

Ukrainian displaced youth:

# Identifying information needs and aspirations

– A SURVEY REPORT



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## **Imprint**

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# Introduction

This study is the product of the **Partnership Agreement between the Council of Europe and the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA)**. The Partnership aims to promote and develop European cooperation within the field of youth information and counselling. Methods include, in particular, the development of training activities and resources for actors working in the youth sector, in line with the needs and demands expressed by the Member States of the Council of Europe and other countries who have signed up to the European Cultural Convention. ERYICA is likewise committed to supporting the promotion and implementation of different Council of Europe recommendations and policy tools, such as [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)4](#) on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood, [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2017\)4](#) on youth work, [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2016\)7](#) on young people's access to rights and [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2010\)8](#) on youth information.

In 2018-2019, part of the ERYICA-CoE partnership activities aimed to support the youth sector in Ukraine by enhancing the information addressed to young people and devising a national model for youth information services to assist the youth sector and the Ministry of Youth and Sports in their efforts to provide quality youth services in Ukraine. We surveyed the information needs of young people and, based on the [results](#), organised a seminar on youth information involving governmental and non-governmental actors from all over the country. During this period, we were in constant dialogue with the stakeholders and participated in discussions involving governmental and non-governmental actors. Unfortunately, our joint efforts in this direction were first jeopardised by the COVID-19 pandemic and later by the devastating consequences of the war in Ukraine.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal: Ukraine Refugee Situation* <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine> (Last accessed 19/09/2022)

<sup>2</sup> *Migration Data Portal, Ukraine* <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/ukraine/crisis-movements#ftn2> (Last accessed 19/09/2022)

According to the UNHCR<sup>1</sup>, **around 7.53 million refugees from Ukraine** have been recorded across Europe by September 30th of 2022. Moreover, the temporary regulation imposed by the Ukrainian Government, which restricts male citizens aged 18-60 years from leaving the country, has also impacted the profile of refugees fleeing to other parts of Europe. Indeed, the community of refugees from Ukraine count **many vulnerable groups with special protection needs**, such as women, children, unaccompanied minors, and young people<sup>2</sup>. This situation requires coordinated intersectoral and transnational responses to support access to rights and integration in their hosting communities.

In this context, the youth sector does not have a choice in whether to engage in support of young refugees or not; its core values and the reality of youth work mean that inevitably, they are involved. As youth information providers, we are aware of **the positive impact that timely access to quality youth-friendly information can have on young people's aspirations and access to rights**. Thus, our role is not only to engage young people in participation and dialogue but also to enhance their right to have a bright and promising future, whatever their background is and wherever they are. Education, housing, employment, health care, and mental health support are not only rights but also beacons for social inclusion and elements that reduce, in this case, young refugees' risk of exposure to violence, exploitation, abuse, and discrimination.

Of course, youth information alone is not enough of a solution to all the challenges displaced young people and their families face. Instead, it should be considered a vital component of a **global youth policy and intersectional cooperation** with crucial actors and policy areas to promote social justice and inclusion for all young people.

Today the youth information sector continues and must evolve and adapt quickly by establishing meaningful partnerships and ensuring the participation of young people from all backgrounds in developing and implementing their activities. In this context, ERYICA joined forces with young activists and experts from the community of young Ukrainian refugees to design a survey aiming to collect data on the information needs and situation of young refugees from Ukraine. The survey was disseminated with the support of volunteers from the Ukrainian Center in Barcelona - project of the Association of Ukrainians "Djerele" (Spain) - and youth information providers from the ERYICA network. The information gathered has been analysed by experts from the Ukrainian community. The conclusions and recommendations have been drawn in cooperation with ERYICA. The data collected helps us better understand the information needs, expectations, and interests of young refugees from Ukraine displaced due to the current war in their home country.

Hopefully, the insights and conclusions drawn from this study will help youth information providers grasp ways of adapting their services to the needs of young refugees across Europe. Our most sincere aim is to support their transition to adulthood more effectively and their involvement and integration in the hosting communities. This study is just a first milestone of a series of further actions that we believe will need to take place to ensure a successful youth information response to the needs of young refugees, not only from Ukraine but also from other geographies.

## Research Design

In the period from 20 April to 31 July 2022, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) and the Ukrainian Center in Barcelona, Spain (the project of the Association of Ukrainians "Djerelo") conducted a survey on Ukrainian youth (13-35 years old) in the framework of the Partnership between ERYICA and the Council of Europe.

The research aims to study the **information needs, expectations and interests of young people who were forced to leave Ukraine** due to hostilities and are currently trying to adapt to a new life in other countries.

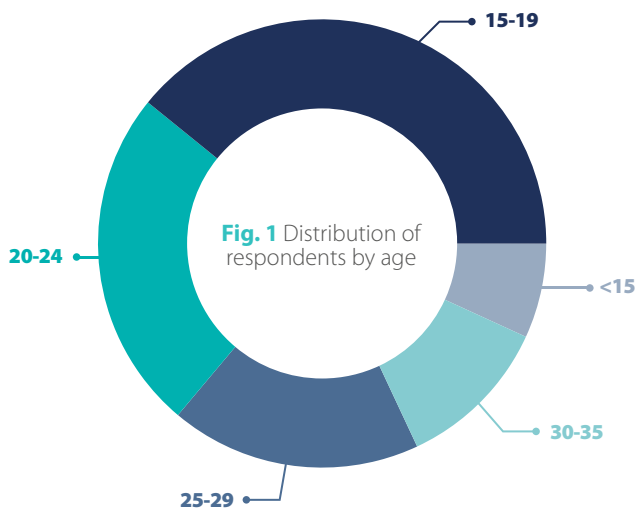
The survey method combines **face-to-face and online surveying** via a questionnaire in a Google form. Face-to-face surveying was conducted at the place of grouped residence of the respondents, as well as during some events (e.g. training activities, master classes). In addition, the Google form was disseminated through thematic groups, social networks and instant messaging platforms (e.g. Facebook Messenger, Telegram, WhatsApp). It was also distributed by youth information and counselling providers across Europe through their services and activities involving young refugees. The questionnaire was available in two languages - Ukrainian and English.

Processing of the results was carried out using the SPSS package. Privacy of respondents has been ensured following the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 concerning the protection of natural persons concerning the collection, processing, and use of personal data and regarding the free movement of this data.

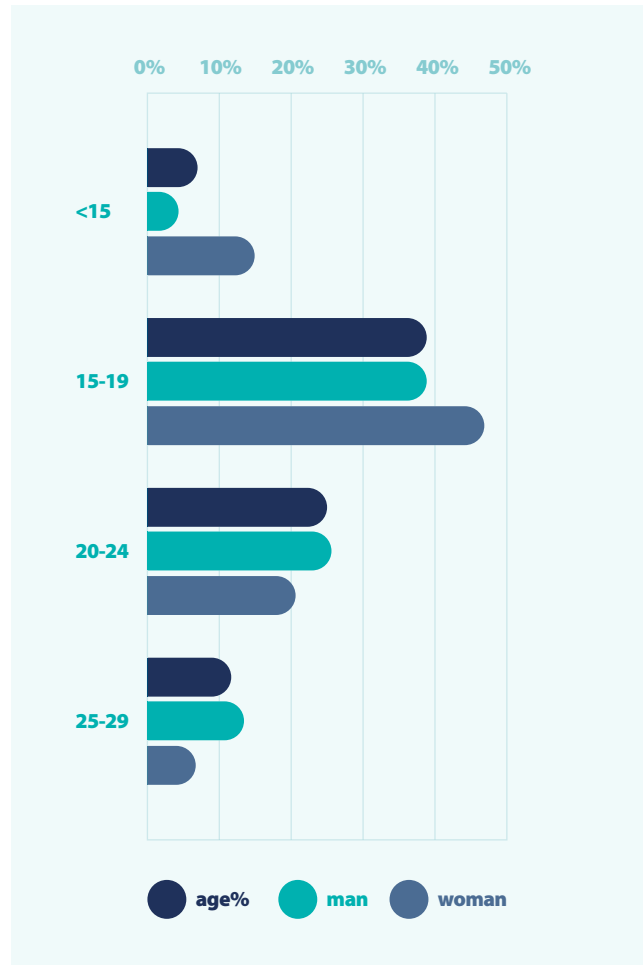
A total of **358 young people participated in the survey**, but 11 questionnaires were removed because the respondents were in Ukraine during the survey period and had no experience of staying in other countries as refugees.

A total of **347 questionnaires are analyzed** in this report. The distribution of respondents by gender was as follows: 248 people (71.47%) - were female respondents,

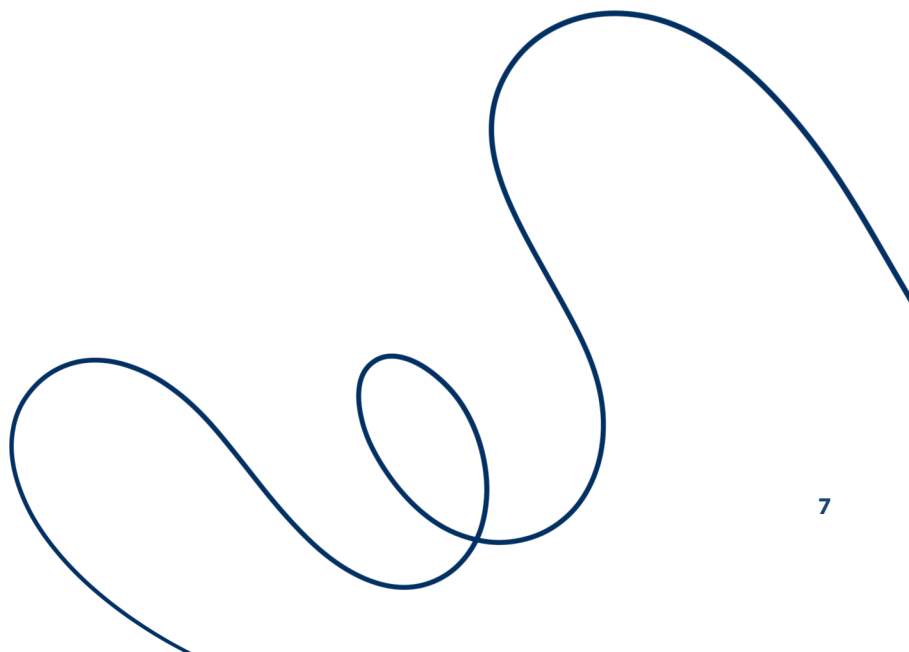
94 people (27,09%) - were male respondents, and five people (1,4%) preferred not to indicate their gender. Figure 1 shows the age and gender characteristics of the interviewees.



As we can see, in general, **young people aged 15-24 years prevail among the respondents** (total number – 69,87%). In addition, there are specific differences in the age distribution between women and men: in the age group of 15-19 years, men predominate among respondents, and among respondents aged 20-35 - women provided more responses (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2** Distribution of respondents by age and gender



## Distribution of respondents by country of residence

Respondents who took part in the survey live in **31 countries**. Most respondents were based in the following countries: **Spain** (82 people), **Poland** (61 people), and **Germany** (35 people). Countries such as Bulgaria, Georgia, Iceland, Luxembourg, Moldova, and UAE had the fewest respondents - 1-3 people from each country (Fig. 3).

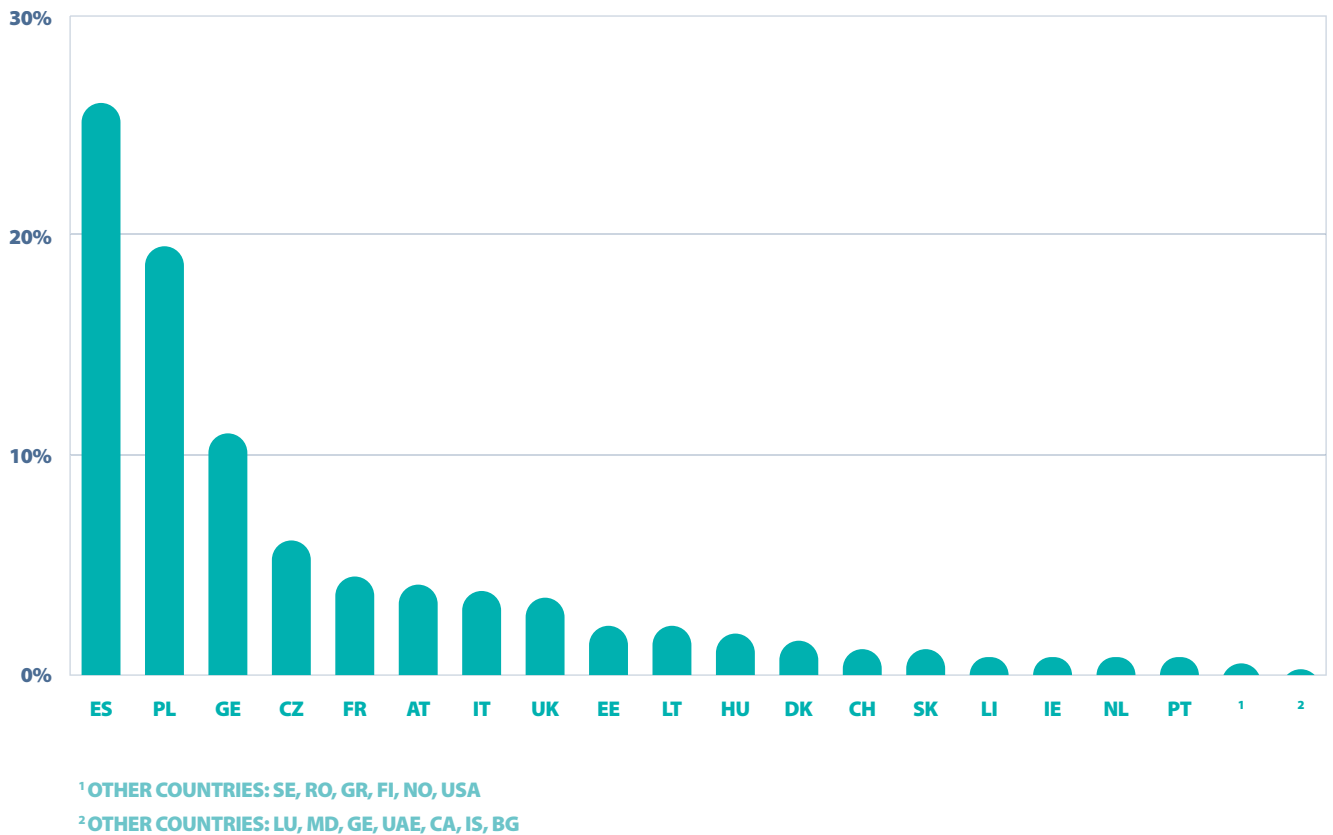


Fig. 3 Distribution by country of residence



# Temporary protection



Fig. 4 Temporary protection and intended period of stay

More than 80% of respondents have received temporary protection in their host country. Accordingly, around 20% of respondents did not receive it. Over 80% plan to stay in the host country for some time, and less than 20% do not plan to stay.

At the same time, among those who received protection, the share of those who plan to stay in the host country is higher (Fig. 4) compared to those who did not receive such protection (differences at the level of statistical significance  $p \leq 0.01$ ).

There are specific differences among the groups of persons planning and not planning to stay for some time in the host country (Table 1). First of all, it should be noted that there are no gender differences between the mentioned groups. On the other hand, there are pretty clear age differences. In particular, **younger respondents do not plan to stay in the host country.** Indeed, among respondents aged 15-19, 37% plan

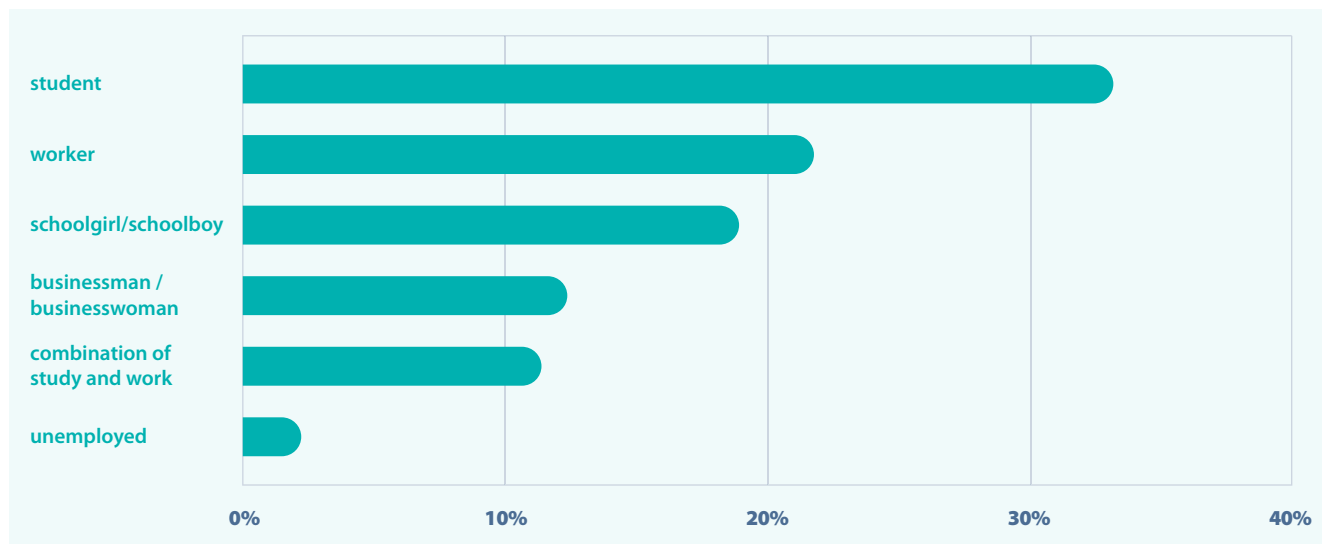
to stay, and 47% do not. On the other hand, among respondents aged 30-35, more than twice as many people plan to stay in the host country- over 20% plan to stay, and around 8% do not.

	<15	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-35
They plan to stay	7,2%	36,9%	23,3%	12,0%	20,5%
They do not plan to stay	5,0%	46,7%	30,0%	10,0%	8,3%

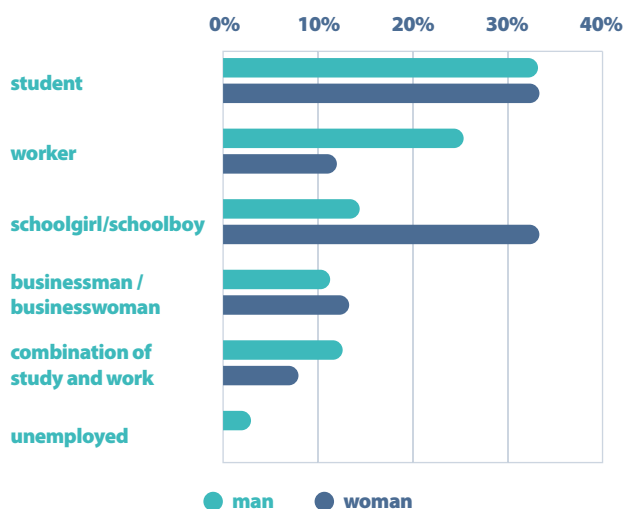
	Women	Men
They plan to stay	75,1%	24,5%
They do not plan to stay	71,7%	25,0%

Table 1 Gender and age distribution among those who plan and do not plan to stay in the host country

**Fig. 5** Occupation of respondents in the pre-war period



In terms of occupation, **more than half (52%) of the respondents were studying before the start of hostilities** (secondary and higher students – 33%, schoolchildren – 19%). Approximately every fifth (22%) of the respondents was an employee, around 12% were self-employed, and about 11% of respondents combined study and work. Only 2.3% were not working or studying at the start of the war (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 6** Distribution by gender

There is practically no difference in the pre-war social status between men and women (or a difference within the limits of statistical error) in such groups as students (women – 33.2%, men – 33.3%) and self-

employed (women – 11.4 %, people - 13.3%).

However, there are more male respondents among schoolchildren (women – 14.4%, men – 33.3%), and the number of women is more significant in the group of employees (women – 25.3%, men – 12.0%) and among those who combined study and work (women – 12.7%, men – 8.0%) (Fig. 6).

Answers to the question “*Why do you want to stay in the host country for a while?*”

The specified question was open; that is, the received answers were analyzed using such a method as content analysis. Based on the responses received, the following reasons for their desire to stay in the host country were highlighted.

- I. War in Ukraine.
- II. Conditions and prospects in host countries.
- III. The influence of the immediate social environment.
- IV. Personal reasons.

The detailed content of each category is presented in Table 2.

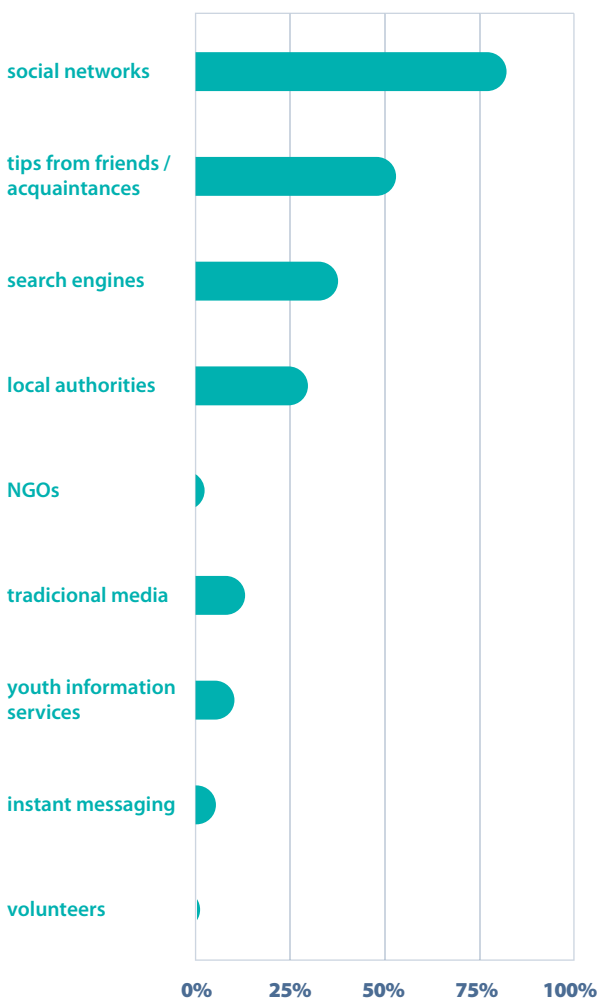
Common Reason	%	Specification in explanations	%
War in Ukraine	51,4%	Explanation due to military actions: "there is a war in the country", "it is dangerous", "I am afraid", "it is unpleasant to hear the sounds of alarm", etc.	36,0%
		Explanation due to the loss: "destroyed housing", "fighting in the city", "the settlement is occupied, "loss of work", etc.	12,7%
		The desire to protect their children	3,6%
Conditions and prospects in host countries	35,6%	The desire to get an education in Europe	11,7%
		Attractive conditions and standard of living: "level of medicine", "stability", "I like the country"	8,9%
		Desire to work in Europe and receive a decent salary	8,5%
		The opportunity to live in safety	5,7%
		I wanted to live in Europe for a long time, even before the war there were plans to move	0,8%
The influence of the immediate social environment	6,5%	Relatives, friends, and acquaintances in the host country	4,9%
		Parents decided to leave and stay in the country	1,6%
Personal reasons	4,9%	A chance to start life anew, to get rid of unpleasant personal memories	4,9%
There is no answer to the question	15,8%	There is no record	15,4%
		I will return home	0,4%

**Table 2** Reasons to stay in the host country



# Main sources and channels of information

As we can see in Fig. 7, the **main sources of information** used by more than 50% of respondents are **social networks and advice from friends or acquaintances** (peer-to-peer). Therefore, we can describe the mentioned sources as being based on more informal communication.



Therefore, we can describe the mentioned sources as being based on more informal communication. That is, a significant share (from over 51% to over 82%) of the respondents obtain information indirectly- through the closest social environment. Around 40% of respondents actively search for information using search engines. In contrast, less than a third of respondents receive the necessary information from local authorities (30%) and through public organizations (over 25%). From 10% to 14% of respondents use traditional media as the primary source of information and turn to youth information services. Other sources of information (instant messages, Red Cross, volunteers, instant messaging) receive much less attention - less than 5% of respondents wrote about their use.

Predictably, the most popular information channel is social networks (82%), followed by websites (64%). However, about **a third of respondents prefer peer-to-peer communication** (Fig. 8).

Around 23% of respondents use emails as one of the critical information channels, and 15% of respondents use instant messaging text messages. Because 38% of respondents would like to receive messages sent

personally to them (SMS, emails), **targeted and personalized information would be more effective** and perceived positively by our target group.

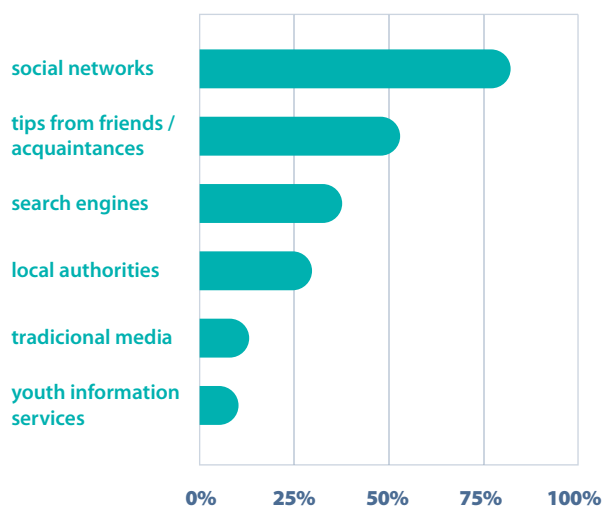
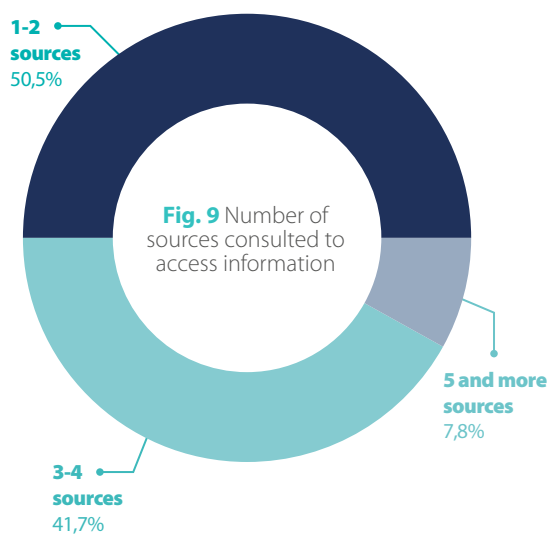


Fig. 8 Main channels of information



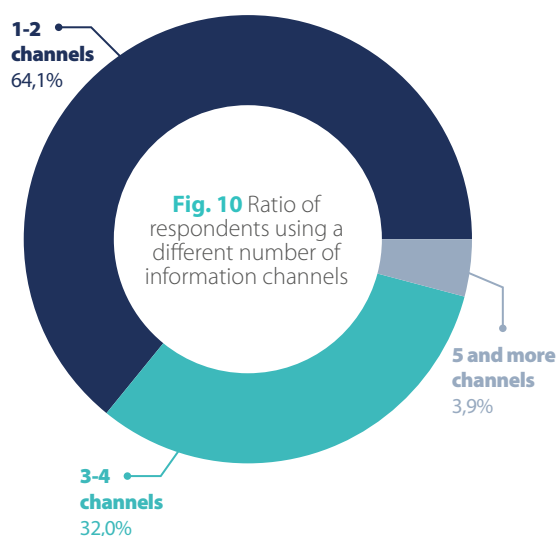
Over half of respondents use 1-2 sources to obtain information, 42% use 3-4 sources, and 8% of respondents use five or more sources (Fig. 9).

Types of information users	Main sources of information	%
Users of 1-2 sources	Social networks	73,1%
Users of 3-4 sources	Social networks	91,5%
	Advice from friends/acquaintances	70,5%
	Search engines	53,5%
Users of 5 and more sources	Advice from friends/acquaintances	100%
	Social networks	91,7%
	Search systems	91,7%
	NGOs and youth information services	83,3%
	Local authorities	79,2%
	Traditional media	54,2%

Table 3 Advantages in using information sources among respondents with different levels of information use  
NOTE: Selected sources were used by more than 50% of respondents.

As we can see in Fig. 9, half of the respondents use 1-2 sources of information, the main of which are social networks. In contrast, **users of 3-4 sources use a combined tactic**, which consists in using sources of information of different content and direction - official (search engines), semi-official (social networks) and personal contacts and peer-to-peer (friends and acquaintances) (Table 3).

**The main channels of information for respondents are social networks (82%) and websites (64%).** About a third of respondents (31%) communicate with acquaintances and peers to get the necessary information (Fig. 8).

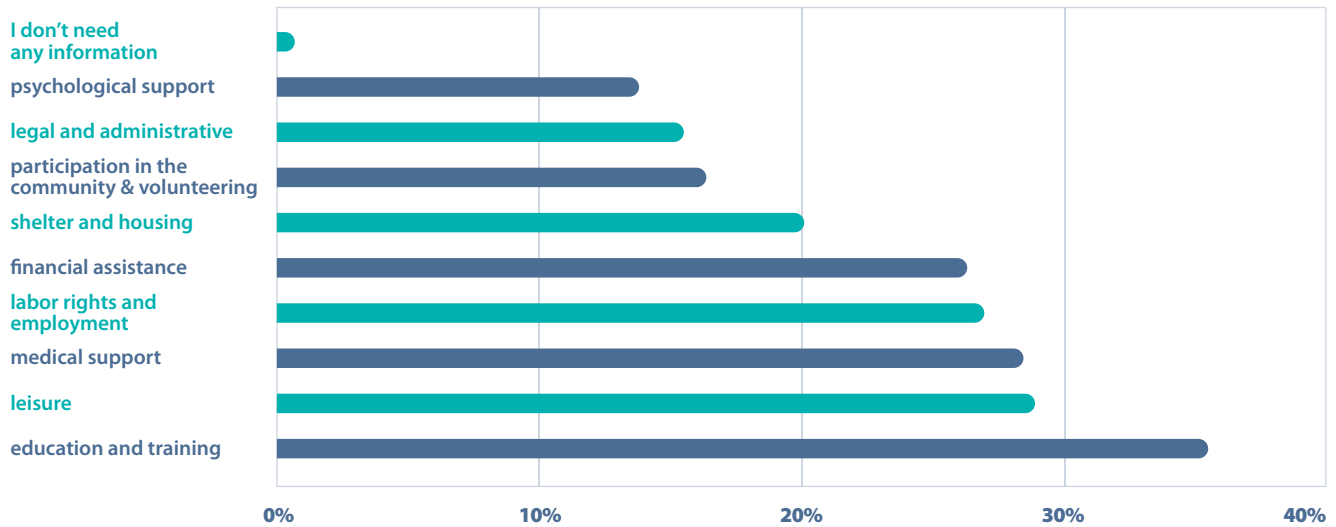


At the same time, **64% of respondents use 1-2 channels of information** (Fig. 10), the main of which are **social networks and websites**. Users of 3-4 channels also, as already mentioned above, use a combination of media - official (websites), semi-official (social networks) and peer-to-peer (friends and acquaintances) (Table 4). Additionally, according to correlation analysis, **women are more active users of social networks** ( $r=0.14$ ;  $p\leq 0.01$ ).

Types of information users	Main channels of information	%
Users of 1-2 channels	Social networks	77,8%
	Websites	53,0%
Users of 3-4 channels	Social networks	88,9%
	Websites	82,8%
	Face to face	58,6%
Users of 5 and more channels	Social networks	100%
	Websites	100%
	Face to face	100%
	Printed material	100%
	Emails	100%
	Text messages	75%

**Table 4** Advantages in the use of information channels among respondents with different levels of use of the specified channels  
 NOTE: Selected channels were used by more than 50% of respondents.

# Information needs



**Fig. 11** Information needs of respondents

As we can see in Fig. 11, the most requested is **information about education and training** - over 53%. In addition, more than 40% of respondents would like to learn more about leisure opportunities, health care (42%) and labour rights and employment (40%).

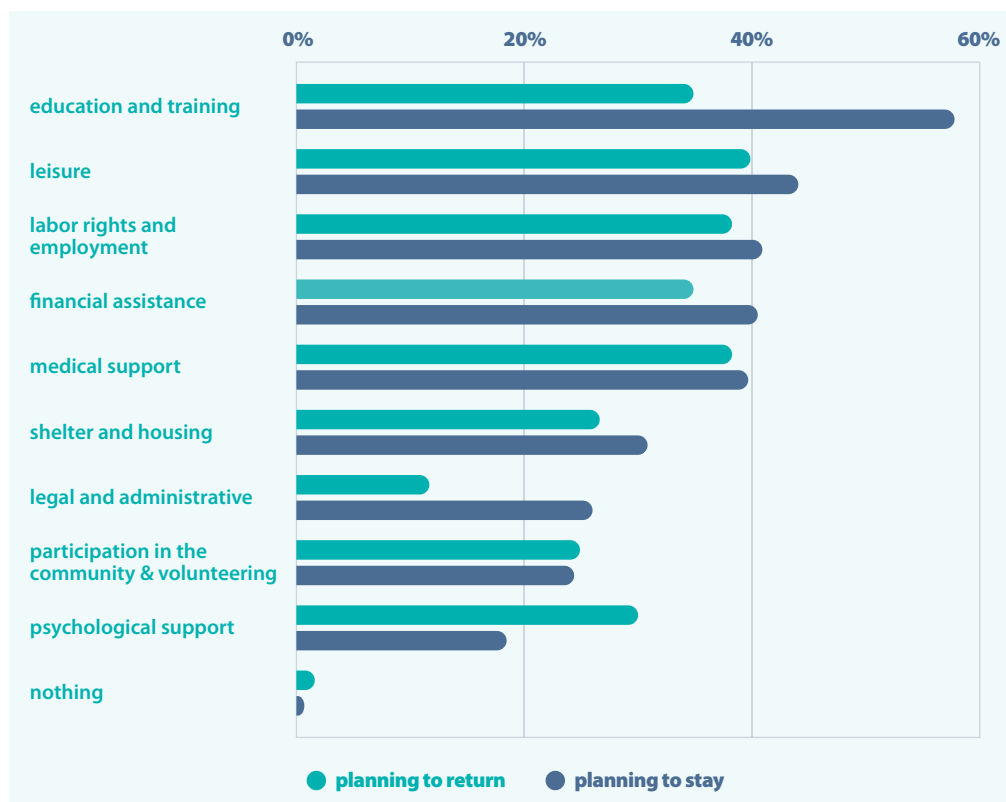
Based on the fact that the surveyed group includes a fairly wide age range (14-35 years), which can certainly be related to different interests and desires. A correlation analysis was additionally conducted to select groups oriented to specific information. Correlation analysis made it possible to identify groups that needed information of a certain type. In particular, **education and training issues are especially relevant for respondents aged 15-19** ( $r=0.17$ ;  $p \leq 0.01$ ). Respondents aged 30-35 would more often like to receive information about health care ( $r=0.14$ ;  $p \leq 0.01$ ), labour rights and employment ( $r=0.17$ ;  $p \leq 0.01$ ) and legal registration and administrative issues ( $r=0.18$ ;  $p \leq 0.01$ ).

The respondents aged 20-29 were quite interesting because no significant correlations with the specified needs were found in this group.

	Needs	Distance
Group 1	Psychological support	0,366
	Participation in the community and volunteering	0,391
	Legal and administrative issues	0,379
Group 2	Education and training	0,332
	Leisure	0,332
Group 3	Shelter and housing	0,364
	Labor rights and employment	0,385
	Medical support	0,416
	Financial assistance	0,408

**Table 5** The needs of respondents aged 20-29  
NOTE: Subgroups are selected based on cluster analysis.

Therefore, a cluster analysis was conducted to understand the structure of the needs of the specified age group (Table 6).



**Fig. 12** Information needs considering the intended period of stay

Based on the obtained results, **the groups of respondents aged 20-24 and 25-29 did not show significant differences**, so they were combined into one group. Within this group, separate subgroups were identified, which had their own needs and characteristics:

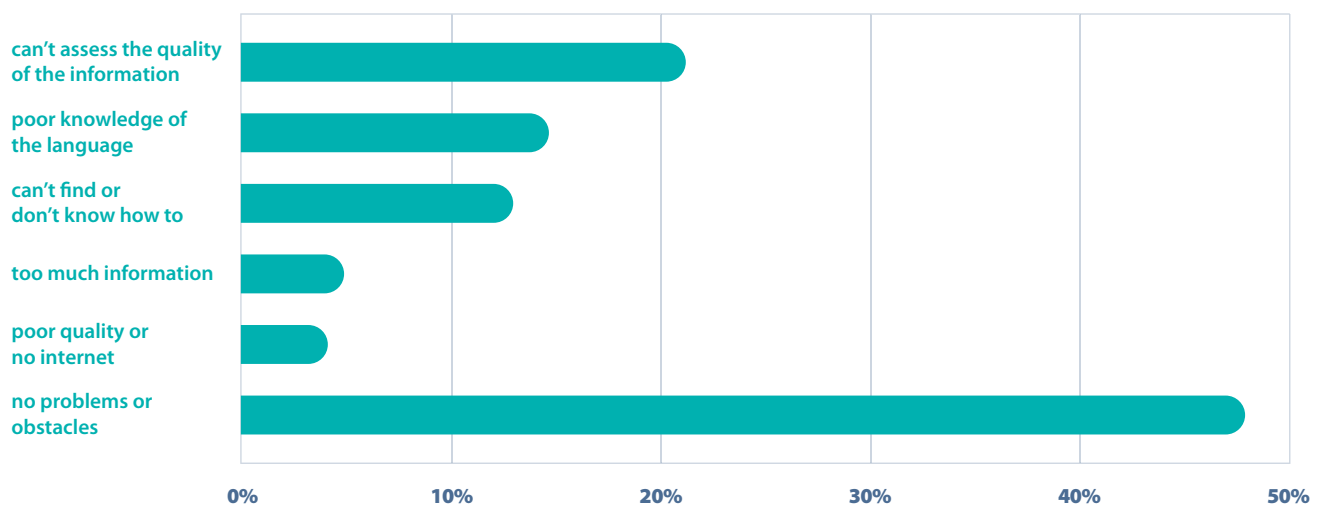
- Group 1, was the most distinct and included respondents with the following needs: orientation towards participation in community life, the need for legal information, on the one hand, and the need for psychological help, on the other. The specified needs were more characteristic of male respondents.
- Group 2 focused on learning, education and leisure activities.
- Group 3 focused mainly on the possibility of having a job, shelter, medical care and financial assistance.

The need for information in different directions is influenced by age and the general orientation to stay or not in the host country. **Respondents who plan to stay** for a while in the host country most often **indicated the need for information on education and opportunities to study** (58% vs 35%), financial assistance (41% vs 35%), legal registration and administrative issues (26% against 12%). On the other hand, **respondents who planned to return** to Ukraine shortly indicated much more often than they **needed psychological support** (30% versus 19%).





# Main obstacles to access reliable information



**Fig. 13** Main obstacles to access information

The question regarding obstacles to accessing reliable information was open-ended, and the answers received were analysed using content analysis. Fig. 13 presents combined options for answers to the question -“*What are your main obstacles to accessing reliable information?*”.

Before proceeding to the analysis of obstacles, it should be noted that **almost half of the respondents (48%) answered that they have no problems** or obstacles in accessing the necessary information.

Respondents who face particular obstacles to receiving information most often noted that **it is difficult to assess the quality and reliability of information** (26%). For example, when they have access to a diverse range of news, they need expert help to distinguish relevant, essential and objective facts. Another 15%

of respondents believe that they have an insufficient or poor knowledge of the language (English and the host country language), which makes it difficult both to understand important/necessary information and to find it. In addition, 13% of respondents feel they do not have the skills required to search for information and do not know on which sites or groups in social networks it can be presented. Finally, for 5% of respondents, a substantial volume of information becomes an obstacle, resulting in not finding the material they need at a particular moment.

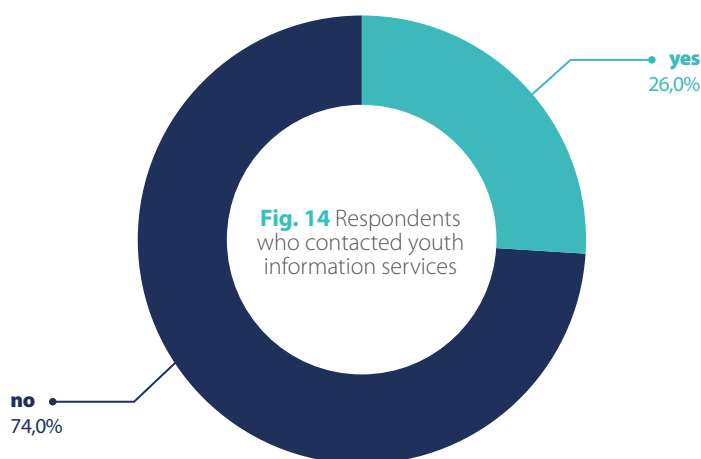
Thus, all the listed reasons indicate that respondents need specific mediators (experts) who could **facilitate the analysis of large volumes of information**, help translate necessary materials or explain particular facts or information. This aspect highlights the critical role that youth information services may play as experts in facilitating young people’s access to understandable, accurate and unbiased information in a personalised way.



# Support of youth information services

This section analyses the interaction with youth information services and its potential to support the information needs and integration of young refugees in the host country.

## *Have you been in contact with local youth information services?*



As evidenced by the indicators presented in Fig. 14, **26% contacted local youth information services**, that is, every fourth respondent. At the same time, there was a distinct difference in the level of contact between respondents who plan to stay in the host country and return to Ukraine shortly. Among respondents intending to return to Ukraine, 35% contacted information services, compared to 25% of those who plan to stay. At first glance, this may seem unexpected. However, considering the relatively high need for psychological help of persons intending to return to Ukraine (Fig. 12), it can be perceived that youth information services are sort of safe spaces facilitating access to psychological support and help for some respondents.

## What can youth information services do to make your life easier?

The specified question was open-ended, so the received answers were analysed using content analysis. Selected meaning groups are presented in Fig. 15.

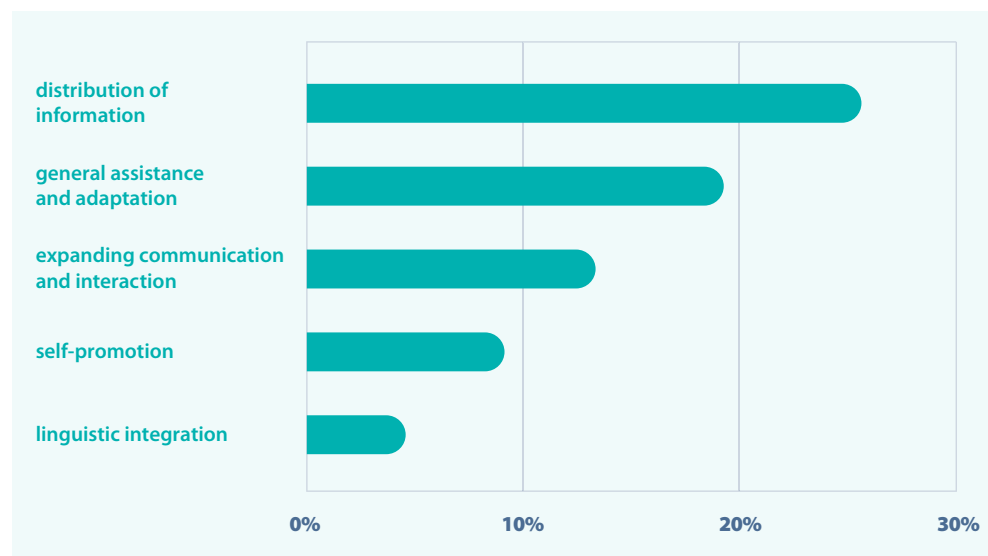


Fig. 15 Areas of possible activity of youth information services proposed by respondents

Around **26% of respondents noted the need for more active dissemination of information**. The answers that were assigned to the specified category were, in turn, divided into three groups.

1. The first group included the **general answers** of the respondents, which indicated the need to inform young refugees and to provide relevant/objective/necessary/important information without specifying what information the respondents needed.
2. The second group included responses that **specified the need for information of a particular type**. Namely, respondents would like to receive up-to-date news on various training or educational programs for refugees, information on admission rules and study conditions at European universities, job vacancies, contacts of lawyers, and information on the housing market. In addition, respondents need to learn about language courses, sports opportunities, and children's leisure time initiatives.
3. The third group included answers related to the **forms and means of information transmission** proposed by the respondents: the creation of a single social network/single resource in Ukrainian and English, the development of a webpage on which information on the possibilities of meeting the basic needs

of displaced persons will be presented in a simple, youth-friendly and accessible way, and all necessary materials are also collected. In addition, it was proposed to use a mailing list to disseminate information, create a youth-friendly site with important information, provide a list of channels/sites to find relevant official and objective information, and offer a “hotline” to reach out for urgent matters.

Over 19% of responses were assigned to the “Help and Adaptation” group. At the same time, **40% of respondents wrote about the need for help in general** (“Help”, “Find me and offer help”, etc.). Around **60% described a specific need for help**: accessing housing, finding a job, obtaining free education, providing contacts with lawyers, ensuring psychological counselling, buying IT equipment, securing food, getting a child to school, organising leisure activities for children, etc.

More than 13% of respondents noted the need to intensify communication processes. The main goal should be to expand and establish ties among displaced persons and with the local community. In this case, two groups of answers can be distinguished:

1. The first group - **general wishes for the activation of communication** - “help find friends”, “meet each other more often”, “organisation of meetings where you can get to know other Ukrainians”;
2. In the second group - the respondents suggested the **organisation of communication within other activities**: involvement in volunteer activities and pro-Ukrainian rallies, assistance in establishing contacts with the local community, organisation of circles and interest groups, organisation of excursions in the area/country of stay.

Over 9% of respondents would like **youth organisations and services** to talk more actively about their offer, involve them in volunteering and other activities, and be **more visible in social networks**. At the same time, respondents repeatedly drew attention to the fact that youth organisations should organise the opportunity to receive feedback from youth who are not directly part of a specific organisation (availability of a “hotline”, chats for communication, etc.).

Around 5% of respondents noted that youth organisations and information services could **help refugees in the first immersion period in the local language**. In particular, the following ways should be offered: the help of translators, if necessary, at the initial stage of the stay in the country, help in translating documents, inform about free language courses, organise language study groups or activities in other languages, etc. Around **21% of respondents did not answer this question**, and another 14% stated they did not need additional information.



## **What kind of information do you need to feel more involved and active in your hosting community/ country?**

The following types of answers were found among those who responded to the specified item of the questionnaire:

- **Involvement through the Ukrainian community and a sense of unity.** This factor could be recorded in the answers of 39% of respondents. Answers were included here, in which the respondents indicated that they would prefer to actively engage in volunteer activities (21%), as well as participate in other forms of social action (meetings, charity projects, etc.) aimed at supporting Ukraine and Ukrainians (19%).
- **Active immersion in the social and cultural life of the host country** - 31% of respondents. Two groups of answers were included here:
  - Acquaintance with the culture and social life of the country/community where the respondents are located - 18% of answers. Examples of answers:
    - › *"I need to learn about culture, issues and taboos"*
    - › *"I don't know anything about Spanish youth organisations"*
    - › *"I need to learn about culture, issues and taboos,"*
    - › *"I don't know anything about Spanish youth organisations and services. Do they even exist?"*
    - › *"I am interested in information about events in the city,"*
    - › *"I would like to go to concerts, meetings or excursions with local people,"*
    - › *"I need information about the language, mentality and traditions"*
    - › *"I would like to learn about how young people live in this country and where possible to join it to better adapt."*
  - Learning the language of the host country - 13% of responses.
- **Socio-economic and legal information** – 22% of respondents. The same groups of answers were included here.
  - Over 12% of the respondents indicated that they are interested in any official up-to-date information, as well as information that reveals the possibilities of better adaptation of Ukrainians in a particular country and the opportunities provided to them.
  - Around 9% of respondents indicated that they need expert advice on specifics of legislation in the host country, information on rights, benefits, insurance, help preparing various documents, etc.
  - Information on the conditions of further integration in the host country - 21% of respondents, 11% of them would like to receive information on studying in the host country, and 10% need employment information.

- Around 4% need informal communication with peers, expanding contacts, would like to know places where you can communicate with young people, etc.
- Over 3% indicated the need to improve living conditions. In particular, 2% of respondents expressed they need assistance in changing housing conditions. Around 1% would like additional help in accessing health care.

### ***Are you interested in having more information about participation opportunities and events in the local community?***

The majority of respondents (59%) are interested in receiving more information about community events, another 30% gave a partial response (“maybe”), and only 11% of respondents do not need relevant information. The obtained distribution of answers certainly indicates the importance (both actual and potential in the future) of the activities of the youth information service (Fig. 16).



**Fig. 16** Distribution of answers to the question “Are you interested in having more information about participation opportunities and events in the local community?”



# Emotional state

As evidenced by the answers to the question - "How do you feel about the future?" (Fig. 17), **most respondents (77%) have a stable emotional state** - they evaluate the future with hope (53%) or, even without particular hopes or illusions, but calmly (24%). On the other hand, a reasonably significant share, **almost every fifth respondent (22%), experiences such conditions as anxiety, uncertainty, fear and despair.**

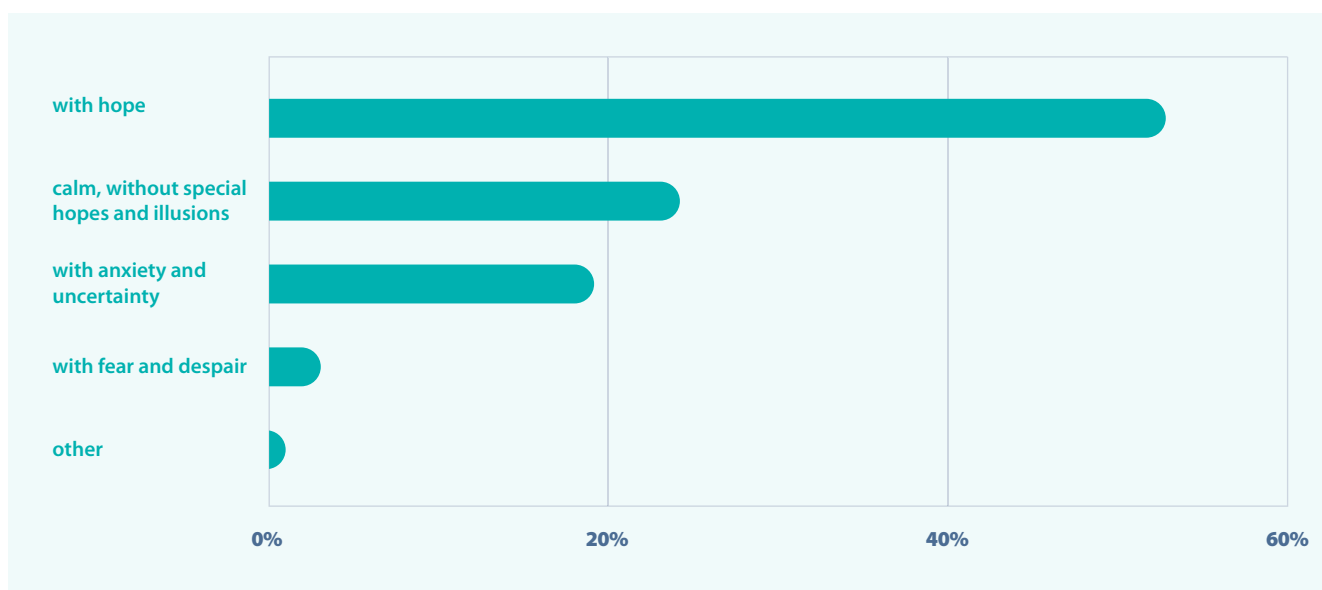


Fig. 17 Emotional state of respondents

## Conclusions and recommendations

This research highlights the presence of a complex of issues and needs among young people who were forced to leave Ukraine due to the war. Before proceeding to the analysis of the problems, it is essential to highlight that the group of respondents is demographically considered to be young in the Ukrainian context (the age of the research participants is 14-35 years old). It is a very **heterogeneous group regarding a whole set of social and value characteristics** that must be considered when organising work with displaced people.

Work with young displaced persons should be oriented, on the one hand, to the patterns of **adaptation in the hosting country**, and on the other hand, to their specific **background and context** - e.g. age, gender, location, conditions and reasons for departure, level of education, specific expectations and needs, etc. Since a significant number of respondents plan to stay in the host country for a certain time, strategic planning of the work of youth information services for the mid and long-term is necessary, considering the patterns of adaptation of migrant communities. At the same time, the strategy and interaction methods should reflect **the attitudes and aspirations of young displaced persons**. For instance, providing information on training and employment opportunities for those who plan to stay in the host country for a more extended period and facilitating access to psychological support for those who intend to return to Ukraine shortly.

Likewise, it is vital to consider the **needs and interests of certain socio-demographic groups** when setting up strategies for youth information and counselling work with young Ukrainian refugees. For example, respondents under the age of 19 are actively interested in spending their free time. Those aged 19-24 are keener to access information on educational and training opportunities. Young refugees aged 25-35 show more interest in obtaining information on employment, housing, health care, administrative procedures, and children's education and leisure time. It is crucial to highlight the significant number of young parents in this age group, especially women. In order to ensure a more effective outreach and youth information service for this target group, it is necessary to consider the following aspects:

- **Enhanced visibility and promotion** among the target group so that as many potential users as possible could know about the work of youth information services – collaboration with local peers and partnerships with local civil society organisations working with the target group. Emphasis should be given to associations led by the



Ukrainian community, which become a very effective way to reach them.

- Provision of **adapted youth-friendly information** based on the needs and interests of the target group. According to the answers, information should be presented in a clear and accessible form, including current news and opportunities. It could be shown on a specific webpage for the target group. Information in Ukrainian would be suitable for those unfamiliar with the local language, who constitute an important majority.
- Creation of a **rapid information service** to which displaced young people can contact to ask urgent questions. Around 38% of respondents expressed their desire for direct communication and messages (e.g. SMS, instant messaging, e-mails, hotline) and one-third highlighted their preference for peer-to-peer interactions. Targeted, peer-to-peer and personalised information would be more effective and positively perceived by the target group.
- **Involvement of young Ukrainian refugees** in the design, implementation and dissemination of youth information activities targeted at them.
- **Comprehensive interdisciplinary and multilevel cooperation** with institutions, municipalities, civil societies organisations working with displaced people, and other stakeholders active in areas such as child protection, health, education, social protection and welfare, migration, justice, and gender equality.

At the same time, bearing in mind the **complexity of needs and requests**, it is desirable to facilitate access to certain services and activities that would satisfy several needs. For instance, meetings with peers from the host country, who can introduce the cultural features and local traditions; non-formal education and peer-to-peer activities oriented to learning the local language, namely for young mothers; online or face-to-face appointments or referrals to specialists, such as psychologists, lawyers, doctors, etc.

For some respondents, youth information services may be perceived as sort of safe spaces for guidance and emotional support. Thus, it is desirable to increase the mental **health literacy and basic psychological competence of youth information workers** within the framework of specialised and targeted training. Due to their particular vulnerability, special attention needs to be paid to the health and psychological needs of young refugees who arrived as **unaccompanied and separated children**. Youth information workers must be aware of the limits of their competence and **know how and when to hand over the responsibility to other services and professionals**. Close cooperation and effective partnerships with mental health professionals and other services are essential to accompany the target group.

According to the results of the study, certain information management features are characteristic of the target group surveyed:

- **A peculiar way of obtaining information**, which can be called individually mediated: Most respondents do not get information directly from official sources (rights, regulations, orders, and clarifications on official websites), but through social networks and communications with relatives and peers from the community.
- **Difficulties in obtaining quality information**: Respondents expressed problems distinguishing relevant information and relating it to their specific needs and aspirations. The study also shows a need to enhance the media and information literacy of the target group to help them gain self-confidence and competence to assess the objectivity and veracity of the information obtained.

The specified features and difficulties should be taken into account, orienting the work of youth information services to **more direct interaction with young displaced persons and their communities**. All the obstacles and difficulties identified in this study indicate the need for certain information mediators to help them analyse the large volumes of information they access, translate necessary information, or explain specific facts and rights. There is a crucial role for youth information services to play in this sense. For example, through the provision of support, signposting, and feedback channels, as well as help from referrals and experts who could ensure understanding of abstract information (e.g. legal issues) required for their integration and access to rights in the hosting country.

Another characteristic feature of the surveyed group is an active focus on involvement in the **Ukrainian community and the reliance on peers as information sources**. This aspect must, of course, be considered when planning the information and non-formal education activities of youth organisations, municipalities, and youth information services. The scope of activities is quite broad: volunteer activities involving displaced persons, peer-to-peer youth information activities with local young people, cultural education, organisation of circles and interest groups contemplating the peculiarities of the Ukrainian and local cultures, etc.

Evaluating the respondents' answers as a whole and taking into account the general emotional state, it is vital to highlight that the youth of Ukraine, who currently live in other countries, have a strong potential for development. As such, hosting societies must consider and enhance this potential-- not only for the contribution they can make to the hosting country but also for the impact those who will return will have on the future of Ukraine. Thus, helping young refugees from Ukraine to make the most out of their stay abroad is a very significant way of supporting Ukraine and its future reconstruction. In the local context of hosting countries, **the youth sector and municipalities have a strategic role in scaling up this potential**. Youth work is based on holistic approaches that promote personal and social development while building intercultural competencies. Youth sector stakeholders should be ready to increase their understanding of young refugees' situation, experiences, and aspirations to find effective ways of supporting them. Young refugees should be actively involved in local youth organisations, youth centres, and youth information services.

**Areas**

**Recommendations**

1. General considerations when working with young refugees

1. Adaptation and integration in the hosting country.
2. Individual background and context: age, gender, family situation, reasons for leaving their country, location, interpersonal and professional skills, expectations, needs, aspirations, etc.
3. The preferred channels to access information are social networks and website, followed by peer-to-peer communication.

2. Needs and interests considering the intended period of stay

When planning the work with young refugees, youth information services should consider the short, mid and the long-term aspirations and needs of the target group and involve them in the process. Those intending to remain for some time show more interest in accessing information about education, training, and employment opportunities. Those who plan to return shortly emphasise more the need to access psychological support.

3. Needs and interests according to the demographic group

- Respondents under 19 years old show more interest in ways of spending their free time.
- Respondents aged 19-24 seem to need more guidance regarding education and training opportunities.
- Respondents aged 25-35 need more information about employment, housing, health care, administrative procedures, and children’s education and leisure time.

4. Tips for effective youth information outreach, support, and guidance

- Enhancing visibility, promotion, and collaboration with local peers and civil society organisations working with refugees, especially with Ukrainian-led associations.
- Providing youth-friendly, age-appropriate, and comprehensive information based on needs and interests of the target group, ideally in Ukrainian language.
- Involving young Ukrainian refugees in the design, implementation and dissemination of youth information activities targeted at them.
- Offering a personalised and peer-to-peer youth information service through direct channels, including also face-to-face interactions.
- Running activities with peers from the hosting country oriented to learn the local language, promote intercultural learning, and ensure social integration.
- Facilitating online or face-to-face appointments with specialised professionals and services, such as psychologists, lawyers, and doctors.

## Areas

## Recommendations

### 4. Tips for effective youth information outreach, support, and guidance

- Ensuring comprehensive interdisciplinary and multilevel cooperation with institutions, municipalities, civil societies organisations, and other actors working with displaced people in all relevant areas.
- Being aware of limitations and knowing how and when to hand over the responsibility to other services and professionals.

### 5. Mental health support

- Many of the respondents seek not only information but also guidance and emotional support from youth information services.
- Youth information services seem to be perceived as a sort of safe space for guidance and emotional support.
- Close cooperation and partnerships with mental health services and professionals is essential.
- Youth information workers need to increase their mental health literacy and basic psychological competence through specific training and resources.
- The health and psychological needs of young refugees who arrived as unaccompanied and separated children require particular attention.
- Youth information workers must be aware of the limits of their competence and timely refer to other services and professionals.

### 6. Challenges in obtaining information and how to overcome them

- Most of the respondents do not get information from official sources, but through social media, social media, and peers.
- Media and information literacy is crucial to help the target group and their community confidently seek and share valid, objective information and assess its relevance to their aspirations and needs.
- The need for more direct communication and for certain information mediators arises, youth information services can provide support in accessing and interpreting information and guiding to specialists when needed.

### 7. Conclusion

With appropriate information, opportunities and support, young Ukrainian refugees have a huge potential for development, integration, and positive societal contribution. Helping young refugees from Ukraine is a very significant way of supporting Ukraine and its future reconstruction. The youth sector and local authorities have a strategic role in scaling up this potential. Young refugees should be actively involved in local youth organisations, youth centres, and youth information services.



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