

UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)

STUDY ON SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SAFETY NETS IN UKRAINE

Exploration of social protection system in general and for specific vulnerable groups supported with examples from conflict-affected Donbas region

Background

The World Food Programme (WFP) is working with governments at all levels to maximize food security and nutrition through safety net programmes. Social protection, including social benefits, social services, or 'safety nets', is a proven tool to reduce poverty, promote livelihoods and improve food security and nutrition¹. In relatively unstable Ukrainian context, with medium capacities yet facing ongoing political or complex challenges, social protection system is a growing national priority. In this context, WFP ensures that food security and nutrition considerations are embedded into national policy agendas for the most vulnerable, as it often engages in a blend of advisory and implementation roles².

In Ukraine, absolute poverty level is 4.8 percent, and a day consumption for the level of USD 5 per day is 1.3 percent³, however, 58 percent of population live below the minimum subsistence level⁴. Household spends on average up to 50 percent of income on food (56 percent – in rural areas), not being able to afford such nutritious products as meat, fish, and fruit. Spending for food is decreasing, while spending for utilities are increasing, which means that households are saving on food in order to pay for utilities⁵. Moreover, 4.1 percent of households consider themselves as not being able to buy food⁶, and subsequently – to reach the lifestyle that is common in a given society⁷.

Even though, in a present socio-economic situation, Ukraine is a lower middle income country, and for many households, minor shock, including chronic disease, rise of prices for utilities, may throw a household into poverty. Not all deprivations and exclusions may be transferred to financial equivalent and classified as poverty. Access to services is another factor that influences standard of living⁸. Importantly, in Ukrainian context, there is a drastic difference in access to services in rural areas in comparison to urban areas. Consequently, rural population has less socialisation opportunities and

¹ WFP and Urban Safety Nets. Maximizing food security and nutrition, October 2016, available [here](#)

² Update of WFP's Safety Nets Policy: The Role of Food Assistance in Social Protection, June 2012, available [here](#).

³ Information about living standards of the population in January 2017, The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine.

⁴ According to Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, available [here](#).

⁵ Information about living standards of the population in January 2017, The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, available [here](#).

⁶ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Households' Self-Assessment of Income, available [here](#).

⁷ Struchenkov O., Poverty Dynamics in Ukraine, 2016, available [here](#).

⁸ *Ibid.*

other options for cultural development. In fact, the smaller the settlement – the deeper deprivation poverty⁹.

One of the main reasons of growing poverty is deterioration of the labour market situation. According to the assessments based on the International Labour Organisation's methodology, level of unemployment is 10.1 percent (1.8 million of unemployed persons, as of 2017). Among those unemployed, every fifth person is unemployed for more than 12 months¹⁰. The highest unemployment rates are recorded in Donetsk and Luhansk regions (15.2 percent and 17 percent accordingly)¹¹ due to reduced operations of important enterprises, mines closing, and the trade blockade. The unemployed in rural areas (27 percent of the unemployed in rural areas)¹² tend to lose their jobs seasonally.

Socio-economic situation in Donbas region is much more fragile and continue to deteriorate: increasing poverty and unemployment rates are affecting standards of life and posing risk to health. In the fourth year of the conflict, the armed hostilities remain unpredictable, and threaten lives of civilians, damage property and critical civilian infrastructure. Since parties of the conflict do not adhere to ceasefire, there is a high risk of damaging civilian objects and facilities. Such objects as hospitals, schools, water, electricity and gas supply were affected by shelling. This puts those vulnerable into even more fragile situation¹³.

In Ukrainian context, food security is understood as mostly economic access to food. Recent food security assessment proves food insecurity to be growing in Donetsk and Luhansk regions (both Government- and non-Government controlled areas, GCA and NGCA, respectively). The share of population who have poor or borderline levels of food consumption is increasing, too¹⁴. Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster in its assessment identifies the most food insecure groups of populations (in Donbas region): single-headed households with children, single older people living alone and households with no active employment as well as women-headed households¹⁵. Social protection system in Ukraine which includes in-kind assistance and social services should ensure protection for vulnerable persons. Nevertheless, shocks such as conflict in the east, destabilise the situation and make those who are vulnerable even more fragile.

Desk review objectives

WFP is set to undertake a desk review of social protection system and safety nets in Ukraine. The desk study included analysis of primary and secondary sources as well as expert interviews. The study will give an **overview of existing social benefits, social services and institutional care in Ukraine** with regard to the most vulnerable groups of populations.

This desk review explores **social protection and safety nets that the Government provides for vulnerable groups of population**, and identifies **possible gaps in the coverage**. It does so by presenting an overview of institutional and financial context of social protection system, overview of financial

⁹ Kogatko Y., Poverty in Rural Areas, 2015, available [here](#).

¹⁰ Poverty Reduction Strategy, available [here](#).

¹¹ Public Employment Service, available [here](#).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Ukraine, May 15 – August 15, 2017.

¹⁴ Food Security Assessment, 2017, available [here](#).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

transfers to the vulnerable populations, and in-kind assistances through social services in communities and social services at residential institutions.

Structure of the report

The report is structured around 4 chapters:

Chapter 1 on Social Protection System Structure explores institutional context and financial sources of social protection system on national and local levels

Chapter 2 on Monetary Assistance describes financial social benefits available to vulnerable groups of populations

Chapter 3 on In-Kind Assistance explores available social services in community setting as well as in residential institutional context

Chapter 4 presents a discussion on vulnerable groups, recommendations to the key actors and decision makers in social protection system, and suggestions for further research.

The most vulnerable groups

Non-exhaustive list of vulnerable groups shows those populations considered to be vulnerable in all circumstances due to disabilities, physical impairments, or inability to provide for themselves. These groups also have overlapping deprivations and cumulative vulnerabilities:

Persons with disabilities, in particular:

Children with disabilities, specifically A category disability

Displaced children in need of psychological support

Persons with disabilities whose pension was suspended

Persons with disabilities who have to commute from remote areas every 6 months in order to verify their status of internally displaced persons (IDP)

Unemployed persons with disabilities (III degree of disability)

Children at residential care institutions, specifically:

1. those who are orphans/do not have parental care
2. who are being transferred from one residential institution to another
3. who are graduating a residential institution
4. youth with disabilities 18+ who were referred to the geriatric institutions for older persons

Older persons, specifically:

1. persons with limited mobility (I and II degree of disability, especially)
2. single, living alone without support from the relatives
3. who have dependants, especially women-headed households

4. who receive social pension (UAH 950), especially those elderly who receive social pension and stay at the residential care institutions
5. displaced older people
6. older people whose pension was suspended
7. older people who have to commute from remote areas every 6 months in order to verify IDP status

Women 40+ who are unemployed

The list is formed by looking at a) monetary support, b) opportunities to access social services for the most vulnerable groups of populations who are not able to support themselves. This list is not exhaustive and each group needs for a closer look. Such vulnerabilities as [residence in rural area](#), [social isolation](#), [single-headed household](#) and [unemployment](#) are simply overlapping with other vulnerabilities, making person more fragile to the shocks such as conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Chapter 1

As of 2017, the population of Ukraine is 42 million people (four million people live in Donetsk region and two million – in Luhansk oblast);

29.5 million reside in urban areas, while 13 million live in rural areas.

There are 6.5 million children below 14: relevantly equally of girls and boys;

There are 9.4 million 60+ persons: six million are women, and 3.3 million are men;

More persons over 60 live in urban areas (six million);

Average life expectancy (as of 2016) is 72: differs significantly for men (67) and women (76);

Birth rate has declined in comparison to 2016: on average, there are 58 births to 100 deaths;¹⁶

The Constitution of Ukraine (1996) guarantees the right to social protection (article 46). The right to social protection is ensured through social insurance, social benefits (financial transfers), social services (in community and at residential institutions), and other benefits (subsidies/exemptions). The Government has an obligation to ensure the basic social guarantees and social rights of the citizens by establishing minimum living standards. In turn, citizens, according to own need, have a right to use other mechanisms available within the social protection system: social services, other in-kind assistances and social benefits¹⁷.

Social protection schemes and safety nets are guaranteed by the complex system of laws, supporting regulatory instruments, international treaties, national strategies and action plans endorsed by

¹⁶ According to the State Statistics Service, available [here](#).

¹⁷ Social Protection and Social Assistance in Ukraine: current situation and reforming perspectives, 2009, available [here](#).

international treaties. Key documents regulating and supporting social protection system in Ukraine one may categorise as follows:

- a. **National legislation** includes around 30 laws defining social policies, and roughly, 58 laws and 120 regulations defining mostly general eligibility criteria for the social benefits and social assistances at national level, but also local governments' socio-economic strategies and budget purpose-oriented programmes. Key laws include: The Law of Ukraine "On Social Services"; the Law of Ukraine "On Social Work with Families, Children, and Youth";
- b. **development strategies (national and local level)** are designed over a certain course of time to influence certain social protection sphere and subsequently, harmonise the legislation to avoid inconsistency and conflict of laws. Key strategies: Poverty Reduction Strategy; Luhansk Region Development Strategy;
- c. **international instruments** (treaties, conventions, strategies, etc.) to which Ukraine has committed. Key documents include: Sustainable Development Strategy 2020; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities¹⁸.

Enrolment into the social protection system in Ukraine mostly means to be eligible through a legal status¹⁹. A critical level of enrolment is required to ensure coverage of those that need social protection. According to the World Bank, enrolment into social protection system in Ukraine reaches 54 percent²⁰, and is almost universal by definition. However, the level of poverty is raising doubts about the effective coverage for those in need of social protection.

The social security system in Ukraine is financed by social security contributions and by the state and local budgets. In addition, there are four social insurance funds: (1) the Pension Fund, (2) the Unemployment Insurance Fund, (3) the Fund for benefits for temporary incapacity for work, and (4) the Employment Injury Benefits Fund²¹. The main legislative actors for social protection system are the President of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament of Ukraine), Parliamentary Committees for Social Policy and Labour, the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Committees of pensioners, veterans and disabled persons²².

For the first half of 2017, The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine has defined following priorities for the social policy: employment facilitation, fair pension system; effective targeted assistance; social and rehabilitation programmes in communities; protection of children's rights²³. Moreover, recognising poverty as a burning social problem in Ukraine, and following its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, the Government has set to implement The Strategy of Poverty Reduction (2016-2017). Social protection, improved access to social services, especially in rural areas, and deinstitutionalisation are in focus of the Strategy and recognised as an important support for those who live in or are at risk of poverty.

¹⁸ Analysis of social sphere regulatory mechanisms, Bureau of Social and Political Developments, 2015, available [here](#).

¹⁹ Introduction to the social security system in Ukraine, ILO.

²⁰ The State of Social Safety Nets, World Bank, 2015, available [here](#).

²¹ Social Protection: Ukraine country profile, ILO, 2017, available [here](#).

²² Introduction to the social security system in Ukraine, ILO.

²³ Social Policy Priorities for 2017, The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, available [here](#).

Financing social protection system

In 2016 and 2017, the Government has increased financing of social protection sphere by raising minimum social standards. In 2017, social protection and pensions received the largest funding from the budget compared to other spheres: approximately UAH 124 million and UAH 148 million, respectively. To compare, for instance, UAH 180 million was allocated for education, and UAH 97 million for healthcare. In 2018, spending for the monetary assistances from social protection will grow further²⁴. Spending from the state budget for social protection in local budgets has grown in 2017, too. However again, the growth happened due to increased minimum standards such as minimum subsistence level and salary, increased financial support for the social protection of families, children, and youth, and increased subsidies for utilities²⁵.

In 2016, financial priority for social protection system were **social benefits** – financial transfers to the populations. Looking at 2016 general overview of expenditures for social protection and social benefits, the priority groups were: pensioners by age and veterans. In 2016, expenditures for social protection of children and families grew, though not significantly. Expenditures for social protection of unemployed decreased. Since the start of the decentralisation reform, capital expenditures increased due to greater resources accumulated at the local level. However, it is difficult to clearly generalise and analyse the Government's expenditures by specific spheres and vulnerable group coverage: social protection expenditures for specific groups are scattered among various budget lines, even between different budget managers and between various functions²⁶. Through the budget programmes approved by the Ministry of Finances and developed by the Ministry of Social Policy²⁷, some of the priority groups might be derived as follows:

- a. **Persons with disabilities** (including physical and psychological rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, provision with artificial limbs, re-integration into the labour market; financial support of the Fund of Social Protection of Disabled Persons²⁸);
- b. **Children, families, women**, where the budget embraces quite a range of vulnerable groups: women who have a title Mother Hero²⁹, disabled persons and unemployed who live below the minimum subsistence level³⁰, social benefit for the persons with disabilities and children with

²⁴ Budget explanations, available [here](#).

²⁵ Programme Targeted Method of a Budget Planning: Approving the Budget Programmes, FEAO, 2017, available [here](#).

²⁶ Social Protection and Social Assistance in Ukraine: current situation and reforming perspectives, 2009, available [here](#).

²⁷ State programmes are designed by the budget holders (in case of this study, it is the Ministry of Social Policy) based on the current budget expenditures. A budget programme contains information regarding expenditures for specific purpose, overall goal and spending purposes of a programme, actors responsible for the implementation, expected outcomes of a specific programme under a mandate of certain Ministry and within the current State Budget (or a local budget), and quantitative monitoring criteria. – Programme Targeted Method of a Budget Planning: Approving the Budget Programmes, FEAO, 2017, available [here](#).

²⁸ Protection of persons with disabilities is rather underfinanced: according to relevant budget programme, there are 153,547 children in need of rehabilitation, however in 2016, only 112 received rehabilitation services;

²⁹ Status of Mother Hero refers to a woman that gave birth/adopted and brought up 5 or more children to the age of 8, enhanced proper environment for children's socialisation and education. During the assessment of candidates for the status, moral and ethical aspects are also taken into consideration: the woman must be clear of any criminal and/or administrative convictions/charges, with no harmful habits, deviant behaviour, etc. Woman applying for the status to the local executive power, should provide a comprehensive package of documents for each child in order for the authorities to be able to make a fair judgement about mother's input to the upbringing of children.

³⁰ Minimum subsistence level for a family (household), regardless of its composition, is calculated as a total all minimum subsistence levels for every family member as a representative of a specific social-demographic group. According to the law, a household may include parents, children below 18, or students below 23, parents of both spouses incapable of work, a

disabilities, and the victims of human trafficking³¹. The implementation of the state targeted social programme against human trafficking by 2020, implementation of the National Action Plan for the Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security, National Plan for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by 2022 are included here as defined social protection policies with respect to specific groups;

- c. **IDPs** – targeted social benefit for IDPs as a coverage of life expenses and compensation for the utilities;
- d. **Veterans, and disabled veterans** – sanatorium tickets;
- e. **Ukrainian Army veterans from the conflict area in Ukraine** (including returning Ukrainian Army veterans who lost their limbs or other functional ability): providing artificial limbs, physical rehabilitation, providing the accommodation and social rehabilitation, professional adaptation, tickets to sanatoriums; compensation for employers for average salary of those employers that were called to the military service during 2014-2015³²;
- f. **Students**³³: social scholarships;

Traditionally, the programme target groups are defined by status such as veterans, people for special labour merits, the affected by Chernobyl disaster. It is clear, that **pensioners by age, persons with disabilities and families, children, and youth** are in priority target groups for social protection programmes on national level. Local governments, based on local needs assessment and available local budget³⁴ make decisions regarding the priority vulnerable groups.

For example, for **Donetsk region** (from information available on the Donetsk state administration web-page and publicly open information regarding the finances in the region for 2017), the budget comprised of UAH 3.1 billion. From which, UAH 2.3 billion came from the state subventions³⁵. Subventions for the social protection sphere come to local budgets as transit. Therefore, local authorities do not influence social protection subventions³⁶.

person that lives with an isolated disabled person (a single woman/man). At the same time, persons that are completely supported by the state are not considered to be the part of the household in this case. Social assistance is provided by a local Department of Social Protection. In third quarter of 2017, minimum subsistence level for one person is UAH 1,700 per month. However, it varies for different socio-demographic groups (children below 6, children between 6 and 18, able-bodied persons and those incapable of work).

³¹ To illustrate, the amount of one-time social assistance is UAH 6,477 for those, who became victims of human trafficking – it is UAH 4,987; for the Mother Hero title – it is UAH 16,000, as defined by the Ministry of Social Policy).

³² Report of the Budget Programme Implementation, January 2017, available [here](#).

³³ Amount of the monthly stipend is UAH 2,000 for the students of higher educational establishments, for the orphans, children without parental care, for the students between age 18-23 who were left without parents.

³⁴ Local budgets are comprised of the budgets of region (oblast), budget of raion, budget of a city of an oblast level, budget of a city of a raion level, of settlements and villages. A (joint) oblast level budget is aggregated budget of local governments' budgets from oblast, raions and cities. City (village) councils approve and execute local budgets, socio-economic development strategies, local targeted programmes. Local budget, including budgets from the consolidated municipality (consolidated budget between several municipalities is a result of decentralisation reform) are comprised by state subventions and local incomes – Programme Targeted Method of a Budget Planning: Approving the Budget Programmes, FEAO, 2017, available [here](#).

³⁵ Subventions, in other words targeted transfers or inter-budget transfers, are part of a delegated authority of local governments.

³⁶ Moreover, defined in the annex to the state budget, subventions may be re-distributed in the course of execution of the budget during the year and depending on the number of users covered by subventions programmes. The subventions sometimes comprise up to 25 percent of local budgets. One third of the local budgets is made by so-called index of levelling. Importantly, according to the Law of Ukraine "On State Budget", the Cabinet of Ministers in agreement with the Verhovna Rada Budget Committee may re-distribute those subventions for non-government controlled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions between the local budgets – the Law of Ukraine "On State Budget", 2017, available [here](#).

Donetsk socio-economic development strategy sets regional development priorities for the period to 2020. Among others, there are: improving of infrastructure, which is a key to social service access; committing to the decentralisation process that will help consolidated municipalities to redistribute own budgets according to the needs assessment (ideally); deinstitutionalising social services and placing them with the communities; IDPs are defined as a priority vulnerable group for the region, Ukrainian Army veterans from the conflict area in Ukraine and their families, orphans and children without parental care are marked as key target groups for the region. Overall, decentralisation, access to social services in communities, IDPs, Ukrainian Army veterans from the conflict area in Ukraine and vulnerable children are key policy priorities defined in Development Strategy 2020 of the Donetsk region.

Looking at the regional (oblast) budget, the funds were allocated for the following groups:

a) social services for older persons, persons with disabilities, b) social services for children with disabilities at residential institutions; c) social services for dependant persons including residential care; d) expenses for charges for burial of veterans and war disabled persons; e) expenses for priority³⁷ medical services for those affected by the Chornobyl disaster; f) providing motor wheelchairs and transport services for persons with disabilities; g) social benefit³⁸ for persons and/or persons with disabilities, who are carers for older persons, persons/children with disabilities, dependant persons because of disability/illness; h) social services and residential care for children with physical and mental impairments; and an extensive list of services for persons with disabilities such as technical service of personal transport, installation of landline telephones for persons with disabilities; social protection of labour and war veterans; financial support for organisations chaired by persons with disabilities.

According to the Strategy for Youth and Family of Donetsk Region 2013-2017, families and children constitute the social protection priority group in the Donetsk region. Subvention for the social benefit for families with children comprised 22.0 percent from the overall subventions sum, subventions for social benefit for orphans and children without parental care. Since indicators of the effectiveness of local budgets have not been defined, it is difficult to say if the planned budgets are sufficient and respond to the actual needs in oblast. From the budget expenditures, the actual spending responds to some of the needs of the most vulnerable persons/children with disabilities, dependant persons, that are always considered to be vulnerable groups of population³⁹. Overall, there many ways to define what social protection priorities for a local level are. Often defined priorities are not complement each other, and are not specific.

As for Luhansk region, it has received the least among other oblasts social-economic development subventions, UAH 5.0 million. Calculations for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are not comparable

³⁷ Priority medical services are in-kind benefits, including but not limited to top priority in using services; free medicines provided upon the prescriptions; free of charge and first priority prosthetic dentistry; first priority service at pharmacies, and preventive establishments; top priority provision with vouchers to health camps and sanatoriums; a possibility to continue using medical establishments after changing the address or after the retirement; yearly medical service involving all the necessary professionals.

³⁸ The compensation is calculated based on the minimum subsistence level and depending on carer's status and status of the person who needs care. Therefore, amount of a compensation per month in 2017 may vary from max PERCENT 253 to min PERCENT 87) – Cabinet of Ministers Resolution, 558, 2004, available [here](#).

³⁹ Food Security Assessment, 2017, available [here](#).

because of the non-government controlled territories. Nevertheless, it is clear that subventions for socio-economic (but in fact, infrastructure) development is disproportionate between Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Donetsk region has received almost 10 times more than amount of subventions from the state budget⁴⁰.

Chapter 2

Financial and in-kind assistances to the vulnerable populations

53 percent of households in Donetsk and Luhansk GCA rely on social benefits as a primary source of income, and 17 percent – as second main income. In NGCA, social benefits are a primary source of income for 33 percent of population⁴¹.

It is an obligation of the Government to secure at least a minimum level of social guarantees for the socially vulnerable by providing social benefit (financial transfers) to a person or a household in need. The system also provides benefits in kind (social services in community and at residential institutions), housing and utilities subsidies and other benefits. Even though traditionally, social protection system in Ukraine has focused on financial transfers to populations, social services have a place, too: poverty is not always convertible into a financial equivalent, and other deprivations should be covered by social services. In general, the coverage by safety nets is complicated and has been emerging chaotically throughout the history of social protection system development in Ukraine. The following chapter will explore safety nets existing for vulnerable groups of population.

Social benefit is provided on the basis of an individual assessment and is granted if a) a standard of living is below the minimum subsistence level and/or b) a person has a legal eligibility status⁴². Minimum subsistence level in Ukraine is a key social policy parameter that determines basic state social guarantees. In other words, the minimum salary, the minimum levels of pensions, and other social benefits are linked to the minimum subsistence level⁴³. Social benefits that constitute main sources of income must not be lower than the subsistence minimum established by the law⁴⁴.

As established yearly by the Law of Ukraine “On State Budget”⁴⁵, the subsistence minimum is calculated based on a market basket. Market Basket is a number of goods and services, that characterise a typical rate and a structure of monthly consumption. The Ministry of Social Policy calculates the actual subsistence minimum based on the prices of predefined baskets of goods and services comprising it into an actual subsistence minimum. The actual subsistence level for certain socio-demographic groups is calculated monthly in order to observe the dynamics of living standards

⁴⁰ General Overview of State Budget Subventions for Local Budgets for Socio-economic development of some territories in 2017, FEAO, available [here](#).

⁴¹ Food Security Assessment, 2017, available [here](#).

⁴² Introduction to the social security system in Ukraine, ILO.

⁴³ For more details, see Annex 1.

⁴⁴ According to The Constitution of Ukraine (Article 46) and the Law of Ukraine “On State Social Standards and Social Guarantees”.

⁴⁵ Social Security System of Ukraine in 2014–15 and Beyond: Towards the Effective Social Protection Floors , available [here](#).

in Ukraine⁴⁶. Actual subsistence level according to real prices of food, services, and goods, that person needs to meet the norm is UAH 3,035⁴⁷.

Pensions by age

11,956,200 pensioners – persons registered with the Pension Fund – in Ukraine

848,127 pensioners in Donetsk region

327,168 pensioners in Luhansk region⁴⁸

In order to be eligible for a **pension by age**, person has to reach a retirement age and have an insurance period of not less than 15 years. Amount of a pension by age might vary depending on the work experience, a type of previous occupation, a disability or special merits. But generally, the range of contributory pensions by age vary from the minimum pension – UAH 1,373, to for instance, UAH 3,501 for the World War II veterans who have a disability.

On average, a pension by age is UAH 1,887 (slightly higher in Donetsk (UAH 2,163) and Luhansk regions (UAH 2,028) due to such factors as higher number of professions that are eligible for higher pensions due to the occupation type, such as miners, for example⁴⁹). As of 2016, there are 9.1 million persons who receive pension by age⁵⁰.

Average pension by age comprises UAH 1,886 (against actual subsistence level – UAH 3,035)

Minimum pension by age comprises 16312 UAH (against actual subsistence level – UAH 3,035)⁵¹

An average, pension in Ukraine comprises UAH 1,656, which is just 69 percent of an average salary in Ukraine⁵². If person's only income is a pension – as it is for 98 percent of older men and women, then the person has a difficulty satisfying his/her basic needs, such as food, for example⁵³. Moreover, older persons spend majority of their income on medicines. Thus, taking into consideration actual food prices that amounts to UAH 3,035 per month, the only budget line that person can save on is food.

Thus, in case the payments are suspended, a pensioner is in high risk of losing basic means for survival. For example, in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, both GCA and NGCA, some older persons demonstrate emergency-coping mechanisms, such as collecting recyclables (paper and plastic bottles)⁵⁴ or

⁴⁶ The Law of Ukraine “On the Minimum Subsistence Level”, available [here](#).

⁴⁷ Calculated based on July 2017 prices – the Ministry of Social Policy.

⁴⁸ Pension Fund, Information on the number of pensioners, as of June 2017, available [here](#).

⁴⁹ Pension for a minors comprises UAH 4,119.

⁵⁰ Statistical Compendium on Social Protection in Ukraine, State Statistics Service, 2016, available [here](#).

⁵¹ Pension Fund, Information on Average Pension, as of June 2017, available [here](#).

⁵² Statistical Compendium on Social Protection in Ukraine, State Statistics Service, 2016, available [here](#).

⁵³ Reports for Donetsk GCA: older people spend majority of their income on medication (57 percent) and food (34 percent); 66 percent of people (73 percent women) report their income decreased since the beginning of the conflict; 94 percent of people residing in the areas along the contact line report decreased income; 96 percent of people (74 percent women) cannot afford to buy the same products as before the conflict – HelpAge International in Ukraine, Humanitarian needs of older women and men in government controlled Donetsk Oblast: Baseline Report - October 2016, available [here](#).

⁵⁴ Food Security Assessment, 2017, available [here](#).

borrowing money for daily expenses and selling their property⁵⁵. In this regard, this situation may be difficult for both those that are single older person/persons with disabilities and those who have dependents.

Currently, retirement age is:

for women – 55 years, not less than 20 years of work experience

for men – 60 years, not less than 25 years of work experience

With time, Pension System reforms measures will increase a retirement age gradually to 65 as a flexible retirement age depending on insurance period. The number of contribution years required for the minimum pension⁵⁶ will be 30 years for women and from 35 years for men⁵⁷.

Thus, persons who are reaching pension age, but are low competitive on a labour market may find themselves struggling with finding job. Now, the age group 40+ is the most numerous among registered unemployed –187,000 people, or 63 percent from total number of the registered. On top of that, according to the WFP 2017 economic analysis, women-headed households have less income in comparison to male, for 59+ especially. Taking into consideration the future rise of a pension age due to pension reform measures, and taking into consideration the unemployment rate, women reaching retirement age are the group where several vulnerabilities overlap.

IDPs pension case

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are eligible for the **first time pensions** on the same basis as all Ukrainian citizens, if not to take into consideration situation in a conflict-affected area and absence of physical access to the archives with information about work experience on NGCA⁵⁸. The fact that IDPs are not able to provide some of the standard documents for the first time pension allocation, leads to the situation when applications by the number of people trying to get their first time pension are being ruled out by the court⁵⁹ which requires time, financial resources, and effort. Thus, many receive a minimum pension instead – UAH 1,312.

In case a person needs to **renew a pension**, there is another set of complication for IDPs specifically. A pension is linked to the IDP certificate and to the place of residence registration. Pensioners-IDPs have a right to enjoy their pension again once registered on Donetsk and Luhansk GCA. The amount of pension should be paid fully from the moment it was suspended. In order to have a pension

⁵⁵ HelpAge International in Ukraine, Humanitarian needs of older women and men in government controlled Donetsk Oblast: Baseline Report – October 2016, available [here](#).

⁵⁶ Minimum pension by age after May 2017 is UAH 1,312, and according to the law, it cannot be less than minimum subsistence level in 2017 for the persons who lost ability to work.

⁵⁷ Social Security System of Ukraine in 2014–15 and Beyond: Towards the Effective Social Protection Floors, available [here](#).

⁵⁸ One of the main challenges of IDPs being granted a pension for the first time, is in fact, physical access to the archives with the information about previous work experience. This information, as well as employment record books (which many IDPs were not able to collect when leaving NGCA), other documents confirming work experience, as well as absence contributions to pension and social insurance fund (as many enterprises were closed and did not pay the contributions), and other documents that require a physical access to previous work place are required by Pension Fund in order to grant a pension to any citizen of Ukraine, including displaced persons. Importantly, IDPs from Crimea have additional requirements for the first time pension.

⁵⁹ Court fee for 2017 comprises UAH 640 and is compulsory for everyone.

renewed, an IDP has to prove again the right to a pension by the relevant work experience. Proving previous work experience also happens through court. Apart from this, one of the biggest concerns regarding pension renewal is the verification process at State Savings Bank of Ukraine (Oshchad Bank) that takes place every 6 months in order to be eligible for pension. This requirement leads to many people not being able to come physically to the Oshchad Bank branch and as a consequence – losing their pension, which often is the main source of income. This is a particularly burning issue for persons with disabilities (I disability degree), who have a right to receive their pension by post, but still have to be physically present at the Oshchad Bank branch.

Disability pensions

*There are 2,233,159 persons with disabilities in Ukraine, 160,831 in Donetsk region, 48,724 in Luhansk region
Minimum disability pension is UAH 1,373⁶⁰*

Disability pension is available for person only after the Medical Social Expertise verification according to a certain group of disability and a classification under a degree of disability, and provision of a list of special requirements for person⁶¹. In general, social benefit for persons with disabilities is a complex financial transfer, that contains many subcategories and various eligibility criteria. Overall, amount of disability pension depends on degree of disability⁶², and pension by age. Amount of disability pension may vary from an amount of the minimum subsistence level UAH 1,373 to up to UAH 3,301 (for children with disabilities caused by the Chornobyl disaster)⁶³.

Pensions as a social benefit is also paid to the eligible on the grounds of professions and special merits status⁶⁴. For instance, persons with disabilities caused by Chornobyl disaster, miners, etc., would have potentially higher pension. This was widely criticised as not effective model as it is a solely status-based social benefit and is not focused on the socially vulnerable populations. 1.4 million persons receive disability pension in Ukraine.

Social pension

*Amount of social pension for persons with disability comprises UAH 1,373
Amount of social pension for persons that reached a retirement age comprises UAH 949⁶⁵*

⁶⁰ Statistical Compendium on Social Protection in Ukraine, State Statistics Service, 2016, available [here](#).

⁶¹ For adults, there are three degrees of disability: I disability degree refers to persons who are not able to work and need regular care; II disability degree refers to persons who are able to take care of themselves, however not able to work in the standard work environment; III disability degree refers to persons who are able to work in disability inclusive environment. For children, the classification of disabilities is different: children with any type of disability need care constantly, there is only one degree of disability of “A” (dependent children who need regular care) and “B” (dependent children who are able to perform some daily routines) categories.

⁶² See *Supra* 49.

⁶³ All values are indicated for the period of December 2017.

⁶⁴ Other pensions are guaranteed beyond the compulsory-to-all social insurance. These pensions are: pension for the prolonged meritorious service; pension for civil servants; pension for the local government servants; pension for public prosecutor’s office servants; pension for judges and legal expertise servants and other professions related to the public sphere etc.

⁶⁵ According to the e-services portal on pensions in Ukraine, available [here](#).

In order to cover those not eligible for pensions by age and disability pension, there stand separately a category of 'social pension'. Social pension is a monthly support for those who lack service record and who are not eligible for any other kind of pension. This support is received also by refugees and asylum seekers. For the persons with disability, it equals to minimum subsistence level – UAH 1,373, and for persons that reached a retirement age – it is 69 percent of a minimum subsistence level – UAH 949. Even though a share of persons who receive social pension is low in comparison to other pensions – 0.1 million⁶⁶– these persons normally do not have any other support or income, such as single older people.

Eligible-by-status persons may receive additional payments of their regular social benefits. For instance, minimum pension by age is UAH 1,373 in 2017, however if a person is also disabled after the military service in World War II, the additional payment will comprise 285 percent of a minimum subsistence level. Or in other words, the additional payment may comprise up to UAH 3,913 per month. However, not all the additional payments make the financial difference for a beneficiary. For instance, for ex-concentration camp prisoners the assistance is only 15 percent of a minimum subsistence level, or additionally, around UAH 205. Sometimes, it is not essential at all, as for example for the people who need an everyday care/or pensioners by age that have a disability and are single – additional payment to the minimum pension would be UAH 50.

Unemployment benefits

815,700 persons registered as unemployed in Ukraine: 35,645 in Donetsk region and 17,028 in Luhansk region

Average salary – UAH 7,339

Minimum salary – UAH 3,200⁶⁷

Both insured and not insured at Social Insurance Fund active working age persons may enjoy unemployment benefits. In general, an employment benefit replaces a certain percentage of a previous salary; its amount depends on the insurance period and previous average salary, as well as reasons for discharge. The maximum duration of the unemployment benefit is 360 days (or 180 days for a first-time jobseeker with less than 6 months of contributions, and for those not insured). A jobseeker receives full amount of a benefit for the first three months. Later on, the amount decreases gradually to 70 percent.

A minimum unemployment benefit for those who are insured is UAH 1,280, maximum amounts to UAH 6,400⁶⁸. A jobseeker receives a flat rate – UAH 544 – of unemployment benefit when being disciplinary discharged, or not meeting the criteria of insurance period.

⁶⁶ According to the State Statistics Service.

⁶⁷ Public Employment Service, available [here](#).

⁶⁸ Social Security System of Ukraine in 2014–15 and Beyond: Towards the Effective Social Protection Floors , available [here](#).

Child benefits

There are 7.6 million of children in Ukraine

82.3 percent with both parents, 17.5 percent with one parent, 0.2 percent without parents⁶⁹

38 percent of households have children below 18

Families with many children (three and more) comprise 3 percent of households

Single-headed households with children – 9.1 percent⁷⁰

Protection of children's rights was set as a priority for social policy in 2017. Children and families with children are supported by the state from the time a woman is pregnant, until a child reaches a certain age. Amount of social benefit for pregnant women and for childbirth is different depending whether a woman is insured (with a Fund of Social Insurance). For insured persons, social benefit⁷¹ equals a woman's salary before the maternity leave. For not insured women, the social benefit for pregnancy and childbirth would comprise UAH 400.

After the childbirth, a parent has a right for a child benefit: one-time lump sum and then, monthly assistance (UAH 10,320 and UAH 860 accordingly) for three years. Importantly, foster families' carers also receive child assistance for each child in a family. In case child is institutionalised, the assistance is paid to a child's private bank account.

Low-income families⁷² are entitled to a social benefit that equals to the difference between a minimum salary⁷³ and average monthly family income. However, not only monthly average income is an eligibility criterion. The social benefit for low-income families is granted to those families, a) whose able-bodied members are economically active, and b) who do not own expensive property.

Families with many children⁷⁴ are eligible for in-kind assistances and exemptions, however the main financial assistance is comprised of assistance for a birth of child, assistance for a child, and assistance for low-income families, if applicable. In other words, they do not receive any additional support from the state.

Children in care⁷⁵ (under parental care) have a right for the social benefit which is granted to the child's guardian. The assistance is provided for a period of 12 months, and may be prolonged depending on the financial state of a guardian. In principle, child-in-care benefit may be provided until a child reaches

⁶⁹ According to the State Statistics Service, 2017.

⁷⁰ Statistical Compendium on Social Protection in Ukraine, State Statistics Service, 2016, available [here](#).

⁷¹ Payment period of a pregnancy and childbirth social assistance is 70 days before childbirth and 56 days after a childbirth.

⁷² 'Low-income family' refers to families whose average monthly income is lower than minimum subsistence level for a family; it is calculated depending on a family composition and a total of minimum subsistence levels for every family member.

⁷³ UAH 3,200 as for December 2017.

⁷⁴ Families with many children are considered as such if consist of a spouse (man and woman) who formally registered their marriage and have three or more children (including children enrolled in higher educational institutions before 23). One parent having three and more children also has a right to the benefits.

⁷⁵ A child in care may be legally defined as an orphan or a child without a parental care.

18 years. Amount of assistance for children in care⁷⁶ depends on minimum subsistence level and other types of social benefits received for the last 12 months.

As a single parent, a person has a right for single mother benefit⁷⁷. A single parent (adopter) has to be not married, or a widower. This assistance is calculated in relation with minimum subsistence level and monthly average family income received by a single parent until a child reaches age of 18 years. Mothers with children before 6 receive UAH 1,492. Meeting nutrition needs for children and breastfeeding mothers may be especially challenging: children and breastfeeding mothers require foods with high nutritional content that are more expensive than regular food⁷⁸.

According to the Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for Children's Rights, poverty and financial instability are major reason of child being institutionalised. Thus, a weak support to the low-income families might become a trigger to child being institutionalised. With regard to this, single headed households are at risk of having children institutionalised, especially those with household providers that are not socially insured.

Other benefits and exemptions

Most typical benefits: subsidy for housing and utilities, free of charge, free of charge public transport

617,000 households receive utilities subsidies⁷⁹ (out of 14,985,600 of all households)

A benefit/exemption is a permission for certain categories to be fully or partially exempted from certain responsibilities, or else, it is giving to a group/person some additional rights. Even though benefits are often not an essentially highlighted and recognised social assistance, it still constitutes an input into what a person could have spent on services, supportive devices etc. Benefits may be granted to persons or households who have low-income economic status⁸⁰, and/or who have socio-demographic and professional merits. Benefits may have various forms but inherently, they are complex elements created to facilitate the access to certain services.

Very often, a certain benefit to one category also includes entire household. For example, Ukrainian Army veterans, their wives and children, other family members who share the accommodation together are entitled to around 20 various benefits: partial exemptions for the utilities bills, free of charge medicines and medical services, providing artificial limbs, discounts for the landline installation; those veterans who are private entrepreneurs are exempted from the relevant taxes⁸¹.

The most common benefits are the subsidies for housing and utilities, fuel for domestic purposes, communications (landline installation), free of charge healthcare, dentistry and sanatorium treatment, and also, free of charge public transport. A coverage of benefits as a safety net is quite extensive. According to various experts, almost half of Ukrainian households enjoy some benefits and

⁷⁶ For child in care below 6 years – UAH 2,984, from 6-18 years of age – UAH 3,720 (as of December 2017).

⁷⁷ Amount of a benefit for single mothers with children below 6 is UAH 1,492; for children before 6-18 – UAH 1,860; for children between 18-23 – UAH 1,762 (as of December 2017).

⁷⁸ Counting the Beans, WFP, 2017, available [here](#).

⁷⁹ Statistical Compendium on Social Protection in Ukraine, State Statistics Service, 2016, available [here](#).

⁸⁰ In this case, low-income equals to living below minimum subsistence level.

⁸¹ The Law of Ukraine "On State Budget", 2017, available [here](#).

exemptions⁸². For instance, persons with disabilities may receive free of charge assistive devices, free of charge medicines; recreational activities; public transport services; 50 percent off in the long distant connections by train, bus, airplane within the country; all the benefits for the persons with disabilities will be available for the recipient regardless of the pension or other social benefit she/he receives.

During the last 12 months, 58 percent in Donetsk and Luhansk GCA and 45 percent of population in NGCA indicated a reduction of expenditures for food and medicines in order to pay for the utilities⁸³. Thus, a subsidy⁸⁴ is an important safety net for those households that live below the minimum subsistence level and are close to poverty, as the utility costs are especially high in cold season and may extract almost entire the household income. However, subsidies are not targeted and not affordable for a state budget safety net: out of all state budget funds allocated for social benefits in 2017 – UAH 107 billion, half was allocated in fact for subsidies – UAH 51 billion. This is planned to increase in 2018, too.

Chapter 3

Social services

Social services are important safety nets for vulnerable persons. Social services are regulated through a number of documents such as Law of Ukraine “On Social Services” (2003), social services standards, and national strategies for reforming social service system since 2012. Moreover, improving an access to social services for vulnerable groups of populations is one of the 2017 social policy priorities. Social services are designed to support vulnerable persons/groups of people at home, in community, and at residential institutions for children and for adults. Annually, two million persons benefit from various social services⁸⁵.

It is difficult to generalise social services in Ukraine as a safety net. The reform of social services is happening in a crisis time and social services providers are being generally underfinanced. There is no integrated system of registering service users, therefore one person may be counted several times. Needs assessment system is in theory developed, but the services’ content has not been changed since then. Thus, the services are still status based, rather than needs based.

By the Law of Ukraine “On Social Services”, social services are designed for *all* socially vulnerable persons, including refugees and asylum seekers. In order to receive social services, a person has to make a personal written request to relevant social service provider (see the Annex III). Normally, social service providers are agencies operating under the mandate of the Ministry of Social Policy, coordinated by local government and local executive authority⁸⁶. Apart from the Government agencies, local government agencies, and institutions, social service providers are non-government and charity organisations, as well as private persons.

⁸² Social Security System of Ukraine in 2014–15 and Beyond: Towards the Effective Social Protection Floors , available [here](#).

⁸³ Food Security Assessment, 2017, available [here](#).

⁸⁴ Subsidy is in fact a partial exemption from payment for entire utilities costs. It is connected to the average monthly income of a household and to the minimum subsistence level for the period of time, as well as to a housing space. The subsidy is granted for 6 months. Amount of this partial exemption for utility payments is different for every household. The extensive number of benefits, that are in turn compensated from the state budget (through special budget lines or else through subventions to the local budgets, as in case with a free of charge public transport).

⁸⁵ According to the Ministry of Social Policy.

⁸⁶ For extended list of social service providers, see the Annex II.

Since the definition of social services in the legislation is generic, the social services' content is adjusted by social service providers on local level. Social services may be free of charge, or provided for a fee⁸⁷ defined on case-by-case basis for each type of service, service user and service provider. Content of social services (see the Annex III) is defined on national and regional (oblast) level, and financed on raion level and is based on the needs assessment. However, the needs assessment in fact means duplicating information about the number of service users from a previous year.

There is no minimum list of social services that would support person's livelihood regardless of her/his financial condition and location. Thus, changing a location, a person would find different services in place. Even though standards for social services were adopted during 2015-2017, as a part of reform of social service system, there were little additional resources allocated for the implementation. This makes social services not reliable as a safety net in times of shocks. Nevertheless, urban population would have better access to existing social services in comparison to rural, according to the experts and to population's self-assessments of level of life. In any case, a legislation rule stating that a person may choose specific social service is not working in practice as some communities simply do not have access to certain service.

Social services focus on short-time solutions (if an agency has financial capacity; providing with information; doing house chores), process-oriented instead of case management. Delivery of social services is oriented to support very basic needs, not promoting person's dignity and independence in everyday life. To illustrate, most of *home care* services (see the Annex III) are listing the activities of doing something *for* a person. Instead of, for example, improving physical accessibility of an accommodation, or teaching how to use assistive devices. For a case management, every social worker is too overwhelmed with a work load. According to some data, there is a lack of one million of social workers. This makes it difficult to dedicate enough time to one service user. Moreover, social workers often lack professional training and capacity to reach vulnerable people, needs assessment is very basic and does not ensure a desirable impact for a service user. According to the state budget 2017, the Government is investing into professional training of social workers recognising lack of training as a relevant problem.

As there is no integrated system of registering all persons who use or need social services, one person may be counted several times by various service providers. This also affects communication between service providers, even though referral and exploring other possibilities available in the community for a service user are a part of services (see Annex III). Moreover, there is very low cooperation between the government and non-government agencies regarding specific cases. Non-government agencies mostly represent a safety net for certain international funds priority groups. Such as, for instance, IDPs at the present period of time. Thus, these services are limited time- and resource-wise.

On a community level, these services are provided by different service providers, and cover older persons, persons with disabilities, low-income families, children, and youth, and mostly those who live below a poverty line. Moreover, there is a limited list of social service providers, that makes it impossible to choose between different providers, as established by the Law of Ukraine "On Social

⁸⁷ In general, a person is required to pay for a social service in case the service is a) in the list of paid services (see the table of common services), or b) a user is not eligible for the service (for instance, older persons who live isolated may still be not eligible for social worker's home visits as an older person officially has children/family who reside somewhere else and who are supposed to take care for him/her).

Services". Major service providers are: Community Centres of Social Services and Social Service Centre for children, family and youth.

Community (territory) centres of social services (the 'Centre')

The Centre is a community based agency (city and raions level), financed by local budget, that targets older persons, persons with disabilities, low-income families, children and youth. Community centre of social services includes day centre (services of day care, social adaptation – *for more detail see Annex 2*), home care (home visits services by social workers), residential institution for temporary stay (shelter and residential care services).

In practice, Day Centres activities vary widely depending on resources of every Community Centre. Regarding day centre department, it suggests rehabilitation, sports activities and fitness, leisure, education for older people, in-kind assistance (clothes, medicines, food (some centres may also have canteens and food delivery for immobile services users), hairdresser), transport services, etc. In general, a demand for services is high according to the statistics of one of territorial centres: older persons and persons with disabilities applied much more often for a certain service than the centre could actually provide: only 81 percent of requests for services were satisfied⁸⁸. This percentage takes into consideration only those that actually applied for social services.

Home care is performed by social workers, whose task is to 1) identify a person, 2) assess the needs and agree on an individual plan of care, 3) qualitatively improve person's life. Lack of professional training, work overload⁸⁹, high turnover turn home care into a set of basic activities to keep a person on a basic level of functioning. Thus, home care is promoting dependency in small everyday tasks, instead of helping people to become more independent in their everyday life.

Even though the Centres are designed to assist the most vulnerable community members, eligibility criteria for service users exclude some of those isolated and dependant persons who *de jure* have family, but *de facto* the family does not support them. According to the experts, there are numerous cases when isolated and dependent person, having no support in everyday life, would apply to the territory centres for a home care service and would not be able to get it.

There are cases when a person with limited mobility would not leave an apartment for years even though with a proper physiotherapy, support, and living space rearrangement, a person is able to leave an apartment. Isolation but also not being eligible for home visits provided by Community Centres makes a person not recognisable for many targeted humanitarian programmes. To illustrate, only 22 percent of older people (71 percent women) have received some humanitarian aid⁹⁰.

Social service centres for children, family and the youth (the 'Centres of Social Services')

The Centre of Social Services is a community based agency working with vulnerable children, families and the youth. Centres are designed to implement national child protection policies, and policies

⁸⁸ The Ministry of Social Policy, 2014.

⁸⁹ According to The Ministry of Social Policy (2014), local municipalities requested to hire 11.5 thousand social workers more.

⁹⁰ HelpAge International in Ukraine, Humanitarian needs of older women and men in government controlled Donetsk Oblast: Baseline Report – October 2016, available [here](#).

regarding families and the youth on a local level. Centres of Social Services target single isolated low-income persons⁹¹; families with many children; the affected by natural disasters; refugees; the unemployed registered with Public Employment Service; children and the youth who are victims of domestic violence. In Donetsk region, the regional programme⁹² lists in particular, families with many children, youth as a specific vulnerable group, IDPs and Ukrainian Army soldiers participating in 'antiterrorist operation'⁹³.

There is a wide range of services that a centre provides: keeping a database of vulnerable families; identifying vulnerable families, providing a complex needs assessment per family, coordination between various community actors in order to assist vulnerable families; based on the assessment, providing protection and patronage; responsible parenthood education; supervising a process of returning a child from a social boarding school (institution) to a family; patronage of children at residential institutions and for children without parental care; integrating orphans and children without parental care, psychosocial support for children and families etc.

The Centre of Social Services, through social workers, must coordinate with a Child Protection Agency, with educational institutions, with medical institutions in order to identify vulnerable children and families, provide early intervention⁹⁴ and assist children according to their needs. However, none of these child protection actors are identified by law as responsible for a family situation improvement.

In practice, the Centre of Social Services is process- rather than solution-oriented. In other words, the Centre of Social Services often undertakes a needs assessment, but instead of complex case management, suggests one-time in-kind assistances (for more detail see Annex II). Thus, an actual goal – to prevent institutionalisation of a child – often is not met.

Specific social service programmes at the Centres for Social Services are:

Social centre of mother and child – a temporary residential care for vulnerable women (7-9 months pregnant until a child reaches 1,5 years old). A woman is admitted to the centre upon a written application and after an interview with psychologist.

Centre for psychosocial assistance for vulnerable groups of population are designed to accommodate persons affected by natural disasters, victims of crime/domestic violence. The centre is a temporary shelter and a place where people are provided with meals (nutrition standards are regulated by the government⁹⁵).

Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre for Children provides residential and day care services, psychological, medical, legal assistance for socially vulnerable children of 3-18 years old. School-age children attend schools while staying at the centre. The centre admits children from families that are not able to take care for them; orphans and children without parental care; children in street

⁹¹ Term 'low-income' in this case refers to a person whose average income is below minimum subsistence level – UAH 1,684 in this case.

⁹² Regional programme on the youth and family, 2016-2020, available [here](#).

⁹³ Here and further some terms are used as defined by the Ukrainian legislation.

⁹⁴ An early intervention is currently understood as mostly services for children with disabilities but not for socially vulnerable families.

⁹⁵ Regulations for the psychosocial rehabilitation centres and for nutrition standards in the centres, available [here](#).

situations⁹⁶. Children are fully provided, including (diet⁹⁷) food according to the general nutrition standards set for the institutions engaged in child residential care. A child may stay at the centre no more than 12 months in day care, and no more than 9 months in residential care. Children juvenile offenders that have been reported to the police, are being referred to the centre of temporary stay of juvenile delinquents.

In Ukraine, an important safety net for vulnerable children and families are [school feeding programmes](#) at kindergartens, schools and specialised educational institutions⁹⁸. Currently, the school feeding programmes, as a state funded programme, target children from low-income families⁹⁹, children with disabilities and children with special educational needs¹⁰⁰, orphans and children without parental care.

School feeding programmes are financed by local governments, but some of the vulnerable groups are defined on national level and funded through special educational subvention to local governments. This means, that only these groups receive school meals, and for all the other groups, local government has to decide separately. As well as school may take a decision to provide meals for some vulnerable categories of children. Regional programmes on childhood protection are those that define additional categories that receive school meals. For instance, in the regional programme in Donetsk and in Luhansk regions (GCA) there were no funds allocated for the displaced children, which is in fact one of the priority vulnerable group of population according to the Regional Development Strategies.

According to the statistics, mostly children who find themselves at residential care institutions are there as social orphans. Meaning, they have living parent(s)/guardians who due to economic reasons are not able to take care of them. Thus, for children from low-income families, school feeding is a safety net and an opportunity for a child to stay at home, rather than to be institutionalised. Nevertheless, for Roma children, for whom school feeding programmes might be a major motivation to stay at school, are not included as a vulnerable group.

As for the cost of a meal per day is calculated by every municipality, financial equivalent of one meal would amount to UAH 35 (no more than two percent from a minimum subsistence level for a child between 6-18, or UAH 1,777)¹⁰¹.

Children are the most vulnerable to the consequences of conflict and those that do not have formed coping mechanisms. Therefore, psychological support for them is vital. One of the vulnerable groups that require the psychological assistance are IDP children and those that live in conflict zone¹⁰². However, rural and remote areas often lack such services for children. As women and children are the

⁹⁶ Term 'children in street situations' refers to children begging and living on the street, runaways and dropped out of school.

⁹⁷ In this case, term 'diet nutrition' refers to nutrition prescribed by a doctor.

⁹⁸ Specialised educational institutions are but not limited to schools, boarding schools (institutions), sanatoriums, etc.

⁹⁹ In this case, a term 'low-income family' refers to families whose average monthly income is lower than minimum subsistence level for a family, which is calculated depending on a family composition, a total of minimum subsistence levels for every family member.

¹⁰⁰ 'Special educational needs' refer to children who have disabilities or learning problems that make an education for them harder than for other children of the same age.

¹⁰¹ Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 116, 2011, available [here](#).

¹⁰² Psychosocial assistance to families with children during the conflict, 2015, available [here](#).

most vulnerable groups during conflict in general, but also to rise of violence and domestic abuse, OHCHR points out that the children living in rural areas near the contact line and “no-man’s-land” have scarce access to quality psychosocial support due to the lack of the service at schools.

Even though people with disabilities have always been in focus of social protection system, in fact community services are the poorest for them. Especially, for dependant persons who need assisted living: adults with I disability degree, and children with disability of ‘A’ category. Often such families with children and adults with disabilities receive in-kind assistance only. This is a short-time relief of a basic need, which sometimes does not even meet the need, or else the needs are not identified. Persons with disabilities are at risk especially in time of such shocks as a military conflict. For instance, only 22 percent have access to humanitarian aid. This might mean, that cooperation is not well established between NGOs and local government agencies in order to identify ‘invisible’ vulnerable groups.

Moreover, it is known that majority of children that are abandoned after birth have disabilities. Thus, a role of the Centres for Social Services is to assist parent(s) with the situation of having a child with special needs. Children with disabilities who were abandoned after birth are 1) institutionalised and 2) excluded from the society and from a possibility to reach the most of their capabilities.

Access to services in community for all regardless of place of residence has been recognised as one of the priorities of sustainable development goals 2030 which Ukraine is set to pursue. Moreover, access to social services is recognised as an essential and integrated part of the Poverty Reduction Action Plan. Additionally, improvement of access is also a part of decentralization process in Ukraine, where every consolidated municipality are to be responsible for improving own access to social services. This makes a service not reliable during shocks. Reforms of social services are set to change financing: financing single service, instead of financing entire agency; case management principle; professional training of social workers; a database of service users and simplified application for a social service. Even though some of these reforms are started in 2012, there have been still no major shifts made.

Employment services

Employment services is a network of Public Employment Service (city and raion levels), Institute of professional training of public servants; educational institutions of professional training¹⁰³. For an unemployed person, Public Employment Service assists in registering as unemployed (in order to be able to receive unemployment benefits), job profiling, professional training and assistance in job application process.

Persons with disabilities and IDPs are in special focus of Public Employment Service. An employer is encouraged by the Government through a dotation for hiring a person with disability that is able to work and is also a displaced person. According to the experts, majority of applicants to the Public Employment Service are persons that are reaching the retirement age. According to the Public Employment Service¹⁰⁴ statistics, 40+ age group is the most numerous among registered unemployed – 187,000 persons, or 63 percent from a total number of applicants. Other numerous groups are single

¹⁰³ Regulation on Public Employment Service, 2016, available [here](#).

¹⁰⁴ Public Employment Service, 2016-2017, available [here](#).

parents with a child/children below 6, Ukrainian Army veterans from the conflict area of Ukraine and persons with disabilities. From 187,000 registered unemployed among those of pre-retirement age, there were only 2.1 thousand employed, as a low competitive group on a labour market.

Pre-retirement age persons, single parent with children, persons with disabilities that are not retired, are at most risk of unemployment and subsequently, poverty and marginalisation. The level of unemployment according to ILO method grew in 2017 to 11.5 (against 11.3 in 2016), with unemployment rate in rural area (9.3) is much higher than in urban area. In addition, almost all respondents from Donetsk and Luhansk regions (GCA) participated in Food Security Assessment¹⁰⁵ identified the absence of job/closure of enterprises as major problem in their locality in Donbas region. Persons who meet the above criteria – pre-retirement age persons, single parent with children, persons with disabilities that are not retired – are at higher risk.

Current system of social benefits for the unemployed discourages job seekers to actually use the services (professional training, education, job profiling, assistance in job application). The reasons are of an economic nature: very often, the level of minimum salary that person may receive when being employed through the service is much lower than the level of unemployment benefit that a person receives for three months while being enrolled into Public Employment Service. Thus, job seekers choose to receive unemployment benefits¹⁰⁶ and meanwhile, finding a job on their own. Facilitation of employment through reforming Public Employment Service was set as priority by the Ministry of Social Policy.

In 2017, facilitation of employment, especially for IDPs and Ukrainian Army veterans from the conflict area of Ukraine is put into practice through dotation for employers. However, for IDPs who used to have region specific professions, for Public Employment Services it is quite challenging to suggest the job that would not only keep an income on the same level but would also meet person's job profile. Moreover, black market employment is a common situation: according to ILO, in Ukraine, there are cases where contractual salary is set at the minimum level while the rest of salary is paid informally in cash¹⁰⁷.

Social Services at residential institutions

*There are 83,716¹⁰⁸ of children without parental care and orphans in Ukraine
9,871 children without parental care and orphans in Donetsk region and 4,587 in Luhansk
region¹⁰⁹*

¹⁰⁵ Food Security Assessment, September 2017, available [here](#).

¹⁰⁶ See the Unemployment Benefits sub-chapter.

¹⁰⁷ Social Protection: Ukraine country profile, ILO, 2017, available [here](#).

¹⁰⁸ The data regarding children are collected from several sources – The Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Health, as well as sometimes, from private children's residential institutions, - and outdated for 2000, 2005, 2010, 2012-2014.

¹⁰⁹ According to the Ministry of Social Policy data as of 2014.

Child protection system in Ukraine, among others, provides residential care for vulnerable children through a wide range of institutions¹¹⁰: orphanages, rehabilitation centres, social boarding schools (institutions), detention centres for juvenile delinquents. Residential care institutions for children function under the mandate of different ministries: Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Education and Science. This may cause confusion about the types of residential care institutions with the same name, as for instance, social boarding schools. A broad variety of residential care institutions also causes a difficulty in monitoring the effectiveness of a child care, following the standards of child care, and coordinating between child protection actors.

Regardless of the state targeted social programme of reforming the child protection system 2007-2017, there are still approximately 5,000 children in institutional care. There are many different kinds of residential care institutions for various vulnerable of groups of population. Such vulnerable groups include orphans, children without parental care, children abandoned after birth, children removed from families, children with mental and physical impairments, chronic diseases, TB and HIV, children in street situations¹¹¹, children who need psychological rehabilitation, delinquents. Among other functions, these institutions provide education, professional training, physical and psychological rehabilitation.

Quarter of children at residential care are orphans (without living parents or guardians), and the rest are social orphans, or those who do have living parent(s), relatives, or else are removed from family. Eligible children receive their social benefits (pensions, stipends, aliments) to their personal bank accounts. However, 75 percent of a social benefit is automatically deducted in order to pay living costs at the institution – meals and medicines. The state finances only administrative expenses, such as salaries, for instance. The rest 25 percent are 1) kept by residents if they are capable of using it, or 2) kept on their accounts frozen and not used, or 3) used by the institution (that acts as a person's guardian). In the latter case, manipulations and frauds are often reported.

Majority of children in institutional care (69 percent) are between 7-15 years old, children older than 16 years make 24 percent, and those below 7 years of age – 7 percent. Therefore, majority of residents are those that are about to leave institutions after they reach 18 years, or in case of a need – to be referred to other institutional care facility for adults. However, according to the State Statistics Service, approximately 33 percent of children that are about to leave institutional care do not have their own accommodation (or legal rights for accommodation)¹¹². Thus, after leaving institutional care, this group falls into risk of social vulnerability, unemployment, homelessness. In general, children are at most risk when transferring from one institution to another.

Approximately 87.5 percent of budgets for child residential care institutions are allocated for administration purposes. According to the reports, child protection system was underfinanced in recent years (it was financed up to 85 percent from what was supposed to be allocated initially). Only on average 12.5 percent of the budget is normally allocated for food for children (orphans and children

¹¹⁰ The state targeted social programme of reforming the child protection system 2007-2017 is designed to reform the system of residential child care to prioritise family type care over the institution for children in order to, among others, decrease the number of children removed from family – Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers, No. 1242, 2007, available [here](#).

¹¹¹ Term 'children in in street situations' refers to children begging and living on the street specifically, runaways and dropped out of school.

¹¹² According to State Statistics Service, available [here](#).

without parental care¹¹³) in residential care institutions, and nutrition standards for the institutional care are set by the Government¹¹⁴. Taking into consideration nutrition needs of children, and that food for new-borns might be more expensive, this may be an issue for those child care institutions where new-borns are placed – Baby Homes. Moreover, even though institutions, in kindergartens and at schools, and other educational institutions should provide diet nutrition¹¹⁵ for children, the diet meal does not consider for instance, lactose intolerant children.

The **new-born and children under three years of age** (4 years, in some cases) whose parents/guardians are not able to take care of them¹¹⁶ are placed in Baby Homes¹¹⁷. There are various types of Baby Homes for children with different physical and mental impairments, for children with chronic diseases, with TB and HIV. Distinctive feature of the residential care institutions is that often children with different needs and abilities are mixed. In fact, innate mental and physical impairments are the prevailing reason of why children are abandoned by parent(s) after the birth and consequently, placed at Baby Homes¹¹⁸. Parents of children with disabilities, according to the experts, do not receive proper support due to the lack of and limited access to rehabilitation services for children with disabilities and do not have enough support with upbringing of a child with disabilities.

Services that children receive at home apart from assisted living, include daily medical supervision; rehabilitation of children with impairments, providing assistive devices; coordinating with the child protection agencies regarding the adoption options, and general assistance in providing clothes, food, cutlery, beds, and arranging leisure activities.

Since 2007, the social policy priority as defined for Baby Homes on national level¹¹⁹ was social and medical rehabilitation. For instance, as a result of the reform, a palliative care for children is ought to be provided by Baby Homes, even though Baby Homes often neither have solid legislative grounds in Ukraine, nor the capacity for child's palliative care. This leaves a gap in work with children that need palliative care.

At this point, there is one baby home left in Donetsk region (GCA), and one baby home – In Luhansk region (GCA)¹²⁰.

While staying at Baby Homes, one child receives child benefits (for more details see Child benefits sub-chapter) which is supposed to support nutrition and medical needs of a child. Major risk for a child occurs when he or she is transferred from one institution to the other.

¹¹³ The data is collected for the 2015 excluding information from NGCA and Crimea, in sample oblasts.

¹¹⁴ Meals in child homes, educational residential care, and other residential care institutions should be provided according to the nutrition standards – according to the Nutrition Standards, available [here](#).

¹¹⁵ In this case, term 'diet nutrition' refers to the nutrition prescribed by a doctor.

¹¹⁶ Orphans, abandoned after a birth, children from families where parents lost their legal rights towards a child, children with a single parent; children with physical and mental impairments; children whose parents are not able to take care of them due to economic reasons.

¹¹⁷ Operating under the Ministry of Health mandate.

¹¹⁸ The Ministry of Health Decree, No. 70, 2010, available [here](#).

¹¹⁹ A priority activity for Baby Homes is social and medical rehabilitation of vulnerable children as defined in [the development programme](#) for Baby Homes by 2017. This is to ensure early stage recovery, prevention of disability, and placing a child into family or a family type care.

¹²⁰ According to the official public information request.

Children between 4-18 years may be placed in various residential care institutions depending on the child's situation: Boarding school for children; Centres for psychosocial rehabilitation for children; Orphanages; social boarding schools (institutions) for orphans and for children without parental care.

- a. Social boarding school (institution)¹²¹ is a residential institution for children between 4-18 years of age with various mental or physical impairments, who need an assisted living and medical services/supervision due to their mental and physical needs. There are various kinds of boarding schools according to the severity of mental or physical impairment. Children are staying permanently at the institution, are following an individual rehabilitation programme, provided with regular medical supervision and medicines, assistive devices, education (where classes are formed according to the abilities of the students), and leisure activities.

There were 49 social boarding schools (institutions) in Ukraine, with 5,806 persons staying there¹²².

- b. Psychosocial rehabilitation centres for children¹²³ are temporary stay residential institutions for a period from 9 to at maximum, 12 month for vulnerable children. Target group: Children between 3(4)-18 years of age, victims of domestic violence, children in street situation, unaccompanied minors, and children seeking shelter on their own, children referred by a child protection agency or the police. Children are admitted 24/7, and upon mutual agreement, the centre is open for visits of family/relatives. The centre provides a temporary shelter, food, clothes, and other basic items, medical supervision and medicines, psychological counselling, and upon discharge from the centre, a child is provided with food/pocket money. There are 74 centres around Ukraine¹²⁴.
- c. Rehabilitation centres for children with disabilities¹²⁵ are residential care and education institutions for children that need special education and cannot be included into regular school education process. The centre admits children with disabilities and children below 2 under the risk of having a disability. It provides education, development according to child's abilities; education for parents/guardians to be able to meet the needs of children with disabilities outside the centre, classes for children with disabilities; transport services from home to the centre facilities.
- d. Orphanages¹²⁶ are residential care institutions for unaccompanied minors of 3-18 years of age. Orphanages admit unaccompanied children, children in street situations (begging and living on the street specifically, runaways and dropped out of school); removed from family; lost their connection with parents as a result of natural disasters; and those whose families applied to the institution or the children who applied there themselves¹²⁷.

¹²¹ The Ministry of Social Policy mandate.

¹²² Statistical Compendium on Social Protection in Ukraine, State Statistics Service, 2016, available [here](#).

¹²³ The Ministry of Social Policy mandate.

¹²⁴ Regulations for the Centre of Psychosocial rehabilitation for children, available [here](#).

¹²⁵ The Ministry of Social Policy mandate.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Regulations on the Shelter for Children, available [here](#).

¹²⁷ Monitoring places with lack of freedom, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, 2017, available [here](#).

Importantly, after reaching 18 years old and before leaving the social boarding school, a person 1) receives necessary support to have all documents in order (disability degree defined, prepared documents to be able to receive pension and other social benefits) or 2) is transferred to the residential institution for adults¹²⁸. For institutionalised children with disabilities, there are three scenarios after they reach 18 years of old:

1) if they are able to take care for themselves, they may graduate the institution, being provided with necessary assistive devices but will not receive a support in everyday life.

2) if they are in need of care, they may be referred to the residential institution for adults (geriatric institutions). This is an open institution where a person has a decision making power over her/his daily life in the institution.

3) if a person is partially or completely dependent, he / she is referred to a psychiatric dispensary. This is a closed institution, and a resident does not have a decision making power: specific timetable and services are organised for a person. This last case creates a mix of persons of different age, abilities and needs in one single residential institution. This puts the group of young dependent people who find themselves at the institutions into a vulnerability of not receiving proper care in accordance with their needs¹²⁹.

According to the experts, institutions do not function as effective safety net when it comes to transfer from one life period to another. Often, there is conflict between medical and social approaches to care in institutional settings, as various establishments work under mandates of different ministries. State targeted social programme of reforming of residential institutions for children sets to provide with accommodation children graduating residential care institutions. However, as these programmes are not financially affordable, in practice, only few children can actually benefit from it, and others are left behind. To illustrate, children leaving Baby Homes (operating under the mandate of the Ministry of Health), where they were provided with care and more attention due to more finances available (as part of their child benefits), are transferred to the institution with the Ministry of Education and Science or Ministry of Social Policy, where there is lack of personnel and with less funds provided per child.

School feeding, investing into helping services and accessibility to the services in the community for families that are in need, not only low-income families will help to prevent institutionalisation. Process of decentralisation and sectoral reform are crucial now for the improvement of access to social services.

Despite the State Targeted Social Programme of reforming of residential institutions, existing institutions are in fact the result of a social protection system's inability to react to the overlapping vulnerabilities and deprivations and cumulating social exclusions of families by sufficient service support, case management and early intervention. Thus social protection system is not able to respond to complex issues. In some cases, it may offer monetary support not enough to cover food

¹²⁷ Regulations on Social Boarding School (institution) for children, available [here](#).

basket expenses. But mostly the system failed when facing unpredictable shocks, as a conflict appeared to be for children in residential care, who will be always vulnerable category. Furthermore, from the overview of social services, social protection system suggests solutions for the consequences. Such solutions are not always beneficial for person that enrolls to the social protection system.

Process of decentralisation is a key change factor for this trend. However, sectoral reform of social protection has to be performed while taking into consideration that 1) social protection and social services are not normally considered as priority in the budgeting and planning, and not understood clearly, and 2) needs assessment of consolidated municipality is crucial in order to develop targeted and accessible services for vulnerable and in risk of vulnerability groups.

Older persons and Persons with disabilities

Social protection of older persons and adult persons with disabilities is provided through monetary assistances in first place (social benefits) (see Chapter 2) and social services at home and at day centres. In cases when a person needs an assisted living, a social protection responds with social services at residential care institutions, specifically for older persons and persons with disabilities.

There are 1.6 million of older persons, persons with disabilities and other persons who require assisted living¹³⁰. From among them, 12 thousand persons were identified as in need of assisted living at residential institutions¹³¹. Under **The Ministry of Social Policy** mandate, there are 241 residential institutions for older persons and adult persons with disabilities where 40 thousand persons are living (2,787 in Donetsk region¹³², and 1,150 in Luhansk region).

Homes for older people (and persons with disabilities) and geriatric institutions are residential care institutions for older people (who reached retirement age) and people with disabilities (I and II disability degree) who due to the health condition need assisted living and do not have family or other carers to provide a daily care. Residential institutions that are designed for people who in general need daily assistance, do not respond to specific needs of each different group – older people, adult persons with disabilities 18+. Therefore, there are situations, when persons with disabilities in residential care after they reached 18 years of age are transferred to the institutions for adults and stay in reality with older persons (see Residential Institutions for Children sub-chapter).

There are certain groups of persons, that have a priority admission to residential institutions, such as veterans and IDPs. Importantly, single older persons and single adults with disabilities living below the poverty line and not being able to provide for themselves with the social benefits income are often admitted to the institutions to avoid homelessness. Residents are completely supported by the state, including meals, according to the nutrition standards designed for this type of residential institutions.

¹³⁰ 'Assisted living' means providing accommodation, teaching and supporting independence in everyday life; scheduling a day and adhering to the schedule; medical supervision; legal representation; coordination with other experts; providing legal assistance; providing all necessary information regarding social assistances that person is eligible for – Standard of assisted living social service, available [here](#).

¹³¹ According to the State Statistics Service (based on data from the Ministry of Social Policy), those that were identified by the social protection agencies and those that have applied for assistance, which however, does not include those that did not apply for relevant assistance.

¹³² Data from Donetsk region show the highest numbers of persons in institutional care in Ukraine in comparison to other regions in Ukraine.

Even though there are nutrition standards in place, information about low funding of the institutions and monitoring of the institutions shows that the diet of the residents might be rather poor.

Residents are completely supported by state for the expenses of the resident's social benefit. Thus, 75 percent of a social benefit are automatically deducted in order to pay for meals and medicines. Remaining 25 percent are 1) kept by residents if they are capable of using it, and 2) kept on their accounts frozen and not used, or 3) used by the institution (that acts as a person's guardian).

Mental health care residential homes for older people and persons with disabilities are residential institutions for persons who need assisted living due to their mental health issues. Residents are provided with residential care services, medical supervision and other social services¹³³. The residents are fully provided while staying at the residential homes, including medicines and meals 4 times per day (taking into consideration diet requirements according to age and health condition of residents)¹³⁴. Some categories have an admission priority, i.e. those who have special merits, affected by Chernobyl disaster, and IDPs¹³⁵.

There are 145 mental health care residential homes for older people and persons with disabilities¹³⁶.

Many of the residents are often single older persons who receive "social pension" – a minimum pension when a person lacks sufficient work experience, which amounts to UAH 949. Thus, for someone staying at the residential institution, after 75 percent are deducted, somewhat UAH 237 will be left. This is less than USD 5 per day, that is defined as a poverty line. Monitoring of the institutions has raised issues of holding back personal finances of residents as a serious problem¹³⁷. Thus, persons that receive "social pension" and stay at residential care institutions are most vulnerable if compared to other single older persons residing at the institution.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Food security in Ukrainian context is understood differently, but mostly as economical access to food and an ability of agrarian sector to provide food and food import. Even though Ukraine is not in the situation of famine, due to raising poverty, vulnerable groups of people are demonstrating negative

¹³³ Social services at the residential home for older persons mean developing personal social rehabilitation and following it, providing legal representation, day-care and leisure activities, social counselling, palliative/hospice care. Regarding palliative care and hospices for older people and persons with disabilities, that may stand as separate institutions, some of them are private property with fee-based admission. Activities of private property institutions though may raise disputes regarding the license for this kind of services – Monitoring places with lack of freedom, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, 2017, available [here](#).

¹³⁴ These institutions were criticised the most as a result of the institutions' monitoring by the human rights commissioner. One of the raised questions, among many others, was the expenses for one person's meal per day. In some residential homes, that expenses would comprise around UAH 8,55 per day. While a price for food if to take a food basket prices UAH 3,035 per a day would cost approximately UAH 101. Therapeutic environment for residents was also criticised as poor due to lack of resources, human rights abuses, including frauds with the social assistances received by the residents. – Monitoring places with lack of freedom, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, 2017, available [here](#).

¹³⁵ Regulations for Mental Health Institution, available [here](#).

¹³⁶ Statistical Compendium on Social Protection in Ukraine, State Statistics Service, 2016, available [here](#).

¹³⁷ Monitoring places with lack of freedom, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, 2017, available [here](#).

coping strategies and save on food. Recent food security assessment proves food insecurity levels to be growing in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, both GCA and NGCA. The share of population who have poor or borderline levels of food consumption is also increasing¹³⁸.

In general, on average 26.6 percent of households in both urban and rural areas estimate that if had larger income, they would spend it for food¹³⁹. According to the data of the State Statistics Service for 2016, 4.1 percent out of 15,033,400 households in Ukraine were considering themselves as such that are struggling to provide for the most basic needs, including food.

Households in rural areas were struggling more to provide food: to compare, 3.7 percent of urban households with 5 percent – in the rural areas. In comparison to 2015, food expenses for general population decreased in 2016, the expenses for bills and utilities has raised to 16.0 (in comparison to 11.7)¹⁴⁰. There is a tendency that the vulnerable households normally spend more on food, and their daily ration is poorer. For example, those that are below poverty line spend on food more than 57 percent of their budget. In addition to the economic reasons, there are two and more children in a household, and if a family resides in rural area, this affects the ability to provide food¹⁴¹.

According to the latest Food Security Assessment, there are more vulnerable groups of populations, that among other vulnerabilities and deprivations are food insecure. Among these groups are (female) single-headed households with children, older people living alone, households with unemployed family members. Thus, there are more vulnerable categories prone to food insecurity, that social protection system covers at the moment.

The Government policy for food security focuses mostly on economic component of food security and monitoring of food production. Even though food security for vulnerable groups of population is not a social policy direction, the Government in some cases does provide food as in-kind assistance (as a social service), benefits at residential institutions¹⁴², and as school feeding programmes¹⁴³. However, it is not enough to cover needs of people that cannot afford food on a daily basis¹⁴⁴. WFP recognises that safety nets may have different forms and may or may not contribute to the nutrition outcomes, but when they protect or increase incomes, they can also improve dietary diversity and help reduce undernutrition.

Expenditures for social protection has grown in 2017, as a result of increased social standards. However, the most vulnerable groups have not benefitted from the raise of funding for the minimum social guarantees. Idea of providing almost universal coverage within social protection system is not affordable and seems to make no difference, especially in those cases when financial support is not the actual need¹⁴⁵. Even though the Government provides people with minimum social standards, due to the discrepancy between fixed and actual minimum subsistence levels, a person is financially insecure.

¹³⁸ Food Security Assessment, 2017, available [here](#).

¹³⁹ State Statistics Service, Households' Self-Assessment of Income, available [here](#).

¹⁴⁰ According State Statistics Service, available [here](#).

¹⁴¹ Struchenkov O., Poverty Dynamics in Ukraine, 2016, available [here](#) (in Ukrainian).

¹⁴² For more detail, see sub-chapter Community (Territory) Centres of Social Services.

¹⁴³ For more detail, see sub-chapter Social services centres for children, family and youth (the Centres of Social Services).

¹⁴⁴ Social Statistical Service, Households' Self-Assessment of Income, available [here](#).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

Moreover, the social protection policies have proved to be not shock sensitive, if to take single example of IDPs¹⁴⁶. Government's policy regarding IDPs and pensions is aggravating the social insecurity: there were challenges around building a regulatory framework that would facilitate an access to social protection, rather than ban vulnerable persons from it.

The Government covers a wide number of vulnerable categories with monetary assistance based on status, which leads to differentiated treatment not justified on an equity and fairness grounds. Monetary support (financial transfers and targeted financial transfers) do not really cover actual expenses for food basket and does not create incentive effects for beneficiaries, and does not minimise the discrepancy between fixed and actual minimum subsistence levels.

At the same time, social services do not represent a reliable safety net: poor service delivery and unequal access do not enhance social cohesion and social contract in the society. The Government has not been fully addressing challenges around the access to social services in communities. Even though the reform of social service system and decentralisation reform were launched, the access to services for the most vulnerable according to the principles of equity and simplified bureaucracy is still limited.

Social services are underfinanced, there is lack of resources and professional support. Social services do not rely on needs assessment and impact evaluation. As a result, social protection programmes and safety nets often exist nominally on national and local levels, being not actually implemented in municipalities. Thus, some of the groups have been left out by the social protection system and safety nets despite the Government's efforts to reform the system during the crisis.

Availability of institutions, services and social benefits for people with chronic diseases is limited. There are TB dispensaries, home care and residential social services, palliative care for people with HIV (see Annex II). However, the coverage by state organisations is very limited, and often provided through non-government organisations, even though in Donetsk and Luhansk GCA, 50 percent both displaced and non-displaced households reported having one or more individual suffering from a chronic illness¹⁴⁷.

Adjusting social protection to various shocks, such as conflict, should become a key task. As children, women, and older persons will be always vulnerable in a crisis context, there are more people with many vulnerabilities and overlapping deprivations excluded from social protection coverage. This desk review has made an overview of and analysed populations targeted by social protection programmes, and derived those groups that are the most vulnerable.

This list is not exhausted and every group requires a closer look. Such vulnerabilities as [residence in rural area](#), [social isolation](#), [single-headed household](#) and [unemployment](#) are overlapping with other vulnerabilities, making access difficult to what person is eligible for. Thus, groups that are vulnerable and not fully benefiting from social protection programmes and safety nets are as follows:

[Persons with disabilities](#), in particular:

- Children with disabilities, specifically category A disability
- Displaced children in need of psychological support

¹⁴⁶ For more detail, see sub-chapter IDPs' pension case.

¹⁴⁷ Inter-Agency Vulnerability Assessment in Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts, November 2016, available [here](#).

- Persons with disabilities, specifically IDPs, whose pension was suspended
- Persons with disabilities who have to commute from remote areas every 6 months in order to verify their IDP status
- Unemployed persons with disabilities (III degree of disability)

Children at residential care institutions, specifically

- those who are orphans/do not have parental care
- who are being transferred from one residential institution to another
- who are graduating a residential care institution
- youth 18+ with disabilities who were referred to geriatric institutions

Older persons, specifically:

- persons with limited mobility (I and II degree of disability, especially)
- single, living alone without support from the relatives
- who have dependants, especially women-headed households
- who receive social pension (UAH 950), especially those elderly who receive social pension and stay at the residential care institutions
- displaced older people
- older people whose pension was suspended
- older people who have to commute from remote areas every 6 months in order to verify IDP status and be able to receive pension

Women 40+ who are unemployed

Persons with [chronical diseases](#).

[Recommendations for action and research](#)

Recommendations for action for various actors in social protection system in Ukraine:

For the Government, local governments, local executive bodies, social protection agencies: to ensure vulnerable persons who need specific financial or in-kind assistance, are receiving it timely, based on needs assessment, clear definition of the service delivered, through simple regulatory framework.

For the Government: nutrition sensitive social protection – school feeding on local level should include more vulnerable groups of children and be supported by the state budget.

For social services providers: to a) develop one system of registering service users, b) develop a clear system of needs assessment, c) develop a social service impact evaluation, d) hold accountability for provided social services and impact they make, and e) keep the concept of dignity of a service user central in service delivery process.

For relevant ministries and local authorities: to ensure timely and equal access to social benefits and services, especially in rural areas.

[Further steps in research:](#)

- a) Monitor an impact on wellbeing outcomes for social service users
- b) Study the interrelation of humanitarian action and social protection in Ukrainian context

- c) Provide evidence to support effective and relevant programme designs and policies (not only by NGOs and humanitarian actors, but also by government agencies).
- d) Generate a clear picture of administrative structure in Ukraine with regard to division of powers between local authorities and consolidated municipalities.

Conceptualisation

This sub-chapter presents a conceptualisation of terms that may be interpreted differently depending on a context, and are used in certain meaning in this report.

Social protection – consists of policies and programmes to protect people from shocks and stresses through their lives. Social protection reduces poverty, inequality, supports inclusive growth. Components of social protection are often underpinned by rights and legislation. Social protection at minimum include safety nets, labour market policies, and basic social services.

Safety nets refer to formal or informal non-contributory transfers, and programmes designed to provide people, who are vulnerable to poverty, living in poverty or who are facing food insecurity (and other forms of deprivation) with predictable and reliable support, require no payment from beneficiaries, and can be provided publicly and privately.

Social benefits – benefits paid to bring incomes up to minimum levels established by law. In this report, social benefits refer to state monetary assistance (targeted/financial transfers) from state and local budgets to populations that helps people to reach the fixed minimum subsistence level (See Annex I). Social Benefits are provided through various programmes upon assessment of individual's living standards, where income is the central criterion.

In-kind assistance – conditional and un-conditional in-kind transfers including school feeding programmes, social services in community and at residential care institutions, and other forms of social safety nets.

School feeding programmes – targeted social safety nets that provide both educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children, thereby increasing enrolment rates, reducing absenteeism, and improving food security at the household level.

State Social Guarantees – established by the laws and legislative regulations minimum amount of salaries, incomes, pensions and other social benefits that would bring incomes up to minimum subsistence level.

State Social Standards – established by the laws and legislative regulations, based on which state social guarantees, social policy priorities and financing of social sphere for further implementation are established.

Social Services – are in-kind social transfers designed to support vulnerable persons/groups of people at home, in community, and at residential institutions for children and for adults.

Social pension – is a monthly minimum pension for those persons who are not eligible for pensions by age and disability.

Social service providers – are agencies under the mandate of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, coordinated by local government and local executive authority, but also non-government organisations, and individuals.

Food security – availability and adequate access at all times to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.

Actual minimum subsistence Level – in order to monitor dynamics of living standards of the population, minimum subsistence level for 1 person (according to specific sociodemographic group) is calculated monthly based on consumer prices. This value changes monthly, and in general, corresponds to actual prices for food basket.

Fixed minimum subsistence Level – is fixed by the Government for 1 person (according to the sociodemographic group) per month and is used as a basis to calculate minimum social standards and social guarantees.

Disclaimer

Some of the terms used in this report are used in accordance with the Ukrainian legislation.

Annex 1

State social guarantees and minimum social benefits^{148 149 150}

<i>Average minimum subsistence level for one person per month</i>	UAH 1,624
<i>Minimum subsistence level for a child below 6 years</i>	UAH 1,426
<i>Minimum subsistence level for a child between 6 and 18</i>	UAH 1,777
<i>Minimum subsistence level for persons who lost their ability to work</i>	UAH 1,312
<i>Minimum salary</i>	UAH 3,200
<i>Minimum age pension</i>	UAH 1,312
<i>Fixed minimum subsistence level</i>	UAH 1,624
<i>Actual minimum subsistence level</i>	UAH 3,035
<i>Actual minimum subsistence level for child below 6 years</i>	UAH 2,876
<i>Actual minimum subsistence level for child between 6 and 18</i>	UAH 3,491
<i>Actual minimum subsistence level for persons who lost their ability to work</i>	UAH 2,562

¹⁴⁸ According to the Ministry of Social Policy.

¹⁴⁹ According to the e-services portal on pensions in Ukraine, available [here](#).

¹⁵⁰ According to the Monitoring of Minimum Subsistence Level in Ukraine, available [here](#).

Annex 2

Non-exhaustive list of state social service providers (in communities and at institutions)

Name of agency/institution	Target population
Community (Territory) Centres of Social Services and its departments (<i>Day Centre, Temporary Shelter, Home Care</i>)	older persons, low-income families
Residential Care Institutions for Adults (geriatric institutions)	18+ persons with disabilities, older persons
Mental Health Care Residential Institutions	18+ persons with disabilities, older persons
Social Services Centres for Children, Family and Youth	low-income and socially vulnerable families, vulnerable children, children at residential care institutions
Social Centre of Mother and Child <i>and various programmes at the Centre for psychosocial assistance, Psychosocial rehabilitation centre for children, Rehabilitation Centre for Children with Disabilities</i>	low-income and socially vulnerable families, vulnerable children, children at residential care institutions
Baby Homes	new-borns up to 3(4) years of age, abandoned children, orphans
Social Boarding Schools (institutions) for Children	Children with disabilities, children with special learning requirements
Orphanages	children 3+ without parental care, social orphans, orphans
Centres for Children and Youth with HIV	Children/youth living with HIV, persons with various chronic diseases/relapses (including TB)
Temporary Shelters for Victims of Domestic Violence	Women/women with children who are victims of domestic violence and for whom it is unsafe to stay at home; married young people below 18, children with parent (guardian)
Social Housing for orphans and children without parental care	Orphans and children without parental care (age varies between 15 to 23)
Shelter for Children	Abandoned, removed from families, children in street situations.
Night Shelters	Homeless persons 18+ who reside legally in Ukraine

Registration Centres for the Homeless	Homeless persons 18+ who reside legally in Ukraine (including foreigners, refugees, and asylum seekers, persons with children)
Reintegration Centres for the Homeless	Homeless persons (except for persons living with HIV, persons with TB, etc.)
Shelter for Homeless Persons ('Social Hotel')	Employed (homeless) persons 18+, whose legal income does not cover rent
Social Adaptation Centres for the Released from Prisons	Persons 35+ (including foreigners), who applied to the centre not later than 6 months after being released
Social Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Human Trafficking	victims of human trafficking
Refugees Shelters	Refugees and asylum seekers
Public Employment Service	Unemployed persons

Annex 3

List of social services may include but is not limited to general services as defined by the Law of Ukraine “On Social Services” and clarified by the standards of social services. Content of social services is clarified by every agency/institution according to the available resources. Generally, typical and available social services are following:

Home care – housework (grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, fixing clothes), if in rural area – land cultivation, assistance with mobility at home; assistance with communication with other service providers (for example, doctors), providing with assistive devices, providing with information regarding legal rights, legal assistance, financial benefits; content of homecare is defined for every service user individually according to needs assessment and individual plan; key provider is a social worker during home visits; duration and visit frequency depends on the mobility and independency of a person; social worker and service user relationship is based on individual plan (reflecting person’s ability to perform everyday tasks, person’s mobility and service agreement).

Residential care – providing meals, medical supervision and treatment, rehabilitation according to the individual plan, psychological support, organising leisure activities.

Day care – assistance with self-hygiene, assistance with changing, assistance with bathroom, medical supervision and use of medication supervision, training on using assistive devices; psychological assistance, organising leisure activities (reading, writing correspondence, etc.).

Palliative care – a) for those who are mobile – providing person with a day care and home care services; b) for persons with limited mobility – providing residential care services; c) for relatives of a person in palliative care – communication training and training on using assistive devices, conducting self-help groups.

Assisted living – providing an accommodation; training on independent living; medical supervision; providing information on other social services, legal representation; coordination with other professionals; referral to legal assistance.

Social adaptation – providing information regarding other social protection options, legal representation, psychological support and self-help groups; family reunion; organising leisure activities; assisting with employment; resocialisation of the released from prisons; referral to other social protection agencies.

Shelter – providing with bathroom facilities and sleeping place; providing with meals and clothing (if available), providing information regarding other social protection opportunities; legal representation; referral to medical services; referral to legal assistance.

Counselling – providing information regarding other social protection options, legal representation, psychological support and self-help groups; family reunion, assisting with employment.

Legal representation – among others, assistance with restoration of documents; assistance with finding relatives; registration at the place of residence; negotiations with other government agencies.

Crisis and emergency intervention – emergency needs assessment, psychological counselling, providing with safe shelter; coordination between other social protection agencies.

In-kind assistance – tailor assistance; shoe repair and hairdresser services; washing and repair works, assistance with food and medicines (if possible).