guarantee that SMEs have access to government-led threat detection and incident response systems, providing timely intelligence and assistance in preventing cyberattacks.

- The Ministry of Digital Transformation develops an online portal where SMEs can register for access to threat detection services, receive real-time intelligence updates, and report cybersecurity incidents.

## **Enhance Cybersecurity Education Through International Collaboration.**

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Within the next seven years, Ukraine collaborates with international universities to update its cybersecurity curriculum, ensuring that students receive cutting-edge education and practical skills aligned with global standards.

- Ukrainian universities launch dual-degree and student-exchange programmes in cybersecurity and cyber law with partner institutions in the EU, fostering cross-cultural learning and knowledge-sharing.
- The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Digital Transformation, establishes a working group of Ukrainian and international cybersecurity experts to develop an updated educational programme tailored to current industry needs.

## **Promote Continuous Learning for Cybersecurity Experts.**

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By the end of 2029, Ukraine is ensuring that cybersecurity experts participate in continuous learning programmes, keeping their knowledge up to date with the latest advances and threats.

- The Ministry of Digital Transformation organises an annual international cybersecurity conference that facilitates knowledge exchange and showcases the latest advancements in the field. Workshops and seminars are incorporated into the conference agenda, providing practical training and insights on emerging threats and innovative solutions.

## **Enhance Cybersecurity Awareness Among SMEs.**

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By the end of 2029, Ukrainian SMEs are aware of the importance of cybersecurity, with 60% actively engaging in awareness programmes and training sessions.

- Cybersecurity NGOs in Ukraine launch online and offline campaigns in collaboration with regional Diia Business Hubs to promote cybersecurity awareness, including the development of the Cyber Brama platform, which educates SMEs on preventing and counteracting cyber-crime.
- The Ministry of Digital Transformation initiates a comprehensive social media campaign highlighting the significance of cybersecurity for SMEs, partnering with cybersecurity experts to disseminate valuable information and resources.



## **Strengthen Secure and Resilient Digital Infrastructures.**

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By 2030, Ukraine moves towards decentralised, secure, and resilient digital infrastructures by enhancing the security of cloud services, virtual private networks, and remote-work tools, with SMEs prioritising secure data-storage solutions and cloud security.

- Government-backed initiatives such as “Diia Cyber Business” support SMEs in improving cloud security by implementing essential measures like encryption, multi-factor authentication, and regular system updates to ensure compliance with international data protection standards.

## **Leverage AI to Enhance Cybersecurity for SMEs.**

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Leading up to 2030, Ukraine integrates the widespread use of AI in cybersecurity, enabling SMEs to become more agile in responding to cyber threats by automating their attack responses.

- AI-based monitoring tools from technology providers equip SMEs with the capability to swiftly detect and neutralise cyber threats, significantly reducing response times to incidents.



# School Education



Viktoriiia Barylovska | Loli Chibko | Florian Huber | Kateryna Korpalo

## PREAMBLE

The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine has greatly undermined the access to and quality of education for Ukrainian students. Every seventh school<sup>50</sup> is damaged, and almost 3,800 institutions<sup>51</sup> have been exposed to bombing. Nearly a million children receive their education online.<sup>52</sup> Constant air raids and power outages disrupt the learning process, contributing to mental-health problems and the educational gap. The PISA 2022 education survey revealed a gap of 4.5 years of formal education in maths between students from rural and urban areas.<sup>53</sup> It is of critical importance that every child regains access to high-quality education for its future prospects. What is more, today's students are the future of Ukraine and will be the drivers of its reconstruction.


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you find important

## The chapter focuses on three questions:

- 1 How to ensure the access to and quality of education, as well as the socialisation of children in wartime?
- 2 How to improve the infrastructure and sustainability of school education and achieve a safe learning environment?
- 3 How can Ukraine and the EU support Ukrainian children's pursuit of education abroad?

The aim is to make sure that children continue pursuing education no matter where they are located. Taking into account educational losses since the start of the full-scale invasion and online education during COVID-19, it is crucial to reduce the inequality gap between children in villages and cities, and between frontline territories and safer areas, as well as create opportunities for socialisation.



The target audience of the chapter consists of the Ministry of Education and Science, international donors such as the European Commission, United Nations agencies, members of the European Parliament, international organisations (for example, IREX), European and Ukrainian city councils and municipalities, Ukrainian and international NGOs, international and national businesses



## SUMMARY

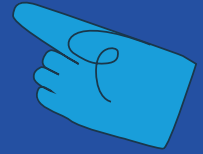


Students in Ukraine are struggling to learn, with many schools damaged or destroyed and lacking access to the internet, as cities face severe wartime challenges. The war has destroyed infrastructure, disrupted electricity, and damaged transportation networks, making rebuilding efforts essential. To support community recovery, these efforts must prioritise creating resilient and modern infrastructure to restore vital services.

The war has severely impacted access to education, with many schools being bombed and children unable to attend classes, leaving their academic progress in jeopardy. Rebuilding educational facilities and providing alternative learning solutions are crucial to ensure that children continue to receive an education despite the war, helping to maintain a sense of normalcy and hope for their future.

A decline in international support for Ukraine, especially from the EU and the United States, stems largely from challenges in donor coordination and the need for a deeper understanding of the local context. Addressing these issues is essential to ensure that contributions are effectively utilised and aligned with real needs.

To rebuild Ukraine's educational facilities, the main focus is on integrating modern, energy-efficient technologies in school construction, such as renewable energy sources and efficient heating/cooling systems. The aim is also to enhance digital platforms and infrastructure for distance-learning, ensuring devices and internet access are available, especially in rural areas. Additionally, it is important to foster non-formal education hubs with international support and engaging local NGOs for career and personal development workshops. EU partners and donors should assist in rebuilding school shelters, while the government should create transparent tools and platforms to track and display school needs and achievements.



The full-scale invasion by Russia has severely impacted Ukraine's education sector, jeopardising the right to education for 5.7 million children as of January 2024, according to UNESCO.<sup>54</sup> Every seventh school has suffered damage, with 400 destroyed and almost 3,800 affected, resulting in nearly \$14 billion in repair costs.<sup>55</sup>

Due to the war, only one-third of children can attend school in person, while others rely on online or hybrid learning as schools near hostilities remain closed.<sup>56</sup> The PISA 2022 study revealed substantial educational disparities, with students in rural areas lagging 4.5 years behind their urban peers in mathematics, sciences and English.<sup>57</sup>

As of January 2023, 62% of students had access to shelters, though coverage is better in central and western regions than near frontline zones. The war has harmed students and teachers' mental health, with 61% of parents observing high stress and anxiety in their children.<sup>58</sup>

The war has also intensified teacher shortages, which are worsened by low salaries, particularly for maths, English, and computer science instructors. Between 2018 and 2023, the number of teachers decreased by 10.9% in urban schools and 22.8% in rural schools, with fewer young teachers joining the workforce.<sup>59</sup> According to the latest research, 40%

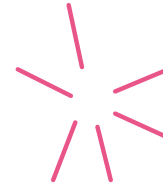
of teachers may leave the profession over the next five years.

The war has led to a severe brain drain, with over 6 million Ukrainian refugees in Europe, nearly half of whom hold university degrees, which poses a threat to the country's future development. School students abroad face challenges adapting to foreign systems while also risking disconnection from their Ukrainian roots.

To address these challenges, EU and UN agencies support digitalisation and online-learning initiatives, while NGOs and international donors help rebuild educational infrastructure. Mental-health support is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and initiatives like the "How are you?" programme of the Olena Zelenska Foundation. Programmes such as "Teach4Ukraine" and "Let's Shake Hands" offer tutoring to bridge educational gaps, especially between urban and rural areas.

The government's initiatives, like "The Ecosystem for Making Up for Educational Losses"<sup>60</sup> and the "Mriya" digitalisation project<sup>61</sup> or the "New Ukrainian School" reform<sup>62</sup> aim to advance school education. Additionally, a €100 million EU-Ukrainian package and the Ukraine Recovery Programme<sup>63</sup> are under way to rehabilitate educational facilities and social infrastructure.

## The key challenges to achieving quality and safety of school education are as follows:



- Frequent air raids and constant shelling disrupt the educational process, leading to significant learning losses for students.
- Power outages often hinder online learning while in-person learning faces security risks or is often impossible due to severely damaged infrastructure.
- Limited online learning skills and lack of qualified teachers and technological support in rural areas result in significant educational gaps and inequality between schools in cities and villages.
- Distance learning and online schooling reduce opportunities for children to interact outside of the classroom, limiting extracurricular activities and social growth.
- Schools are equipped with outdated Soviet-era infrastructure and are energy-inefficient, with only 62% of students having access to adequate shelters, making the educational process even more difficult in wartime.
- Donors struggle to identify and address critical needs in the education sector due to a lack of understanding of current local situations, while schools do not have the expertise to communicate their priorities effectively.
- Teachers and students face high levels of stress and anxiety as well as increased workloads, which has a negative impact on their performance and work.
- Students abroad risk losing their connection to Ukraine while facing educational setbacks, language barriers, and challenges adapting to foreign school systems.

The key actors that can help address these challenges include: the Ministry of Education and Science, governmental partners and UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, etc.), municipalities, school administrations and teachers, parents, NGOs and educational initiatives, international donors and experts, EU partner cities, the business sector and civil society.

### **Sustainable school infrastructure is present in every community.**

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National and local authorities cooperate with donors to ensure that schools have energy-efficient shelters equipped with modern technologies for digital learning and effective in-person studying. School staff have basic knowledge about using top-notch devices. In regions with ongoing hostilities, there are underground schools that enable students to receive education without disruptions. Rebuilding of school infrastructure is aligned with EU standards. To achieve this aim, we propose the following:

- The government adopts the prioritisation framework, according to which foreign donors start with the most urgent needs and then progress to less damaged areas.
- The government and civil society organisations together develop and constantly update the tools such as the “Recovery

and Destruction Map” Register<sup>6465</sup> that would include the current status quo of damaged schools and their needs.

- European municipalities supervise and contribute to the renovation efforts of their partner city in Ukraine, providing material, technical, financial, and expert support.
- Donors align their efforts in school renovation with the use of tools such as registries of damages from the Russian invasion.<sup>66</sup>
- The government, with the assistance of international donors such as USAID,<sup>67</sup> constructs temporary modular schools and underground<sup>68</sup> schools<sup>69</sup> in regions with ongoing hostilities.
- Local businesses partner with local schools to equip schools with sustainable materials (solar panels, generators, tablets), and NGOs and activists facilitate and campaign for such partnerships.

### **The shortage of teachers is reduced**

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Schools in small villages and towns have enough newly recruited staff while other teachers are being upskilled. The teaching profession is more valued in society and teachers receive competitive salaries. To achieve this aim, we propose the following:

- The Ministry of Education and Science creates a mentoring institute to support young teachers (proper support for students at all stages of teaching education, from internships to mentoring in the workplace, would help retain young teachers, whose number has fallen dramatically).<sup>70</sup>

- Hromadas<sup>71</sup> in the rural areas use the funds available to them to pay the additional allowances provided for teachers.
- The Ministry of Education and Science implements the reform of trajectories of entry into the teaching profession by rethinking and enhancing pedagogical practice by increasing its duration and employing third- and fourth-year students at schools in smaller towns and villages who will work under the supervision of the teacher and receive monetary compensation. The ministry will need to ensure that universities have a network of partner schools within the area.



- The government develops initiatives enabling professionals with expertise in a specific subject, but without formal education degrees, to work as teachers in exchange for tax incentives and social benefits. For that purpose, the professionals can undergo short teacher training programmes.
- The Ministry of Education and Science promotes competitiveness among teachers through national state programmes of professional development and positive reinforcement by providing teachers with training, mentorship, and resources to improve their skills and knowledge, which results in better educational outcomes for students.
- The government collaborates with the “Teach for Ukraine” programme and co-develops other relevant projects with the help of national partners, Ukrainian businesses, and EU donors that will bring highly qualified teachers to rural areas in exchange for subsidies and other social benefits. Offering incentives such as higher salaries, housing, and transport allowances will help to attract and retain teachers in rural areas. The Ministry of Education and Science will create short- and long-term initiatives to encourage the return of teachers from abroad or enabling online classes for students in critical regions.
- Ukrainian NGOs and social media influencers raise the status of the teaching profession and promote its societal importance as well as involving more young teachers at schools. Campaigns target policymakers and civil society in Ukraine as well as the diaspora.
- The government introduces long leave with job security (sabbaticals) for six months or a year to raise the prestige of the profession and improve the wellbeing of teachers.

**High quality of education is maintained and the educational gap between cities and villages is reduced from 4.5 years to 1 year.**

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Children and teachers have access to updated educational materials. Rural schools have greater financial autonomy to implement the “New Ukrainian School” reform and optimise the educational network, and logistical support is improved and donor support is available to implement sustainable practices. Educational performance between students in rural and urban schools is more balanced by reducing the existing gap to 1 years. To achieve this aim, we propose the following:

- The government successfully implements the “New Ukrainian School” reform with

the support of EU partners, educational NGOs, and local experts. International donors support reforms effort through programmes such as “Education Modernization Projects” and results-based financing initiatives like the World Bank’s “Systems Approach for Better Education Results”.<sup>72</sup>

- The Ministry of Education and Science implements EU-supported training in management, finances and grant writing for schools in rural communities. Encouraging community involvement helps create a sense of ownership and investment in the success of rural schools.
- The EU and Ukraine create twin-city collaborations in the school sector that help rural schools to exchange knowledge and adopt best foreign practices.

- The government centralises the existing platforms for tutoring and catch-up classes into a national system that is accessible, updated, and of high quality as part of its collaboration with NGOs, educational initiatives, and small businesses.
- The EU and Ukraine jointly promote greater involvement of Ukrainian organisations in Erasmus+ international actions (for example, raising awareness about the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ programme by supporting the delivery of additional school books for Ukrainian learners) and working together with EU experts to facilitate the recognition of academic qualifications.
- The Ministry of Education and Science and Ukrainian NGOs promote further cooperation between schools within each oblast and provide support to the education of displaced children by developing teachers' unions and associations as well as fully exploiting the potential of online platforms in the area of school education.
- The EU enables the participation of the Ministry of Education and Science in the Eurydice network<sup>73</sup> and the capacities of sport and youth organisations (for example, by participating in the Erasmus+ "Capacity Building for Youth and Sport for the Eastern Partnership").

### **Students and teachers have consistent and uninterrupted access to educational services.**

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Local authorities ensure that modern energy-efficiency technologies are implemented, as well as heat modernisation and safety standards in the reconstruction of destroyed buildings and the constructions of new ones. All new buildings include bomb shelters and safety infrastructure in their design in case of future military conflict. Local authorities, through transparent public procurement, ensure the resilience of utility networks for the supply of drinking water, telecommunications, electricity and transport to the population. To achieve this aim, we propose the following:

- Central and local governments and school principals prioritise the use of modern, energy-efficient technologies in the reconstruction of school buildings and the construction of new ones. This can include energy-saving insulation, renewable energy sources (solar panels,
- wind turbines), and efficient heating/cooling systems to reduce energy costs and environmental impact. Governments also work with local businesses or foreign companies already involved in the reconstruction of Ukraine, with a strong sustainable development charter.
- The government scales up the use of robust digital platforms and infrastructure for distance-learning to enable uninterrupted education. This includes online-learning platforms, mobile classrooms, and reliable internet access, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas.
- Local municipalities enhance partnerships with the private sector and NGOs competent in trauma-informed education. This includes collaboration with technology companies and NGOs to provide digital learning tools, equipment, and software at a reduced cost or through sponsorships. Initiatives include providing tablets or laptops, mobile Wi-Fi devices, and online learning resources to students and teachers.

## **Students in every region beneficially interact and socialise outside of classrooms.**

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Local authorities cooperate with Ukrainian and international NGOs to ensure that students have opportunities for non-formal education through extracurricular activities and career workshops. In cases where students receive online education, they are able to spend time together in libraries and youth centres. To achieve this aim, we propose the following:

- The government and Ukrainian NGOs together cultivate a culture of non-formal education hubs with the support of international organisations, such as UNICEF<sup>7475</sup> and GoGlobal<sup>76</sup> with opportunities to network

## **There is a safe learning environment where teachers and students are digitally literate and supported mentally.**

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All teachers and students have basic skills in online learning and digital literacy, and they have the devices necessary for remote learning. They are aware of existing governmental resources on mental-health support and know-how to cope with the stress and anxiety caused by war-time education. All schools have adequate and energy-efficient shelters, and they are equipped to accommodate the learning process in them. To achieve this aim, we propose the following:

- EU partners and international donors help reconstruct and equip school shelters based on priority needs and current infrastructure conditions.
- The EU provides assistance to implement sustainable practices and long-term energy sources as well as modern furniture for shelters and school buildings.

and explore different fields (such as 3D printing, graphic design, language courses).

- The government, regional councils, and city municipalities with the support of international donors transform old libraries into innovative hubs with educational materials and equipment for hobbies. In areas where it is feasible, they construct pop-up libraries (such as an Ideas Box<sup>77</sup>) in youth centres and shelters.
- Regional councils and city municipalities engage local NGOs in preparing workshops on career development (such as in motion design, cinematography, IT), sports and personal development etc.
- School psychologists conduct trauma-informed training and stress-resilience workshops for teachers and students using interactive and informal approaches.
- Schools adopt effective career-guidance tools and internships/hands-on practice opportunities from partners (such as NGOs and EU) in the next two years to support students in their further professional choices and to lower anxiety regarding their future.
- With the support of the EU and professionals in this field, the government organises centralised training in digital learning for students and implements innovative ways of engaging online teaching for teachers, providing local schools with expertise and necessary digital devices.
- International donors consult with local educational NGOs and foundations, such as the SavED Foundation, that have extensive field experience and a deep understanding of the needs of communities in order to design and implement responsive projects.

## **Donors increase their investments in the education sector with a deep understanding of the local context and strategic use of resources.**

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Transparency and accountability are key to fostering trust and encouraging investment. Ukraine creates a transparent and attractive environment for donors and foreign investors. This not only ensures that funds are used effectively but also highlights the positive changes brought about by investments. Local authorities collaborate with educational institutions to provide regular updates on funded projects, share success stories, and offer detailed financial reports. This approach builds confidence, transparency, and trust among donors and investors, demonstrating the tangible benefits of their contributions. To achieve this aim, we propose the following:

- The government establishes by 2026 a tool for local authorities to have better insight into schools' needs.
- The government creates by 2026 an online platform that gathers a detailed list of local resource needs and openly displays to potential donors what has been achieved and where with the existing funding.
- The government introduces from 2025 fiscal incentives for companies investing in the education sector.

## **The educational landscape is strengthened through European partnerships.**

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Partner schools and cities play a pivotal role in strengthening Ukraine's educational landscape, offering students and educators vital opportunities for collaboration, cultural exchange, and mutual growth. By fostering connections between Ukrainian and European schools and cities, Ukraine not only enhances the quality of its education but also builds lasting, supportive networks in Europe. Such partnerships are essential in developing a more interconnected, resilient, and culturally aware generation of Ukrainian students and educators. To achieve this aim, we propose the following:

- The EU scales up its Erasmus+ programmes<sup>78</sup> such as “EU4Youth in Ukraine” and “KA1 Learning Mobility for Individuals” in Ukraine<sup>79</sup> as of 2026, giving students and educators from Ukraine and the EU a chance to interconnect, to gain relevant skills, and to engage with new cultures.
- The EU expands its eTwinning programme in Ukraine to allow more schools to connect with EU counterparts, creating valuable opportunities for collaborative projects, cultural exchange, and shared learning. This enhanced network fosters mutual understanding and helps Ukrainian students and educators gain diverse perspectives and skills, enriching their educational experiences by 2027.
- The government facilitates city partnerships with schools in Europe by 2028.

## **Students abroad receive support from the Ukrainian government to integrate into their host society as well as to maintain connections with their homeland.**

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Enabling Ukrainian students abroad to follow the Ukrainian curriculum without being isolated from other students in their host country is essential to their well-being and the continuity of their education. Students socialise with local students but also connect with their Ukrainian roots. Students abroad maintain access to education from their host country and Ukraine while avoiding drastically increasing their workload. To achieve this aim, we propose the following:

- The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine establishes bilateral cooperation with its counterparts in the EU countries hosting the most Ukrainian students (Poland, Romania, Germany, and France). Bilateral cooperation agreement should be signed by the end of 2026 and monthly inter-ministerial meetings planned to establish dual high school diplomas (based on Ukrainian and host-country curricula) by 2030. For this cooperation, Germany and France send attachés to monitor the progress as both countries have experience in launching dual high school diplomas.<sup>80</sup> Each participating country will also consult with schools willing to implement such a diploma.
- The Ministry of Education and Science together with the European Commission and certain European education ministries set up a committee that will work on the harmonisation of the Ukrainian curriculum with European ones to facilitate the recognition of Ukrainian diplomas abroad.
- The government in cooperation with the Department of Youth of the Council of Europe promotes the valorisation of youth organisations and the importance of youth work by increasing the budget for youth organisations involved in education and youth participation. International donors such as the European Youth Foundation continue supporting youth organisations through initiatives such as the “Special Call Ukraine” one.<sup>81</sup>



# Urbanisation and Smart Cities Technologies

Viktoriia Manko | Kateryna Shyshatska | Hrach Arzumanyan | Eoghan Gately

## P R E A M B L E

In most developed cities, smart technologies are essential for enhancing the safety and comfort of residents. As Ukraine's cities continue to grow, there has been a significant rise in technological initiatives across sectors such as transport, energy, trade, and security. However, the war has posed substantial challenges for residents of the country's cities, towns, and rural areas. This chapter emphasises the long-term recovery of Ukraine, focusing on a systematic and effective approach. Citizens will be at the forefront of this process, playing a central role in making key decisions and guiding recovery efforts.

This chapter examines these issues, highlighting the specific challenges faced by citizens in different regions and the impact on their daily lives. It emphasise the long-term recovery of Ukraine, aiming to create a systemic and effective approach to recovery. The goal is to identify strategies to restore and strengthen trust between local authorities and city residents, thereby enhancing the efficiency and transparency of governance for the future development of cities.


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### Viktoriia Manko, 20 y.o.


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 Favorite Thing About Ukraine:  
What I love most about Ukraine is its history and the people who have shaped it. Today, Ukrainians are building independence and fostering a new generation of smart, creative leaders.

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The resilience and unity of the Ukrainian people.

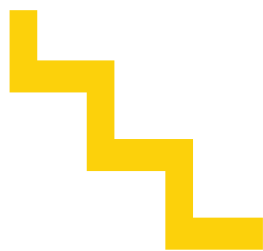
This approach focuses on the following key areas:

### 1 **Enhancing Financial Transparency and Combating Corruption:**

The objective is to reinforce transparency and eliminate illegal or corrupt practices within governmental structures. Implementing stringent oversight mechanisms and fostering accountability aims to build public trust, to ensure efficient use of public funds, and to promote ethical governance.

### 3 **Developing a Long-Term Vision for Sustainable Urban Development:**

Each Ukrainian city aims to create its own comprehensive plan for sustainable growth, deeply rooted in residents' values, local culture, and traditions. This approach ensures that urban development respects community identity while fostering resilience, environmental sustainability, and a shared vision for the future.



### 2 **Engaging Residents in Urban Development:**

By involving residents in the urban-development process will raise awareness and facilitate effective communication between residents and local authorities. This will ensure that public voices are heard and incorporated into decision-making.



The target of this chapter are actors crucial for fostering transparent, inclusive, and collaborative urban development in Ukraine, leveraging local governance, international expertise, and social policies to ensure effective recovery and trust-building, such as municipal governments, the European Alliance for Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine, the Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons, and the Ministry of Social Policy.



## SUMMARY

Public participation in urban development involves complex challenges, particularly in ensuring that local voices are integrated into planning, cultural preservation, and communications with government bodies. Infrastructure development often relies on the involvement of residents who are invested in the improvement of their neighbourhood. To foster this involvement, educational programmes are essential, as they inform residents about their rights and roles in urban planning processes. Furthermore, establishing representative bodies with clear responsibilities for public engagement is critical, as these are structured communication channels between residents and local authorities, enhancing collaboration and trust in urban development initiatives.

Ukrainian society must prepare for future urban development and connectivity, addressing the challenges posed by the war, which has displaced many from high-risk areas affected by instability and damage. Cities must adapt to meet the needs of new and existing residents. A comprehensive, long-term urban planning strategy focused on inclusivity, accessibility, and flexibility will guide resilient development, inform resource allocation, and shape future projects across Ukraine.

Rebuilding Ukraine's cities is among the most financially demanding challenges ahead. Currently, corruption, exacerbated by the war, hinders progress. Foreign partners have allocated funds to support the economy, yet effective mechanisms for monitoring and controlling these funds within state and local organisations remain limited. Addressing this requires embracing digital technologies to ensure transparency and accountability in financial transactions, leaving no room for misuse. This approach is essential during the war and after as it will help build a robust system of public trust in local authorities

and foster sound budget management for sustainable recovery and growth.

Preserving cultural heritage is a key element of effective urban planning. Architectural landmarks are vital to Ukrainian identity, particularly during the Russian occupation, and state protection is essential to prevent these sites from deteriorating. Without preservation efforts, many of these structures risk being lost.

Ukraine has the potential to grow after the war as a tourism destination, where its unique cultural and historical identity can be showcased. To support this vision, lesser-known heritage sites should be re-evaluated and granted protected status as cultural landmarks, securing their role in cultural preservation and economic development.



## ANALYSIS

As of 2021, 69% of Ukraine's population resided in urban areas.<sup>82</sup> The full-scale invasion has led to significant internal displacement, with many people relocating from eastern to safer western and central parts of the country.<sup>83</sup> This has posed challenges for host cities, requiring them to adapt to new residents' needs while offering opportunities for relocated businesses. Meanwhile, the decentralisation reforms initiated through the 2015 Law "On Voluntary Association of Territorial Communities" has sought to empower local governance.<sup>84</sup>

Despite a supportive legal framework, mechanisms for citizen participation and transparency in local decision-making remain underdeveloped. Institutions such as the Ministry for Communities and the Association of Ukrainian Cities aim to strengthen local governance; however, inconsistent communication with citizens has led to fragmented information,<sup>85</sup> limited public engagement, and under-representation in decision-making. The Ministry for Communities and Territories Development plays a central role in overseeing local finances and decentralisation efforts, along with the Ministry of Finance and regional authorities, ensuring resource allocation. Yet, reforms are needed to improve municipal budget management<sup>86</sup> and to reduce corruption for efficient recovery and development in affected cities.

In 2021, the National Security and Defence Council instructed local governments to review urban planning documentation to address widespread regulatory gaps.<sup>87</sup> Developers have exploited these weaknesses, leading to unauthorised changes to city master plans and inappropriate constructions, eroding public trust. The State Service of Ukraine for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre manages land-use regulation but insufficient legal frameworks and oversight have led to unauthorised developments.<sup>88</sup> Robust regulations and greater citizen engagement are essential to rebuild trust and foster sustainable urban development.

Effective recovery also requires enhanced transparency and accountability in municipal spending. Minimising political influence, inefficiencies, and corruption in public procurement is crucial to restoring public trust. Platforms like Prozorro and OpenProcurement have improved transparency by making procurement processes public and accessible.<sup>89</sup> However, persistent corruption risks,<sup>90</sup> regulatory loopholes, and off-system dealings limit their effectiveness. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms and closing regulatory gaps are necessary for these platforms to achieve their full potential.

Urban development often suffers from inadequate strategic planning.<sup>91</sup> Many cities lack comprehensive spatial development strategies that integrate long-term growth with social, economic, and environmental considerations.

The Ministry of Reconstruction reports that over 90% of municipalities are working on Integrated Development Plans, but the quality and implementation of these vary widely.<sup>92</sup> Even Kyiv, as the capital and a key economic centre, faces challenges in aligning short-term political agendas with long-term planning objectives, compounded by fragmented decision-making and limited public participation.

General Plans, traditionally used for urban planning, present further obstacles.<sup>93</sup> Revised every five years, they are often too rigid to adapt to changing conditions. They frequently lack alignment with sustainable economic and political strategies,<sup>94</sup> leaving them disconnected from broader development goals. Public input is typically limited, excluding residents' needs and opinions, while vague functional designations hinder practical implementation and weaken their value as effective urban-development tools.<sup>95</sup>

**Residents are well-informed and involved in the decision-making, planning, and implementation processes for their urban environment.**

### Establishment of Community Boards in All City Districts

Local authorities establish Community Boards in each district with the objective of improving communication with residents and addressing their needs. Each board is composed of a fixed number of members who reside, work, or have significant interests in the district.

These boards are of crucial importance in terms of their ability to provide support for local initiatives, to organise community events, to ensure that residents are kept informed of government actions, and to represent the interests of the community as a whole at the city level.

Community Boards also provide counsel on matters pertaining to land use, budgeting, and service quality, while advocating community priorities. Through monthly open meetings, they ensure transparency, publish decisions, and involve citizens in discussions.

This approach enhances governance transparency, builds trust, and encourages inclusive and accessible community participation in decision-making, ensuring local needs are effectively addressed in urban projects.

### Citizen Participation in Planning

In the early stages of urban-development projects, city authorities involve stakeholders such as civil society, academics, local businesses, and social organisations to contribute ideas that influence decisions. Involving residents at this stage is crucial because making changes later is more difficult and resource-intensive. Engagement should be open, meaning that decisions can be influenced or changed on the basis of input.

Participation should use all available channels: social media, printed notices, videos, public presentations, local radio, community chats, and more. The method of communication

should be tailored to the stakeholders; for example, using social media for younger audiences and direct communication for businesses.

One example is the “Street for All” project, which aims to create a comfortable space for pedestrians and cyclists. Resident engagement was carried out through various channels: media publications, videos, presentations, social media, and public hearings. Residents were able to submit suggestions online and offline, and the city kept them informed of which ideas were incorporated. This ensured participation and community support in the implementation of the project.

## Implementation of Tactical Urbanism

Local authorities use tactical urbanism to make rapid, temporary changes to the urban environment to test ideas before making large, permanent investments. This approach is based on the idea that even small changes to urban space can have a significant impact on the well-being and comfort of residents.

One of the key features of tactical urbanism is its low cost and minimal use of materials and resources. This allows ideas to be quickly implemented and tested in practice without significant financial outlay. This approach is particularly useful for temporary projects or situations where the urban space needs to be changed quickly to test new ideas.

These changes can include temporary installations for public events, the transformation of neglected areas into pedestrian zones, or the creation of spaces for cultural activities. This approach allows residents to temporarily experience potential permanent changes to their environment, express their opinions and suggestions, and provide feedback. This allows projects to be adapted at an early stage, creating a platform for dialogue and ensuring that future changes meet the real needs of the community.

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**Reducing corruption and providing international investment projects with strong guarantees and transparent access to fund-allocation data help cities attract local businesses, boost budget growth, and manage expenditures more effectively.**

## Enhancing Procurement Transparency and Regulatory Accountability in Project Management

To ensure transparency in urban construction processes, digital technologies are integrated through online open platforms and establish clear legislative compliance criteria. Existing online registries of construction procurement and project data are enhanced to expand their functionality. For instance, procurement information are linked with the construction registry of projects, while leveraging Prozorro not only as a tendering base but also as a comprehensive database of procurement of construction materials, providing detailed information on prices and suppliers.

This approach is supported by a robust regulatory framework that empowers relevant commissions to hold parties accountable, including imposing criminal liability for corruption schemes or failure to submit necessary project documentation. Strict penalties and significant fines act as deterrents for developers, promoting compliance. Open data access facilitates journalists exposing corruption, creating a strong precedent for accountability and transparency.

## Enhancing Transparency and Compliance in Urban-Development Documentation

The development of urban-development documentation is governed by regulations outlined in the Law “On Building Standards”. Previously, the State Inspectorate of Architecture and Urban Development had the authority to ensure compliance with construction standards during the preparation of such documentation. To address issues in

this process, an open General Plan for each city should be created, featuring hyperlinks for submitting each project for development on a designated site. This transparent, public approach will help reduce opportunities for bribery and the illegal acquisition of land for development.

## Creating Reconstruction Innovation Zones

Reconstruction innovation zones (RIZs) are designed to attract small businesses while upholding high standards of transparency and accountability. They offer tax incentives, streamlined permitting processes, and affordable leasing options, while ensuring that new businesses adhere to principles of green and sustainable construction. Managed by local governments and supported by international grants, donors, and business associations, RIZs will leverage online platforms to transparently track funds, procurement activities, and project progress. Citizens are encouraged to provide feedback, fostering a participatory approach.

Community Boards, comprised of district residents and stakeholders, play a pivotal role in aligning RIZ initiatives with local needs. They promote transparency through regular open meetings and participatory budgeting. Further strengthening oversight, independent committees, regular audits, whistleblower protections, and public town halls ensure compliance and reinforce public trust. By empowering small businesses, RIZs drive recovery through a transparent, inclusive, and community-focused approach.

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## **Cities effectively use urban spaces while meeting residents' needs and promoting sustainable development.**

### **Establishing Urban Institutes**

Urban institutes are interdisciplinary centres for urban planning, bringing together experts, local communities, policymakers and businesses to ensure long-term inclusive growth. At present, urban institutes are operational only in a limited number of major cities and regional centres. In the majority of cases, their functions are assumed by separate organisations and departments of local authorities. While this is financially viable in small towns and communities, in large cities it gives rise to a number of problems, including dispersed functions, bureaucracy, and limited innovation.

The establishment of urban institutes facilitates the coordination of planning, monitoring, and implementation of development strategies within a unified structure. This ensures enhanced coordination between

departments, and facilitates data-sharing and joint decision-making. For example, urban transport, environmental, and economic development issues are addressed in close cooperation, reducing the risk of duplication of functions or uncoordinated actions. Urban institutes also improve communication with the public by providing a single point of contact, reducing bureaucracy and duplication of efforts. They coordinate the collection and analysis of data, which allows decision-making based on up-to-date information, creating transparency, facilitating access to feedback, and promoting innovative projects that meet the needs of residents.

Urban institutes become drivers of sustainable development, creating a comfortable, innovative, and environmentally friendly environment for residents.

### **Continuous and Systematic Gathering and Analysis of Data on Residents' Needs**

The gathering and evaluation of information regarding the needs of residents is frequently an unstructured and haphazard process, lacking sufficient systematic organisation. Unless specialised city institutions have been established, local authorities use different methods, which often leads to duplication of work and lack of coordination. Many organisations and departments work independently, and data collection often fails to cover all social groups, does not take into account rapidly changing needs, and is not adapted to modern technologies.

To improve the situation, it is vital to engage all social groups, including individuals with

disabilities and the elderly, and to guarantee residents' involvement in data collection and processing. Data-collection methods and tools should be diverse, encompassing digital platforms and traditional paper formats. The establishment of a single data-collection and analysis centre can integrate disparate institutions, ensuring coordination and reducing the dispersion of information. This facilitates the creation of a more accurate representation of residents' needs, circumvents bias, and promotes inclusive planning.

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**Preserve and promote each city's unique history and potential by safeguarding its architectural heritage. These sites are protected by law and catalogued on a national online platform, enhancing their visibility and inviting tourism opportunities.**

- Historical buildings play a crucial role in preserving the traditional character of historical environments. However, there is currently no legal definition, registration procedure, or protection measures specifically for historical buildings. Preservation requirements are only included in building regulations and may be addressed in scientific project documentation. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and approve detailed criteria and methods for assessing the value of such buildings and to designate an authority responsible for their approval.
- Local councils are legally mandated to develop and approve relevant documentation, along with allocating targeted state budget funds to local governments for fulfilling this duty. Demolition or reconstruction that alters the appearance and dimensions of significant or typical historical buildings is strictly prohibited until the local council has approved a procedure for their use. Establishing legal protection for significant historical buildings strengthens efforts to safeguard monuments and newly discovered cultural heritage sites from destruction.





## CONCLUSION

Across the diverse visions presented in this paper, a shared commitment emerges: rebuilding Ukraine as a resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking society that stands as a beacon of hope and opportunity for its citizens and the broader European community. From preserving cultural heritage amid adversity to revolutionizing energy systems, securing digital transformation for small and medium-size enterprises, modernizing education, and fostering sustainable urban development, the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors have outlined a comprehensive and inspiring roadmap for recovery.

At the heart of these proposals lies a belief in the power of collaboration—between Ukrainians and other Europeans, and between public institutions and local communities—to shape a future grounded in solidarity, innovation, and shared prosperity. This programme amplifies the voices of young leaders who are ready to champion a sustainable rebuilding process and who see themselves as agents of change in Ukraine’s journey toward a brighter, more secure future.

As Ukraine continues to face profound challenges, integrating these visions into broader policy discussions is crucial. It is now up to the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors to carry forward their ideas, engage with stakeholders, and advocate a united approach to recovery. Their work is a testament to the resilience of Ukraine’s people and a reminder that rebuilding a nation is not just a logistical effort but a deeply human endeavour rooted in hope, determination, and collective action.



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We would also like to wholeheartedly thank the dedicated facilitators of this year’s “Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors” programme, European Youth Parliament alumnae Kristina Chelmakina and Anastasiia Ianovytska.

### **Kristina Chelmakina**

is Ukrainian working with civil society in Central and Eastern Europe at TechSoup Europe. She has worked on several projects aimed at aligning Ukraine’s civil service with EU standards, such as EU4PAR and U-LEAD with Europe and most recently leading a civil service component for the Eastern Partnership project at GIZ Ukraine.

### **Anastasiia Ianovytska**

is Ukrainian and was the moderator of the previous Rebuild Ukraine Lab, where she did outstanding work. As a freelance expert, she works in programme management, campaigning and advocacy, particularly in the areas of gender equality, democracy-building, and combating human trafficking.

Their guidance and support of the ambassadors was the backbone of this project, and we cannot thank them enough.

---

In addition, we extend our deepest gratitude to Helena Nepp, whose expertise and dedication were invaluable to the success of this programme.

### **Helena Nepp**

is Ukrainian and currently based in Germany. She is an EYP alumna with extensive experience in project management, particularly in youth-focused initiatives, advocacy, event management, and volunteer engagement. She previously worked for the International Office of the EYP and played a key role as the project coordinator for this initiative on the alumni side, making significant contributions to shaping this round.

We also want to thank the many experts who spoke to the groups throughout 2024, among them:

**Anastasiia Apetyk,**

a lawyer and an expert in information rights and digital security. Since 2017, she has been working at the Expert Centre for Human Rights in Kyiv, Ukraine.

**Ievgeniia Gubkina,**

a Ukrainian architect, urban historian, and curator specialising in the architecture and urban planning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ukraine.

**Nicolas Heger,**

who has extensive experience in international public-sector consultancy, specialising in European administration, law, advocacy, and political strategy.

**Iryna Minkovska,**

co-founder and CEO of the educational centre Me and My School, who has held key positions such as vice president for public relations at EdCamp Ukraine and community lead at UNIT. City Kharkiv.

**David Radermacher,**

vice president of sustainability and climate at E.ON, who supported our energy group during the Rebuild Ukraine Lab, thanks to our funder, the E.ON Foundation.

**Ilya Zabolotnyi,**

a programme manager for culture, art historian, and curator with experience in cultural diplomacy, especially in the field of visual arts.

Their expert input and feedback ensured the structured and evidence-based approach of our ambassadors' work and helped them navigate their complex topics.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors for their hard work, dedication, and disciplined attitude throughout the entire project.

We are very proud to have created a space for such inspiring and motivated young leaders, who will now spread their knowledge as multipliers in their communities to support the rebuilding of Ukraine across Europe. Thank you to the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors:

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Viktoriia Manko

Eoghan Gately

Aybars Önder

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Nazarii Pomohaibo

Florian Huber

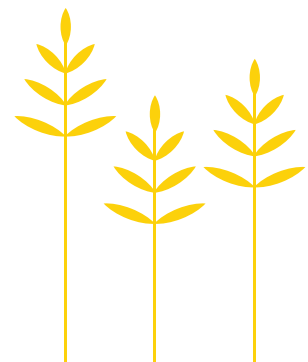
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