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ELDERLY IN UKRAINE DURING THE WAR: SITUATION, NEEDS, EXAMPLES OF RESILIENCE

The paper investigates the Ukrainian older adults' social, economic, and humanitarian circumstances in the context of the Russian war against Ukraine. It mainly analyses the challenges and needs of the elderly residing in regions affected by active hostilities, those who have experienced occupation, and internally displaced older persons. The main problems for older people in the areas of active hostilities and those who have been in the occupied territories are loss and (or) damage of housing; difficulties in evacuating, especially lonely people and those who lost social (family) support; destruction of institutions for the elderly and disabled as well as medical infrastructure; increased poverty and limited access to basic food, hygiene, and medicine, poor health; vulnerability to war crimes by the occupiers. For internally displaced older persons, the following problems are determined: the shortage of housing in slightly safer regions; limited financial opportunities for rental housing and meeting other basic needs (food, medicine, etc.); significant deterioration of health conditions forced by the physical and psychological trauma experienced and displacement during the war; living in temporary shelters with an increased risk of being placed in institutions for the elderly. There are some of the most urgent needs of older people in Ukraine in the context of war: various medicines and hygiene products; food and its delivery to the affected regions; transporting older people, including transferring them to the bomb shelters; increased need for medical care, psychological and social rehabilitation; help with home care and household chores. The paper underlines the resilience of older adults to the hardships they face, their high level of self-organisation and mutual assistance during Russia's war against Ukraine.

Keywords: demographic ageing, elderly, Russia's war against Ukraine, urgent needs, resilience.

Курило І.О., д-р екон. наук, проф., завідувачка відділу досліджень демографічних процесів та демографічної політики Інституту демографії та соціальних досліджень імені М.В. Птухи НАН України, бульв. Тараса Шевченка, 60, Київ, 01032, Україна, гостьова дослідниця відділення демографії та геодемографії наукового факультету Карлового університету, Альбертов 6, 12800, Прага-2, Чеська Республіка, email: iryna.kurilo2017@gmail.com, ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1379-1756>, Scopus Author ID: 57190215809

ЛІТНІ ОСОБИ В УКРАЇНІ ПІД ЧАС ВІЙНИ: СТАНОВИЩЕ, ПОТРЕБИ, ПРИКЛАДИ СТІЙКОСТІ

Досліджено соціальні, економічні та гуманітарні аспекти становища літніх осіб в Україні у контексті повномасштабного вторгнення Росії в Україну. Дослідження зосереджено, зокрема, на аналізі проблем і викликів, а також потреб тих літніх осіб, які проживають у зоні

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активних бойових дій, перебували (перебувають) в окупації, а також внутрішньо переміщених осіб поважного віку. Встановлено, що головними проблемами літніх осіб з регіонів бойових дій і тимчасової окупації є: втрата або пошкодження домівок; труднощі з евакуацією – особливо самотніх осіб та тих, які втратили сімейну (соціальну) підтримку; руйнування установ інституційного догляду для літніх та інвалідів, а також медичної інфраструктури; зростання рівня бідності й обмежений доступ до необхідних продуктів харчування, гігієнічних засобів і ліків, зумовлене цим погіршення стану здоров'я; вразливість до військових злочинів з боку окупантів. Для внутрішньо переміщених літніх осіб виокремлюються такі головні проблеми: нестача житла у відносно більш безпечних регіонах країни й обмежені можливості для його оренди та одночасного забезпечення найнагальніших потреб літніх (їжею, медикаментами); погіршення стану здоров'я під впливом фізичної й психологічної травми, викликані війною та вимушеним переміщенням; проживання у тимчасових притулках з ризиком подальшого потрапляння в інституційні установи для осіб похилого віку. Найактуальнішими для літніх осіб в Україні під час воєнного стану є потреби у: різноманітних ліках і гігієнічних засобах; продуктах харчування та їх доставці в регіони, де йдуть бойові дії; транспортуванні осіб поважного віку, зокрема, їх переміщенні до бомбосховищ; медичній допомозі, психологічній і соціальній реабілітації; допомозі щодо догляду за домом і хатньої роботи. Наголошено на стійкості літніх людей до труднощів, з якими вони стикаються, високому рівні їх самоорганізації та взаємодопомоги під час війни Росії проти України.

Ключові слова: демографічне старіння, літні особи, війна Росії проти України, нагальні потреби літніх, резилієнтність

Unfavourable circumstances and harsh repercussions of Russia's war against Ukraine are pervasive and go far beyond Ukraine's borders. However, in Ukraine, this war affects everyone and makes life exceptionally difficult, especially for older adults – one of the most vulnerable groups in the population. During the war, the elderly population faces many challenges that exacerbate their vulnerabilities.

Older people face worse consequences due to their low mobility and health conditions. They suffered and died at a disproportionately high rate as a result of Russia's armed attack on Ukraine. According to the estimates of the UN's Human Rights Office, one-third of civilians killed during the first 12 months of the war were persons over 60 years [1].

Ukraine is one of the thirty countries with the oldest population. The share of people aged 60 and older in Ukraine's population has rapidly increased in the last years, from 20,7% in 2010 to 24,8% in 2022. So, every fourth person in Ukraine was 60 or older, and almost every fifth was 65 years and over in 2022, before the beginning of the war.

Due to the negative impact of the war on demographic processes, we expect not only a loss in the population but also an acceleration of demographic ageing after the war and an increasing number of persons with disabilities.

Since the beginning of the Russian full-scale invasion, hostilities have affected the regions of Ukraine with the demographically oldest population – Chernihiv, Sumy, and Kharkiv regions (fig. 1), and also intensified in demographically old Donetsk and Luhansk regions. There is an enormous number and percentage of older people in war-affected areas.

Older adults who live in areas close to the front line, as well as those who were or are still in the occupied territories, have the highest risks to life and health. They face a greater likelihood of being killed or injured.

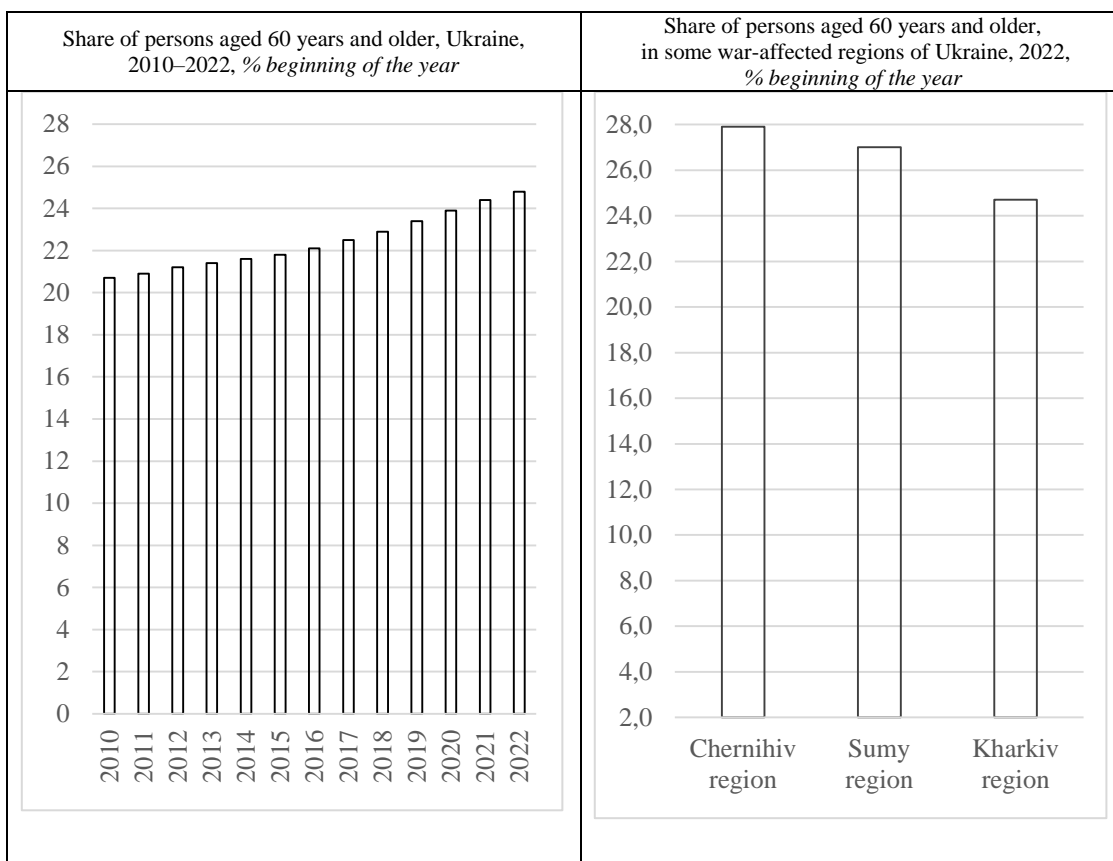


Fig. 1. Demographic ageing in Ukraine (2010–2022) and some regions, which have been affected by hostilities at the beginning of a full-scale invasion

Source: calculations based on data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine.

At the same time, equally significant is the category of older people who are forced to leave their homes because of the war, losing their familiar environment, social connections and support systems.

Previous studies. The issue of the situation and needs of older persons in our country in the context of war is raised in the publications of international organisations dedicated to the situation in Ukraine [2–3]. One of these reports found that Russia's war is causing elderly Ukrainians to suffer from complicated illnesses and a lack of adequate housing [2]. The UN noted that older adults on both sides of the frontline have been highly affected by

interruptions in electricity and water supply and lack of access to medical services, medicines and pensions, which for most were the only source of income [1].

The columnist of “IFA’s The Storyteller” B. Swerts also paid attention to the vulnerability of the older adults during the wars and such factors of elderly mortality in Ukraine as a lack of energy to keep older adults warm to provide transportation for them to have access to food, health, and other basic needs¹. Problems of older adults in our country during Russia’s war against Ukraine are systematically underlined by A. Sidorenko, who is a known scientist in the field of ageing and policy on it².

Previously, we also tried identifying the main problems and needs of older adults in Ukraine in the first months of the war [4].

However, unfortunately, Russia’s war in Ukraine is going on, and the front line is moving slowly. The crimes of the Russian troops against the civilian population continue, the destruction of the infrastructure and the damage to the environment are increasing, and vulnerable groups of the population, particularly the older adults, suffer the most from this.

Our main objective is to summarise the long-term issues and challenges for older people caused by the war in Ukraine, to identify and classify the most urgent needs of various groups of older adults.

The analytical, comparative, classification and concrete-historical *methods* were used for our study. Secondary analysis of various research data, some statistical and graphical methods, was also applied.

We supplemented our work with data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, international organisations (particularly those belonging to the United Nations) and the results of the surveys conducted by the sociological services of Ukraine (Sociological Group “Rating”, Razumkov centre) during the full-scale war.

The main problems *for older people in the regions of active hostilities and those who have been in the occupied territories*. The largest number of people in the regions near the active hostilities need shelters because of loss or (and) damage to housing. Many older adults lost their houses because of shelling and bombing. Damages to houses often force older people to live in unsafe and unsuitable conditions, in partially or fully destroyed housing, lacking functional roofs, windows, electricity or heating.

Some older adults who lost their homes were forced to move to institutions for the elderly, although, before the war, they preferred to live independently in their own homes.

The situation with the loss of housing significantly worsened after the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power by Russian occupying forces. Thus, the housing sector has suffered significant losses in the settlements of Kherson and Mykolaiv regions: 49 and 31 cities, towns, and villages, respectively. In the Mykolaiv region, over 500 private houses in rural areas have been flooded. However, in the Kherson region, it wasn’t possible to

¹ Swerts B. The Weakest Link. (2022, July 25). International Federation of Ageing the Storyteller. URL: <https://ifa.ngo/the-storyteller/the-weakest-link/>

² Sidorenko A. Older People in Ukraine in the Time of Russian Invasion. (2022, May 6). IFA Global Café.

accurately determine the exact number of damaged or destroyed residential buildings due to the region's partial temporary occupation³.

As of the beginning of autumn 2023, the regions most affected by the destruction of housing stock include Donetsk, Kyiv, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Chernihiv, Kherson, and Zaporizhia.

The next group of challenges for older adults in such regions is connected with difficulties in evacuating and accessing bomb shelters for them. These problems intensified more so with physical obstacles and utility disruptions.

There are many difficulties, especially with the evacuation of lonely older people and those who lost social (or family) support. Many lonely older adults were evacuated with their social workers. But some older adults were scared; moving was a step into the unknown. Those older people who didn't evacuate often did so because they had no alternative housing options or faced greater difficulty evacuating. Information about evacuation plans is not always accessible to older people (for example, some do not have smartphones, etc.), and evacuation routes are difficult for them. Mobility limitations and other disabilities generally make evacuating more difficult.

It is also worth noting that older people are difficult to persuade to evacuate. This feature was demonstrated by the situation at the beginning of the war and by subsequent events, particularly those related to the flooding after the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant explosion. At the same time, older people with chronic illnesses or disabilities who remained in conflict-affected areas reported⁴ feeling trapped [1].

The older adults were killed not only because of bombing and shelling. For example, the majority of drowned people because of the destruction of the dam of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power were older adults, and people with disabilities who couldn't swim had mobility limitations, etc. The maximum depth of flooding was up to 5 meters.

It's also worth noting that Russian occupiers (on the flooded occupied territories in the Kherson region) left people without assistance, including in evacuation⁵.

The next problem for older adults (especially lonely people) is related to the destruction of the institutions for the elderly, as well as medical infrastructure. A number of the institutions for the elderly have been evacuated. However, some are forced to operate near

³ The explosion at the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant Dam has caused Ukraine at least \$2 billion in direct damages, according to the initial calculations of KSE Institute. (2023, June 30). KSE. URL: <https://kse.ua/about-the-school/news/the-explosion-at-the-kakhovka-hydroelectric-power-plant-dam-has-caused-ukraine-at-least-2-billion-in-direct-damages-according-to-the-initial-calculations-of-kse-institute/>

⁴ Ukraine: People with Chronic Diseases Face Massive Challenges in Accessing Health Care, According to New WHO Survey. (2022, April). World Health Organization. URL: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/22-04-2022-ukraine--people-with-chronic-diseases-face-massive-challenges-in-accessing-health-care--according-to-new-who-survey#:~:text=Preliminary%20results%20from%20an%20ongoing,accessing%20care%20for%20those%20conditions>

⁵ Melkozerova, V., Gavin, G. (2023, June 7). As Ukraine evacuates its dam-flooded towns, cries for help go unanswered in Russian-occupied territory. *Politico*. URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-evacuates-civilians-flooded-towns-help-unanswered-russia-occupied-territory-nova-kakhovka-dam-kherson-dnipro-river/>

the front line, and some have been destroyed. There were cases in the northern (Sumy) and eastern (Lugansk) regions of Ukraine when the Russian military did not allow "green corridors" for the evacuation of such institutions and even shelled nursing homes (for example, near Kreminna they killed 56 elderly people), hospitals etc.

Infrastructure critical to older people has been damaged or destroyed. It is estimated that 1,223 healthcare facilities (including 384 hospitals and 352 dispensaries) were destroyed or damaged since the start of the full-scale war. Damages from destroying healthcare facilities in Ukraine amounted to \$2,9 billion as of September 1, 2023⁶.

Most of the damages and destructions of health care infrastructure are concentrated in the hostility-affected Donetsk and Kharkiv regions. Many older people in the frontline regions live without access to regular health care, medical facilities, pharmacies, etc. Older adults and people with chronic illnesses also face difficulties affording the cost of medicines. These conditions have led to a deterioration in their health.

The war has critically exacerbated the problem of poverty and deprivation among vulnerable groups, including pensioners. Increased poverty (including difficulties in accessing pension benefits in the regions of hostilities) and limited access to basic food, hygiene and medicine are among the main problems for the Ukrainian older adults during the war.

In the pre-war year (2021), 44,8% of pensioner households in cities and 52,9% in rural areas were classified as poor (based on the criterion of expenses below the actual subsistence minimum) in Ukraine. The war has dramatically increased poverty among older adults. According to the forecast of poverty among pensioners, in 2023, most older adults (76,4% in cities and 83% in rural areas) fall into the poor category [5, p. 104].

The lack of economic opportunities is a major factor that caused even food insecurity in households of elderly in the more affected regions during the full-scale war. This problem is particularly acute for households of pensioners in urban settlements, who cannot consume self-grown food products. Households of pensioners in rural areas are more food secure as they can finish their farm produce. However, they are more disadvantaged in livelihoods and incomes, etc. At the same time, in many regions of the country, agricultural fields are contaminated with mines and unexploded ordnance and households there are unable to grow food to feed themselves.

The level of poverty based on various signs of deprivation, such as insufficient funds to meet basic needs (utility bills, medicines, clothing, home facilities, etc.), has also increased significantly.

It is also worth noting that for older persons and persons with disabilities, the disruptions of utilities (mainly during the autumn-winter period) were particularly difficult because they had to rely on external support to buy additional equipment and store water.

⁶ The total amount of damage caused to the infrastructure of Ukraine due to the war reaches \$151.2 billion – estimate as of September 1, 2023. (2023, October 3). Kyiv: KSE. URL: <https://kse.ua/about-the-school/news/the-total-amount-of-damage-caused-to-the-infrastructure-of-ukraine-due-to-the-war-reaches-151-2-billion-estimate-as-of-september-1-2023/>

People in the regions of active hostilities and those who have been in the occupied territories are exceptionally vulnerable to war crimes committed by the occupiers. In addition to systematic shelling and bombing of residential buildings and civilian infrastructure, russians commit robberies, rapes, and murders, including of older adults. UN Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine finds continued war crimes gravely impacting civilians.

For example, this commission documented cases of sexual and gender-based violence committed by russians (in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia provinces). In the cases investigated, the victims of rape were a 16-year-old girl and women aged from 19 to 83 years. Most of them were in a vulnerable situation [6, p. 12]. In one instance, a 75-year-old woman who stayed alone to protect her property was raped and tortured by a russian soldier who hit her on the face, chest, and ribs and strangled her.

The immediate consequence of the war is large-scale forced population displacement, including older adults. One of the main challenges for *internally displaced older persons* is a housing shortage in slightly safer regions.

According to preliminary estimates the total area of damaged or destroyed facilities by shelling is 88,9 million square metres (8,6% of the total area of the housing stock of Ukraine), 16,9 thousand residential buildings (with a total area of 15,6 million square metres) were partially damaged (the degree of destruction is less than 10%); 84,5 thousand residential buildings (with a total area of 48,12 million square metres) were moderately damaged (the degree of destruction is more than 10% or less than 40%); 65,8 thousand residential buildings (with a total area of 25,24 million square metres) were destroyed (the degree of destruction is more than 40%) [7, p. 9].

There is little free housing available. Ukrainians sometimes allow displaced persons to stay in their homes. But these are often temporary opportunities for older people. Securing rental housing for displaced older adults is challenging due to their financial situation. They have minimal economic opportunities for rental housing and meeting other basic needs (food, medicine, household items).

The next problem is the significant deterioration of health conditions caused by physical and psychological trauma and displacement during the war. Forced internal displacement of older adults often leads both to worsening health and additional barriers to accessing health services.

Some older persons (especially lonely) are forced to live in temporary shelters with an increased risk of being placed in institutions for the elderly. Almost all regions of Ukraine have seen a sharp increase in the number of older people placed in institutions for the elderly during the war. Usually, older people would like to live independently.

Displacement and disruption of communities also resulted in social isolation and loneliness of many older adults who lost touch with their friends, family members, etc.

It also should be considered that some older adults who lived close to the frontline in eastern Ukraine have been displaced two or more times since the beginning of the war (in 2014) and since the full-scale invasion in 2022.

In the context of the stated issues for the older adults in Ukraine, it is essential to highlight the most *urgent needs* common to older people in the regions of active hostilities and internally displaced persons in war conditions.

One of the main is the *need for medicines and medical equipment*. Often, it is about life-sustaining drugs for daily use, which are needed by the older adults, people with chronic illnesses and (or) disability. Sometimes, it requires quite expensive and specific medicines for older adults. In addition, in many cases, there is a significant need for hygiene products, especially adult diapers of various sizes and types.

Consideration should also be given to the heightened demand for *medical care, psychological support, and social rehabilitation* for older persons who have undergone severe war trials, hardships, forced displacement, etc. However, these needs cause increasing pressure on local health infrastructure, which has been one of the harder-hit sectors since the start of the war.

Meanwhile, the unmet *food needs* are no less pressing. According to the last estimates of the World Food Programme, around one in five Ukrainian families face severe food insecurity⁷. Due to wartime conditions and the worsening of the food security issue, particularly affecting vulnerable population groups, it is necessary to supply the older adults with essential food products and, in some cases, drinking water. Tens of thousands of older adults living near the hostilities now depend on humanitarian food assistance. Fulfilling these critical needs is often hampered by challenges in delivering food and water to the most affected areas. Some older persons encounter difficulties in accessing humanitarian aid due to physical barriers, lack of information, etc.

We would like to underline the activities of some non-governmental organisations in Ukraine, which specialise in helping older adults and people with disabilities to meet these most urgent needs during the war. For example, the NGO "From People to People" was established during the war and provides food and some necessities to older adults in Kharkiv (and now also in liberated Kherson). There is also the volunteer organisation "Grandchildren" and other similar NGOs.

The "Proliska" Humanitarian Mission was established at the beginning of the Russian military invasion in 2014. During the full-scale war, it works for vulnerable groups of people in the frontline area and for internally displaced persons in ten regions of Ukraine.

The need to help older adults with household chores has also intensified because many social workers with children have left abroad. In contrast, the number of internally displaced older adults in host communities has increased. Some of the oldest old and (or) persons with disabilities need long-term care at home.

Regarding assistance at the level of territorial communities, it's worth noting that some communities, with the help of experts from the NGO "League of Social Workers of Ukraine" have created special social services for displaced older adults and people with disabilities.

The need to transfer older adults and people with disabilities has not lost its relevance. This applies to both evacuations from dangerous areas and moving to bomb shelters.

⁷ Decrying escalating attacks on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, security council speakers renew call for Russian Federation to cease war of aggression. (2023, November 21). *United Nations*. URL: <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15502.doc.htm>

Experience has shown that ensuring the safety of people with limited mobility (including moving them to bomb shelters) becomes particularly challenging during forced power outages caused by the bombing.

A separate emphasis should be placed on the *needs related to the autumn-winter period*. Based on the experience of the last heating season with Russian attacks on the energy sector, electricity and (or) heating disruptions, people in Ukraine try to prepare for such extreme circumstances.

However, less than half (45%) of older people aged 65 and above could prepare for winter this year. But they often have only stockpiled water, and some have battery-powered lighting devices with a power bank at home. Expensive equipment needed during power or heating cuts (for example, electric generators or solar panels) is unavailable to older people in Ukraine (fig. 2).

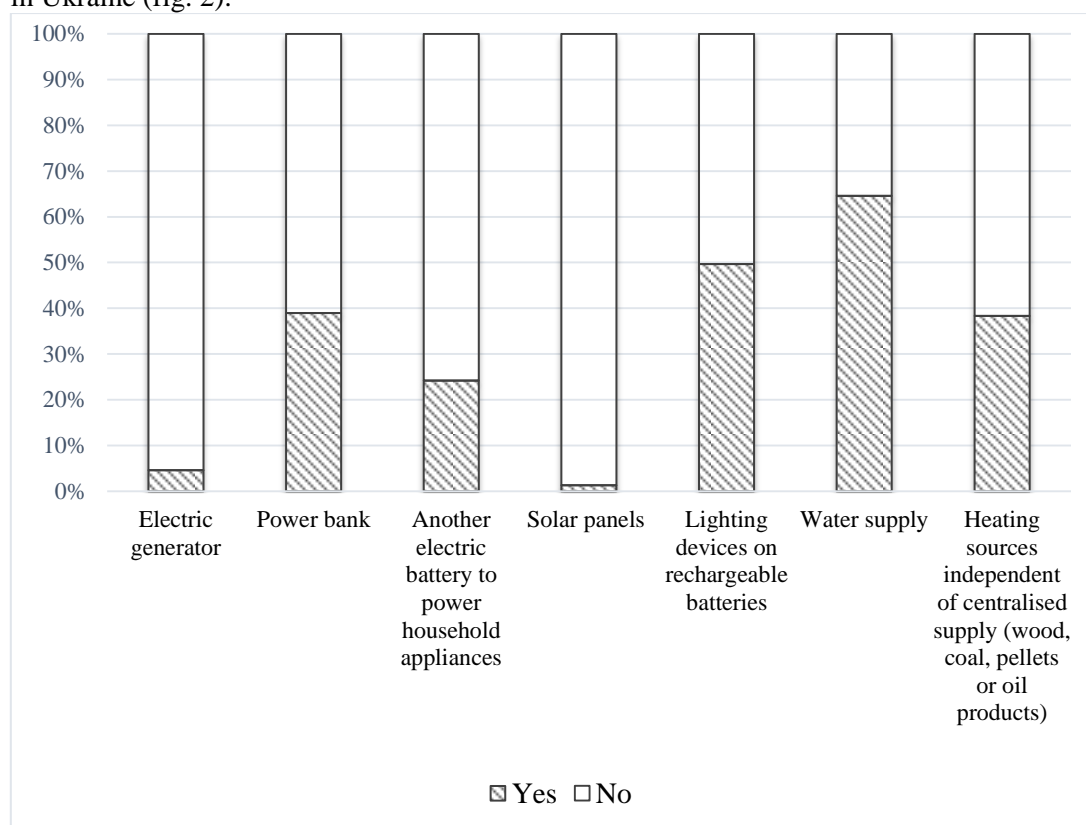


Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents aged 65 and older by the presence of equipment at home needed in case of power and heat supply interruptions

Source: author's calculations based on the survey data (according to the survey conducted by the sociological service of the Razumkov Center, commissioned by the publication "Dzerkalo tyzhnia" from September 28 to October 4, 2023).

It is worth noting that nearly all of the urgent needs of older people in Ukraine in wartime are basic needs, mainly *physiological* and *safety* requirements. Without addressing such priority needs, the survival of these persons is uncertain.

Simultaneously, we would like to mention the relevance of the *need for communication* and *affection* in alleviating the loneliness and social isolation experienced by older people (as those residing in insecure regions and internally displaced persons). Older people also require *recognition and respect* and are often willing and able to contribute to communities and households. Therefore, it is necessary and useful for the host communities to consider and try to meet the *socio-adaptation needs* of forced-displaced older adults.

Despite the severe war trials and hardships experienced by older adults in Ukraine, they maintain optimism and exhibit resilience and endurance.

For example, according to the results of the twenty-fourth wave of the survey "Ukraine in Times of War", conducted by the sociological group "Rating" from September 5 to 7, 2023, the percentage of respondents aged over 50 who believe that Ukraine is heading in the right direction is 64%, which is higher than the corresponding share among respondents aged 36–50⁸.

Older adults in Ukraine persist in their daily lives, working, assisting their peers and neighbours, and actively contributing to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Historical memory and the experience of generations tested by wars, devastation, etc., help our older people adapt to extreme war circumstances. War cannot diminish the wisdom and resilience that older persons bring to their communities, and they become pillars of strength, commitment and adaptability during the war. Here are just a few specific examples:

67-year-old Hanna Plykhchynska walks among ruins in the village Stepova Dolyna with a metal detector. She checks if her fields have mines, so she can continue living and working there on her own and save her farm.

Elderly ladies from the "Grandma's Battalion" of NGO "Care for the elderly in Ukraine" – Maria Karuk, Iryna Isaieva, Nina Dekhtyarova (from Zhytomyr), in 2023 crafted more than 400 pairs of knitted warm socks for the soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

Cherkasy pensioners Oleksandr Zaspа and Mykola Svyatenko help collect and sort unnecessary computer equipment to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine

⁸ The twenty-fourth nationwide survey "Ukraine in times of war" public sentiment and economic situation of the population. (2023, September 5-7). URL: https://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rg_1000_ua_moods_job_%d1%85%d1%85iv_092023.pdf

Despite their modest financial circumstances, older people in Ukraine make efforts to contribute to the army and charitable causes. According to the aforementioned Razumkov Centre's survey, among respondents aged 65 and older, 47% allocate funds for these purposes. The majority contribute no more than UAH 100 every month, and the number of those who donate from UAH 100 to UAH 500 is half as small. Even fewer older adults (half as many compared to the previous group) can afford to donate more than UAH 500 monthly⁹.

Thus, during wartime, older people play an important role in uniting communities and society, fostering resilience through solidarity and a shared commitment to rebuilding what war seeks to dismantle.

Resilience is always about hope. Within the framework of the "National Survey of Ukraine" (conducted by the Sociological Group "Rating" on behalf of the Center for Insights in Survey Research in September 2023), respondents were asked questions about their belief in Ukraine's victory in the war and about their vision of Ukraine's future.

According to the survey, 73% of respondents over the age of 50 answered the question "Do you believe that Ukraine will win the war?" with "Definitely yes", and another 24% chose the option "Likely yes".

The share of those who see Ukraine's future as "rather promising" was highest among older respondents (over 50) – 88 % compared to 84% among respondents aged 18–35 and 83% among those aged 36–50.

Conclusion. Russia's war against Ukraine is still going on. Figures from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights confirmed that more than 10,000 civilians have been killed and more than 18,500 injured to date¹⁰. Among the civilian casualties, there are disproportionately many representatives of vulnerable groups, including older adults and persons with disability.

This war imposed hardship, deprivation and misery on the lives of older persons in our country. Russian war aggression has left numerous older adults in Ukraine without homes, compelling older people to live in unacceptable living conditions. The war has forced others to abandon their residences and familiar surroundings, exacerbating the poverty and healthcare challenges faced by older adults. Additionally, it has inflicted both psychological and physical injuries and, tragically, has separated some older adults from their close relatives and left them without family support.

The acutest needs of older people in the most war-affected regions of Ukraine are medicines and hygiene products, food and clean drinking water, increased need for medical care, and psychological and social rehabilitation. The needs of older people must be considered and prioritised when organising evacuation, providing long-term housing for internally displaced persons, and ensuring access to health care and government financial assistance, including pensions and benefits.

⁹ Calculations, based on data of the survey, conducted by Razumkov Center (survey commissioned by the publication "Dzerkalo tyzhnia").

¹⁰ Decrying escalating attacks on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, security council speakers renew call for Russian Federation to cease war of aggression.

Continuous monitoring of the issues caused by the war and the corresponding needs of older adults and other vulnerable groups of the population in Ukraine is required. Special surveys for this purpose (and research based on them) aimed at identifying the relevant needs of older (vulnerable) persons and opinions of these persons regarding better ways to satisfy their needs in the current conditions would be highly suitable. This involves collecting information through quantitative and qualitative methods from the older adults and social workers, community leaders, volunteers, etc.

Alongside the activities of non-governmental and volunteer organisations in supporting and assisting older adults, the government should take the initiative and bear the primary responsibility for supporting these vulnerable population groups. This should primarily involve ensuring the most basic needs (providing essential items, ensuring safety through evacuation to relatively safer zones, etc.). There is also the need for more active information (at the state and community levels) about the problems and needs of older people in times of war and the involvement of non-disabled persons (especially those who are temporarily unemployed) in providing services to older people, etc. Promoting self-organisation and mutual assistance for older people (especially internally displaced persons) and helping them to adapt and integrate into host communities is also promising.

Both Ukraine and the international community should intensify their efforts to improve the situation of older adults and vulnerable people in the context of this war and do their best to ensure their economic and social rights.

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