



IMPACT OF WAR: FRONT LINE COMMUNITIES AND RESILIENCE

BASED ON THE HROMADA LEVEL
RESCORE KEY INFORMANTS SURVEY





USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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informants
survey

Ukraine • 2024

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Cover photo: Young poet and rap performer Mikhailo Nevidomskii in Irpin city at a local cultural event, September 2023. Photo courtesy of Inna Mishchenko.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study explores how the full-scale Russian invasion in Ukraine has affected local communities and their ability to cope with the adversities and continue functioning day to day. It focuses on 32 surveyed hromadas in the southeast, center, and north of Ukraine, including those on the front lines and those that dealt or are still dealing with occupation. The study seeks to enhance our understanding of the current needs at *the hromada level*, with a focus on identifying recovery priorities for intervention by donors and partners.

This brief is based on 504 key informants' insights, including hromada offices, CSOs, OSBB¹/starostas², and public servants. Although the key informant data from selected localities does not claim to be representative of all hromadas, oblasts, or macroregions, its value is three-fold:

- a. it offers input from hromada actors, who have empirical knowledge, expertise, and deep understanding of the local situations for informing programmatic needs of policymakers, researchers, and donors;
- b. it provides valuable insights from communities that are very hard to reach by researchers due to accessibility and security reasons; and, lastly,
- c. it complements other analytical reSCORE products that are presented at the oblast level-based household data.

In evaluating the **overall hromada performance**, our analysis of reSCORE indicators identified outliers, **categorizing them as well-performing and underperforming** based on significantly higher or significantly lower scores. The analysis revealed **critical factors such as pre-war preparedness, and availability of public consultations and cooperation mechanisms that significantly influence hromada performance** across various dimensions.

1 OSBB refers to the association of co-owners of apartment buildings which is a legal entity created by the owners to manage, maintain and use common inseparable property.

2 Starosta refers to an appointed person who represents the interests of the villagers and provides communication between the residents of the rural district and local authorities.

- Notably, underperforming outliers exhibited less than half the performance level in pre-war preparedness indicators and nearly half the availability of in-person or virtual consultations between citizens and authorities compared to positive outliers. In contrast, **positive outliers report using participatory budgeting three times more frequently and meetings at local community centres, businesses, schools and city/town council two times more frequently than negative outliers.** They also demonstrate more effective collaboration with diverse community segments, including youth, women, and CSOs.

In this analysis, beyond the assessment of overall performance, we have focused on key indicators that span the **institutional and social functioning** of hromadas, as well as the **recovery mindset** of relevant actors.

- Since the invasion, effective institutional functioning has been crucial for crisis response, ensuring the delivery of basic services, and maintaining accessibility of the essential infrastructure. **Pre-war contingency measures played a pivotal role in ensuring the ability of hromadas to maintain institutional functioning.** Overall pre-war preparedness in surveyed hromadas showed bottlenecks, with only three out of 14 envisaged contingency measures prepared in nearly half of the surveyed hromadas.
- Significant ecological damage caused by the war poses a challenge to the sustainability and health of hromadas. The average score for ecological destruction across 32 hromadas was reported at a level of 4.8 out of 10 (with the scale ranging from 0 – minimal damage to 10 – maximum damage). **Air pollution emerged as a prominent issue**, with 70% of key informants expressing concerns. Other concerns raised by more than half of the respondents include worsening of water quality, destruction of local ecosystems, mining and damage to agricultural sites, and deterioration of drinking water quality, which is particularly alarming in frontline and de-occupied communities.
- Overall, key informants' estimation of the provision of services ranged from 8.1 for Internet access, which is the highest ranking, to 5.4 for the quality of roads, which is the

lowest ranking, while for basic needs, the scores ranged from 9.7 for food to 6.1 for bomb shelters (with the scale ranging from 0 – minimal provision to 10 – maximum provision). However, noteworthy disparities exist across various service categories, with some frontline hromadas consistently exhibiting substantially lower-than-average scores. Maintaining uninterrupted delivery of essential services and meeting basic needs remain particularly difficult for severely affected hromadas. Respondents in **hromadas of Donetska (frontline) and Khersonska (de-occupied) oblasts reported lower assessments of basic needs provisions in multiple categories**. Noteworthy, hromada key informants indicated **challenges in access to services for groups experiencing vulnerabilities** (people living with disabilities (PLWD), people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), IDPs, older people, children). They also reflected on the need for equitable humanitarian aid distribution and support (material, educational, psychological/rehabilitation, etc.), particularly for demographics falling outside conventional vulnerability taxonomies, such as families with one or two children in severely affected hromadas struggling to sustain themselves and individuals in single-person households with special needs requiring assistance but often overlooked.

- Trust plays a pivotal role in the performance of communities, acting as a foundation for effective governance and community cohesion. In this study, we examined the level of trust in central institutions, local institutions, and NGOs/CSOs within surveyed hromadas, revealing emerging disparities. A relatively higher level of trust in local institutions (a score of 6.1, on a scale ranging from 0 – minimal trust to 10 – maximum trust) and civil society (7.4), as compared to central authorities (5.3), points to a **gap in confidence in central institutions**. Though not significantly wide, this disparity is noteworthy, underscoring **the importance of addressing it for effective governance, ensuring community needs align with national policies, and for maintaining sense of national unity and solidarity**. Notably, frontline hromadas with substantially below-average scores in services and basic needs provision demonstrated lower trust in central institutions and NGOs/CSOs.
- The survey indicated availability of diverse community civic participation mechanisms in hromadas. Overall, 7 in 10 key informants reported the presence of social media and online chats and 6 in 10 mentioned hotlines as an available mode of engagement; 4 in 10 respondents listed town hall meetings and local gatherings at community centers, businesses, schools, etc. In-person or virtual consultations were mentioned by 3 in

10 informants. Finally, participatory budgeting was listed as an available option only by 2 in 10 respondents. **Interactions with youth, women and CSOs are overall relatively frequent and perceived as highly effective when they occur.** Conversely, meetings with authorities of different levels were reported as less frequent and were considered less effective.

- The feedback mechanism between hromada key actors and members (e.g. through consultation about the decision-making, receiving criticism about their work, collecting information about needs, etc.) remain only moderately utilized, although it is slightly more common for hromada office representatives and OSBB leaders compared to the other two target groups (CSOs and public services). **A majority of public services' representatives** (52% and 56% respectively) reported that they **never consulted with hromada members** about the decisions they make and stated that hromada members never gave feedback and criticism about their work.
- Investigation of the recovery mindset within local communities sheds light on the collective approach to overcoming challenges and fostering resilience. While there is a **consensus on the importance of civil rights** in general as a safeguard against state oppression (with over 80% of support among respondents), this is juxtaposed with a rather high frequency (around 60%) of valuing obedience and respect for authority as the most important virtues for children. Although it might be a temporary concern during the martial law, it could point to a dissonance between a demand for democratic values in the public sphere (i.e. public institutions) but authoritarian values in the private sphere (i.e. in the household, and within family), at least among hromada actors. This finding raises some considerations for post-war democratic transformation, including the need for programmes such as democratic parenting and collaborative decision making.
- The study reveals **differing levels of support for reforms** among various groups. Although Hromada office representatives show the highest overall support for reforms, which is encouraging, skepticism among all other groups remains significant, with a balanced perspective (almost 50/50). Simultaneously, confidence in the EU's stability and perceived benefits for a majority of the sectors, if Ukraine joins the EU, is reported at the level of 7 out of 10 points, nearly equal among all four target groups. This suggests that skepticism about reforms (which are critical for Ukraine's European aspirations) highlights an untapped potential of reforms for gaining increased support across all groups of key informants, rather than signaling polarization. It underscores the importance of engaging a wider hromada public in open

dialogues on the meaning and significance of different reform initiatives to bridge differing perspectives.

- The **top-five priorities for recovery and reconstruction in hromadas include Health and Education Facilities**, with over half of respondents emphasizing these two sectors, followed by **Transport, Energy, and Technology**, which are noted by more than a third of respondents. However, variations exist. While in some de-occupied and frontline hromadas Educational Facilities are deemed highest priority (with over 80% underscoring this as their top priority), in southeast hromadas, Health and Energy are the top two pressing issues (with over 70-80% key informants prioritizing these sectors).
- Regarding the awareness of the work of the international partners, a majority of the respondents have heard about USAID and UNDP, and nearly a quarter have participated in activities organized or funded by the partners. The highest awareness and involvement in partners' programs are observed among hromada office representatives. Overall, **8 in 10 key informants agree that international donors are responsive to the needs of their hromadas and that development investments have a positive impact on their hromadas.**

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study draws on several key research objectives aimed at deepening our understanding of the current needs and resilience potential at the hromada level. It covers hromadas that have been selected in line with reSCORE partners' programmatic priorities.

Firstly, it aims to assess the multifaceted reSCORE indicators in the front-line communities and those communities affected by the ongoing war, with a particular emphasis on understanding their current situation in the face of adversity. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the impact of war on hromadas' capacity to deliver essential functions, such as providing services and support to residents and maintaining effective communication mechanisms to implementing effective local governance. This was done by collecting data from hromada representatives, who have an empirical knowledge, expertise, and deep understanding of the local context. Secondly, the research aims to identify the recovery priorities, by documenting the most urgent local needs that can be addressed by development actors. In doing so, the research complements other analytical reSCORE products that are presented at the oblast level based on household data with deep-dive expert findings from hard-to-reach communities to inform localized interventions.

To achieve these objectives, the research employs analysis of quantitative data enriched by some qualitative evidence from the "Reflections" section of the interviews³. The study delves into the reSCORE core indicators and investigates the presence of common

3 At the end of the interview, key informants were asked to address the following open question: "Do you have any other thoughts or reflections related to the current urgent needs of your hromada? Are there any issues (or needs of specific groups or settlements) that require special attention? What key messages about the development your hromada should be delivered to national and international partners?". The reflections from expert interviews illustrate some key reSCORE topics and reveal several prominent issues that were not covered within the survey. We quote local voices from different target groups to bolster the validity and triangulation of our findings and provide a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the local context.

positive or negative outliers among the surveyed hromadas⁴. Moreover, it explores the factors influencing these outliers (on the approach in defining the outliers – see *Methodology* section). In addition to evaluating the overall performance, the analysis centers on pivotal indicators encompassing the institutional and social dynamics of hromadas.

The study is also complemented by the hromada-level online data uploads on the interactive SCORE platform. This allows participants of the study, community members and other stakeholders to directly engage with the indicators and investigate hromada performance on reSCORE heatmaps⁵. As such, it widens the utility and actionability of the findings to different audiences, and allows for further investigations combined with other data sets, including but not limited to reSCORE household study.

Additionally, to provide vital context about the evolving role of hromadas in Ukraine and set the stage for understanding the impact of war on local communities, this brief is enriched by two thematic boxes (Box 1. *Setting the Hromada Scene through Decentralization Process: what is important to know about the current role of hromada in Ukraine* and Box 2. *Understanding Current Front-Line Communities Landscape: Impact of War and Evidence of Resilience*) based on the selected literature review. Finally, building on the main findings of the study, the brief recommendations in each section draw strategies to support resilient hromada communities.

4 For a reliable basis of comparison of quantitative data, it would have been essential to concentrate on hromadas where interviews included at least two representatives from each of the four designated expert groups. However, in this study, we steer clear of a strictly qualitative approach, given that it relies on key informant interviews that may not be fully representative but, nevertheless, provide valuable pieces of evidence and insights. As a result, we offer comprehensive online access to the individual scores of each hromada, facilitating assessments of available local key informants' insights, irrespective of the number of observations. In this brief, the recommended criterion for reporting at the hromada individual level was to have 3 or more surveyed key informants. The criterion is grounded in the triangulation principle, which enhances the reliability of findings by incorporating diverse perspectives. Hromadas with fewer than 3 respondents are included in aggregated calculations to maintain comprehensive insights but are not presented as standalone scores to ensure the robustness and credibility of the reported data.

5 The hromada level reSCORE data is available on: <https://app.scoreforpeace.org/en/ukraine/datasets>

APPROACH TO RESILIENCE

In this brief, we employ a composite definition of resilience, drawing from the conceptual insights and empirical observations of scholars and practitioners in the field⁶. Community resilience, which is a developing research domain in many countries that experience challenging events, is conceptualized as a ‘multivariate construct that contains both physical and perceptual components’⁷. Hromada resilience in times of war is understood as the capacity of local communities to effectively withstand, adapt to, respond, and recover from the complex shocks and challenges while maintaining essential functions. Resilience is achieved by leveraging a wide array of community resources and employing diverse interaction mechanisms that actively involve different groups of community members. The significance of the human component in community resilience extends to crucial aspects such as cohesion and trust, and encompasses other factors, such as confidence in leadership⁸. This approach acknowledges the interconnectedness of factors influencing the hromadas’ capacity to withstand and thrive amidst the complexities of the wartime context⁹.

In this analysis, we have prioritized indicators that encompass various aspects of institutional and social functioning of hromadas, as well as recovery mindset of respective actors. The **institutional**

6 For overview of practitioner frameworks to assess resilience in different humanitarian and development contexts, see: Lordos A., Hyslop D. (2021). The Assessment of Multisystemic Resilience in Conflict-Affected Populations / *Multisystemic Resilience*. Edited by: Michael Ungar, Oxford University Press, pp. 417–451). Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/book/41117/chapter/350425087?login=true> For conceptualization of hromadas’ institutional resilience in wartime and summary of the theoretical framework used in the context of communities facing multifacet shocks, see: Rabinovych M., Brik T., Darkovich A., Savisko M., Hatsko V., Tytiuk S., Piddubnyi I. Explaining Ukraine’s resilience to Russia’s invasion: The role of local governance // *Governance*, 06 October 2023. Available at: Explaining Ukraine’s resilience to Russia’s invasion: The role of local governance – Rabinovych – Governance – Wiley Online Library .

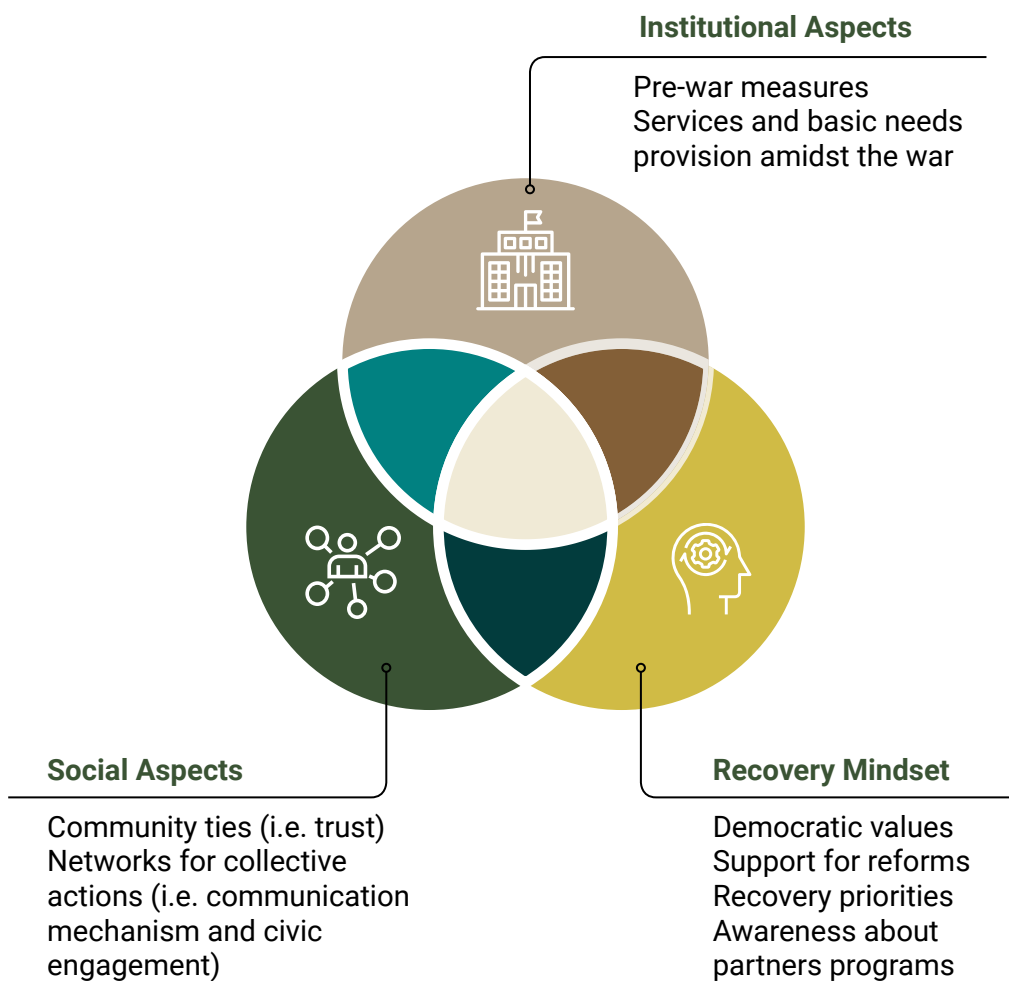
7 See Eshel, Y., Kimhi, Sh., Community Resilience of Civilians at War: A New Perspective // *Community mental health journal*, 2016, Vol.52 (1), p.109-117.

8 Obrist, B., Pfeifer, C., Henley, R., Multi-layered social resilience: a new approach in mitigation research // *Progress in Development Studies*, 10(4), p.283-293.

9 We extend our gratitude to our colleagues from the Center for Sociological Research, Decentralization and Regional Development, Kyiv School of Economics (Myroslava Savisko, Tymofii Brik, Serhii Tytiuk, Valentyn Hatsko, Andrii Darkovich) for their insightful publications on the historical and institutional context of decentralization processes and valuable methodological and practical insights on the approaches to hromada resilience assessment. A summary of the key findings from KSE’s research on hromada resilience is presented in Box 2. The KSE’s Preparedness Scale was employed in the ReSCORE hromada survey.

aspect includes the effectiveness of formal structures such as the ability to undertake pre-war contingency measures, provide services and meet basic needs during emergency situations caused by the war. On the **social front**, attention is given to indicators that measure community ties (such as trust) and networks that facilitate collective action (including communication mechanism and civic engagement). The analysis plan also involves examining the **recovery mindset** through the lenses of democratic and authoritarian values, support for reforms, recovery priorities, and awareness about partners' programs.

Diagram 1. Hromada Resilience: Analysis Dimensions



ZOOMING OUT FOR A WIDER LENS:

Identifying Outliers and Investigating the Factors Defining Local Communities' Performance

The overall evaluation of hromadas' performance involved a comprehensive analysis of all relevant reSCORE indicators, aiming to identify outliers. Outliers were identified based on significantly higher or lower scores and categorized into better-performing or under-performing lists. In the context of this research, "performance" refers to the outcomes measured through various indicators rather than an assessment of skills or governance quality. Subsequently, we identified indicators that significantly influenced a hromada's classification either as a stronger or a weaker performer (for details on analysis procedures – refer to the *Methodology* section). Based on the performance analysis of the 150 thematic indicators, the following outliers were identified:

Negative outliers / weaker performing hromadas – Kostiantynivska urban, Kramatorska urban, Shostkynska urban, Mykolaivska urban, Khersonska urban¹⁰, Zaporizka urban, Dniprovska urban¹¹.

Positive outliers/ stronger performing hromadas – Kochubeivska rural, Nikopolska urban, Novovorontsovka stlmt¹², Kryvorizka urban, Novomoskovska urban, Kharkivska urban, Kamianska urban.

Negative Outliers

Under-performance is associated with lower scores in 15 indicators (see Factors defining negative outliers in *Table 1*). A set of indicators that can be grouped as **Pre-war Contingency Measures underscores**

¹⁰ In Khersonska hromada three out of four target groups were interviewed (specifically, CSOs were not covered).

¹¹ In the main text of this brief, we utilize the official transliteration of hromada names as designated by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. For instance, we refer to the "Dniprovska urban hromada." However, in the maps, we use shorter names, such as "Dniprovska hromada", for the sake of space.

¹² In Novovorontsovka hromada three out of four target groups were interviewed (specifically, CSOs were not covered).

the critical role of proactive planning and effective emergency response in shaping hromada resilience and overall performance. Lack of pre-war preparedness may leave hromadas more vulnerable to unforeseen challenges, hindering their ability to mount effective emergency responses and potentially exacerbating negative outcomes during wartime. Noteworthy, the **negative outliers exhibit less than half the performance level in all preparedness indicators compared to positive outliers.**

Among other group of factors identifying negative outliers include **the lack of Public Consultations and Cooperation Mechanisms, which** may hinder community involvement and transparent decision-making processes, potentially **contributing to unfavorable hromada outcomes.** Availability of in-person or virtual consultations between the citizens and the authorities is almost half as much among negative outliers as compared to positive outliers.

The final factor associated with negative outliers is **lower Trust in local authorities** (oblast, city/town, and mayor levels), which **poses challenges to effective governance and community leadership** (see *Table 1*). Notably, trust in local authorities fluctuates around scores of 4-5 for negative outliers, whereas for positive outliers, it consistently stands around scores of 6-7 out of 10.

Table 1. Factors defining negative outliers among hromadas

Factors Availability of...	Negative outliers average score	Positive outliers average score	Average score for 32 surveyed hromadas
Pre-War Measures done in hromada before February 24, 2022 (Overall)	2.1	5.4	3.3
including...			
Emergency response plan updated or approved	2.8	5.6	3.6
Special plan for the evacuation of the population in the event of an armed conflict drawn up	1.9	5.2	3.0
Program of national resistance on territory of the hromada approved by representatives of the local government	1.5	5.1	3.0
Online map of shelters in hromada published	2.5	5.9	3.9

See continuation of the Table 1 on the next page ►►

►► Continuation of the Table 1. Factors defining negative outliers among hromadas

Factors Availability of...	Negative outliers average score	Positive outliers average score	Average score for 32 surveyed hromadas
List of shelter addresses published on social networks or on the hromada website	3.1	6.3	4.5
Means of notifying population checked	4.3	6.8	5.0
The hromada data backed up	1.9	4.1	2.4
Availability of in-person or virtual consultations between the citizens and the authorities	2.5	4.6	3.4
Effective cooperation with women	7.3	8.8	7.9
High trust in local council	5.2	7.4	6.1
High trust in oblast administration	5.3	6.8	5.9
High trust in town administration	5.5	7.5	6.3
High trust in mayor	4.7	7.7	6.0

* $p < 0.05$. A low p -value indicates that differences between groups are statistically significant.

** Scores are given a value from 0 to 10, where 0 corresponds to the total absence of a phenomenon, and 10 corresponds to its maximum possible presence (refer to reSCORE Metrics section).

Positive Outliers

Better performance is associated with higher scores in 15 indicators (see Factors defining positive outliers in Table 2). Specifically, elevated scores in indicators related to Civic Participation mechanisms, such as Participatory Budgeting, availability of Social Media and On-line Chats for communication between citizens and local leadership, and Meetings with City or Town Council, highlight a positive link between robust feedback between authorities and the wider public for enhanced hromada outcomes. For instance, **positive outliers report using participatory budgeting three times more frequently and meetings at local community centers, businesses, schools and city/town council two times more frequently than negative outliers.**

Analysis of metrics such as Frequency of Contacts and Effective Cooperation with Youth, Women, CSOs, suggests that effective

collaboration with diverse community segments positively contribute to hromada performance. Frequency and effectiveness of contacts with these groups are more than one point higher in well-performing hromadas, which is considered a notable difference.

Higher Trust in emergency services, which is more than one point higher in better-performing hromadas, underscores the pivotal role of confidence and reliance on public institutions during challenging circumstances. Additionally, Pluralistic Ukrainian Identity shows itself as a contributing factor to positive outliers, which is also one point higher in well-performing hromadas. This finding underscores the importance of fostering national-civic unity based on inclusive narratives among citizens, particularly during times of adversity.

Table 2. Factors defining positive outliers among hromadas

Factors Availability of...	Negative outliers average score	Positive outliers average score	Average score for 32 surveyed hromadas
Availability of community civic participation mechanism for communication (comms) between citizens and authorities (Overall)	3.4	5.8	4.3
including...			
Means of participatory budgeting	1.2	3.6	2.3
Social media and/or online chats	6.8	8.5	7.1
Meetings at local community centres, businesses, schools etc.	2.9	6.8	4.58
Hotlines	6.3	8.6	7.3
Frequency of public comms in social media and/or online chats	7.8	9.1	8.2
Frequency of public comms through meetings at local community centers, businesses, schools etc.	3.1	5.6	4.7
Frequency of meeting in city or town council	2.8	5.1	3.8
Frequency of contacts with youth	4.9	6.0	5.0
Frequency of contacts with women	5.3	6.78	5.7
Effective cooperation with youth	7.1	8.6	7.4

See continuation of the Table 2 on the next page ►►

►► Continuation of the Table 2. Factors defining positive outliers among hromadas

Factors Availability of...	Negative outliers average score	Positive outliers average score	Average score for 32 surveyed hromadas
Effective cooperation with CSOs	7.3	8.5	7.8
Community cooperation (overall, includes relying on people in hromada for help in case of a serious problem and extent people solve common problem together, such as cleaning the territory or planting the trees)	6.0	7.1	6.2
Pluralistic Ukrainian Identity (overall, including diversity of perspectives on language, ethnicity, historical unity, and regional cultural influence, reflecting a nuanced understanding of what it means to be a Ukrainian)	7.5	8.8	8.0
High trust in State Emergency Service of Ukraine	7.6	8.8	7.9

* $p < 0.05$. A low p -value indicates that differences between groups are statistically significant.

** Scores are given a value from 0 to 10, where 0 corresponds to the total absence of a phenomenon, and 10 corresponds to its maximum possible presence (refer to reSCORE Metrics section).



MAIN TAKEAWAY & RECOMMENDATION 1

These observations highlight the significance of preparing and updating contingency plans as a best practice for improving hromada performance and resilience. Scenario-based mitigation and risk management plans can serve the task, and the process of preparation could be as valuable as the output. Additionally, a regular and efficient feedback mechanism (through, for example, meetings and hotlines) and collaboration with different population groups (youth, women, representatives of CSOs) emerge as vital processes that generates multiplier effects (such as increased community cohesion, enhanced trust in hromada leadership, and improved responsiveness to the unique needs of various segments of population). Fostering confidence in local authorities and emergency services is also essential for enhancing hromada resilience: this ensures that the hromada is well-prepared to address emergencies and continue to maintain a sense of order, civic adherence, and security.

ZOOMING IN FOR A CLOSER LOOK:

Assessing Resilience of Local Communities through Institutional and Social Functioning and Recovery Mindset

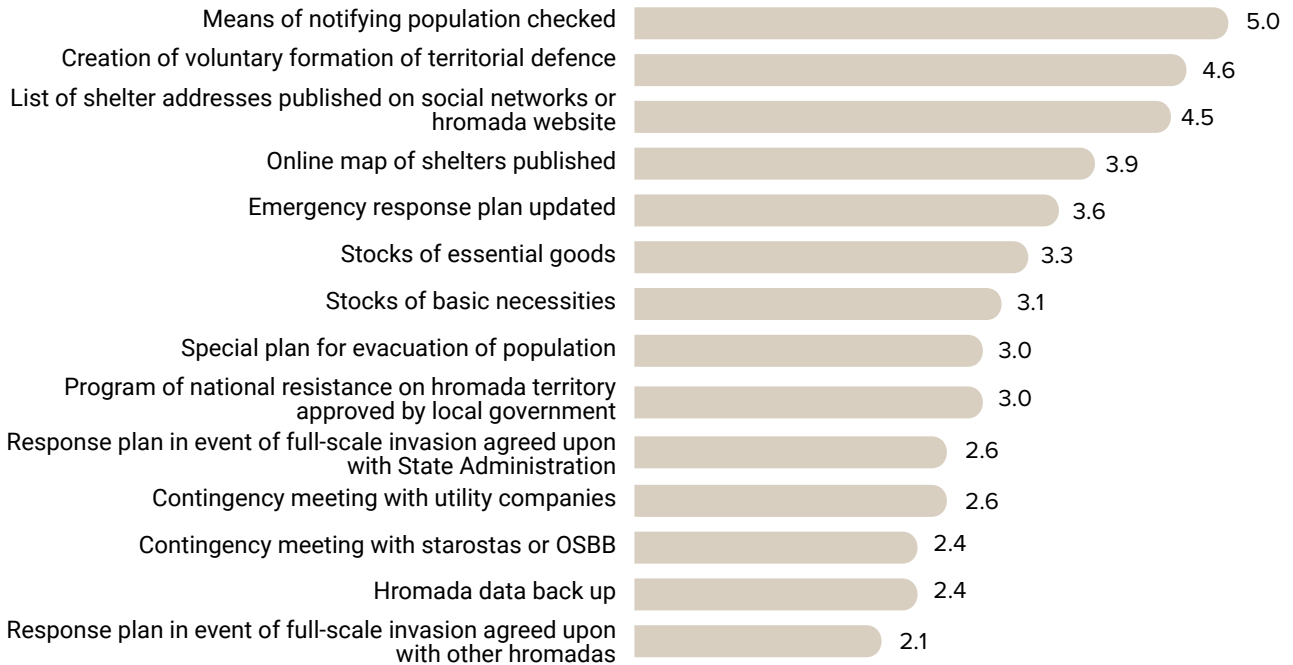
Institutional functioning: Pre-War Preparedness, Provision of Services & Basic Needs

Institutional functioning in the context of a local community refers to the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of the various agencies that provide services, governance, and support within that community. Since the start of the full-scale invasion, efficient and reliable institutional functioning has contributed to effective crisis response and provided delivery of basic services and accessibility of essential infrastructure in a community.

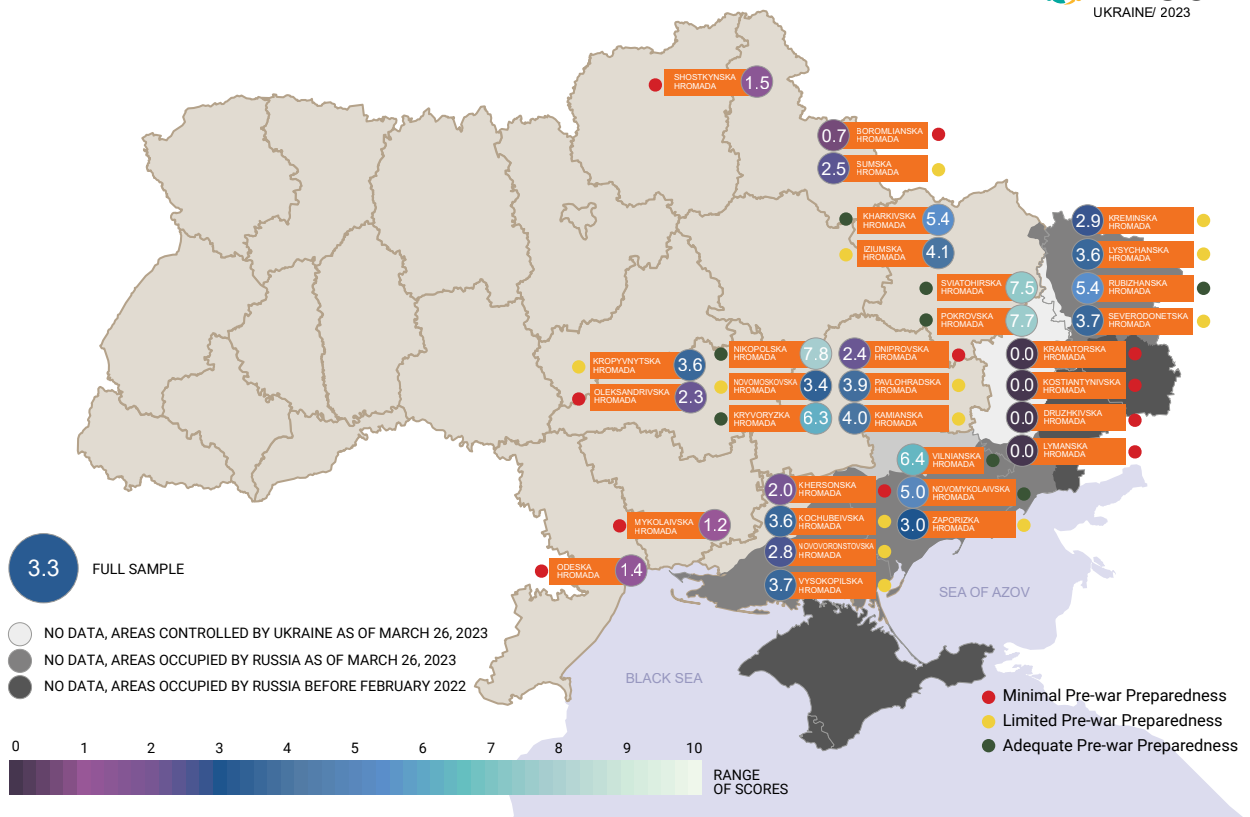
As demonstrated in the previous section, pre-war contingency measures played a pivotal role in enhancing the overall performance of local communities, and worse performance was associated with lower scores in these indicators. Data on service and infrastructure provision show that hromadas with low pre-war preparedness are most likely to continue experiencing lower availability of bomb shelters, water supply, waste disposal, mobile connectivity and community participation mechanisms; they also face greater challenges associated with ecological damage caused by the war.

It should be underscored that the overall pre-war preparedness in the surveyed hromadas showed bottlenecks: only three out of 14 envisaged contingency measures (i.e., means of notifying population, creation of voluntary formations of territorial defense and publication of the list of shelters on social networks or hromada websites) were implemented in nearly a half of the surveyed hromadas. A response/action plan in the event of a full-scale invasion has been agreed with representatives of the state administration in only 26% of the surveyed hromadas. Findings reveal that proactive measures to prepare for potential full-scale invasions, such as holding meetings with starostas and/or OSBBs and developing response/action plans in collaboration with representatives from other hromadas, have been undertaken in a limited percentage of local communities (24% and 21%, respectively). *Picture 1* presents mean scores on pre-war measures for 32 surveyed hromadas.

Picture 1. Overview of the pre-war contingency measures in the surveyed hromadas (mean indicators based on key informants' assessment)



Picture 2. Hromada mapping of pre-war preparedness (overall) based on the key informants' assessment



When reviewing the findings on pre-war preparedness (see *Picture 2*), it is essential to note that the reliability of assessments in hromadas with a limited number of observations (see *Annex 1*), such as those in Donetska and Luhanska oblasts, should be approached with caution¹³. Still, findings from larger hromadas, supported by a substantial number of observations from diverse key informant groups, suggest that pre-war preparedness in the majority of larger communities in the southeast (Odeska, Mykolaivska and Khersonska hromadas) was minimal and below average. Simultaneously, according to key informant assessments, pre-war preparedness varied, with limited preparedness in Zaporizka and adequate preparedness in Kharkivska hromadas. Despite these nuances, the overall pre-war preparedness in frontline hromadas remained low.



“...All the water infrastructure was destroyed. Only about 700 locals live in Sviatohirsk, and they are living without water. They carry water to their five-story buildings and private houses. Drinking water is the most urgent issue.”

Sviatohirska hromada, public services representative



“After the period of occupation... many of our agricultural lands are mined. In some villages of our hromada people have no electricity, and we transport water by tractors.”

Vysokopilska hromada, starosta representative

Beyond preparedness, the reSCORE Hromada component studied perceptions of environmental changes in localities since February 24, 2022. The survey revealed significant ecological challenges stemming from hostilities, including concerns about water quality, destruction of local ecosystems, damage to agricultural sites, deterioration of drinking water quality, soil degradation, and increased radiation risks (see *Picture 3*). Air pollution emerges as a prominent issue, with 70% of key informants highlighting its impact. The average score of ecological destruction across 32 hromadas was reported at the level of 4.8 out of 10. Significantly high scores for ecological destruction caused by the war (above 8 out of 10) were reported in Izumska, Nikopolska, Rubizhanska, Severodonetska, Kostiantynivska, Kramatorska, and Khersonska hromadas. Extensive mining of agricultural lands, particularly in the hromadas that were under occupation, hinders work in the affected areas, impeding agricultural productivity and overall economic activities. Profound destruction in frontline communities poses challenges to effective provision of basic needs and services. Specifically, many key informants reported that attacks on civilian infrastructure have led to the destruction of the water supply system in many areas (as a result, deterioration of drinking water quality and problems with water supply, including absence of clean water, remains a massive problem in many hromadas – see *Reflections* on the left and below).

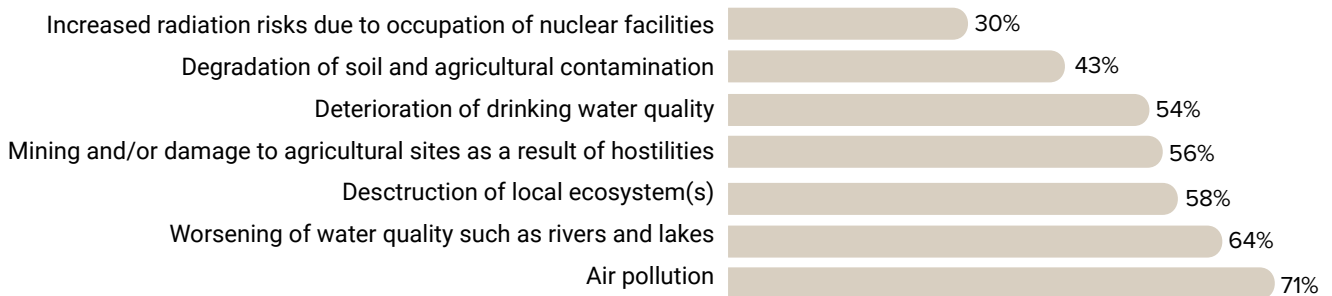
¹³ All surveyed hromadas in Donetska oblast are situated on the frontline, while those in Luhanska are under occupation and continue to function after relocating to the Government-Controlled Area (GCA). There is a need to qualitatively investigate the differences in the estimations between these two groups of hromadas. We acknowledge that the assessment of pre-war preparedness might have varied among individual hromadas, not necessarily due to different priorities of its leadership, but possibly because of an unequal level of cooperation between the military-civic administrations and local self-government bodies. Also, some of the surveyed key informants might be unaware of contingency measures or provide lower scores under pressure of current adversities on the frontline.



“As a result of shelling in Mykolaiv, there has been no drinking water in the tap for a year; assistance is needed to resolve this issue. This is not only a problem in Mykolaiv: due to the flooding caused by the dam breach there is also a water problem in the Snihurivskyi district. In Mykolaiv, the water supply has been restored, but it is technical water. Also, a large territory has been affected by mine explosions, and local emergency services are struggling.”

Mykolaivska hromada, hromada office representative

Picture 3. **Perception of Ecological Destruction of War in Hromadas** (in %, combined items ‘occurred somewhat’ and ‘occurred severely’, overall sample)



Overall, key informants’ estimation of the provision of services and basic needs is reasonably high, ranging from 8.1 for Internet access to 5.4 for the quality of roads, and for basic needs, from 6.1 for bomb shelters to 9.7 for food. These estimations align with trends observed in the reSCORE representative household survey (with the only significant difference in estimated quality of higher education which stands at 5.9 for hromada sample, and 4.8 for national reSCORE sample). However, the situation in hromadas varies considerably, and numerous factors – ranging from exposure to geography, demography, human and budget capacity to the number of months spent under occupation – could account for this diversity. Therefore, this variation underscores the necessity for a tailored and localized approach, emphasizing the value of qualitative insights from hromada representatives to enhance our understanding.

The analysis of Table 3, which examines the provision of various services across surveyed hromadas, highlights noteworthy disparities in performance. **Kramatorska and Kostiantynivska frontline hromadas as well as Khersonska and Iziumska, both de-reoccupied, consistently exhibit substantially lower-than-average scores across multiple service categories, which requires targeted interventions and resource allocation to address the identified gaps, enhance overall community well-being, and ensure fair distribution of humanitarian aid and other forms of support** (also refer to *Reflections* below).

Table 3. Provision of Services: Average Scores and Hromadas with Substantially Below-Average Performance

	Average score for 32 surveyed hromadas / national sample	Hromadas with lower-than-average scores
Public services	6.8 / 6.5	Kramatorska (3.9), Kostiantynivska (4.1), Druzhkivska (5.2)
Basic schooling	6.6 / 6.7	Kramatorska (4.2), Novomoskovska (4.5)
Higher education	5.9 / 4.8	Novovorontsovka (0), Kochubeivska (0.6), Novomoskovska (4.5), Oleksandrivska and Iziumska (both 4.6)
Health care	7.0 / 7.0	Kramatorska (3.8), Kostiantynivska (4.4)
Justice services (e.g. services of courts, police, lawyers, and prosecutors)	6.0 / 5.7	Khersonska (3.6), Iziumska (4.1), Novovorontsovka and Vysokopilka (both 4.1), Kostiantynivska (4.4)
Administrative services (e.g. TSNAP, residence registration, issuing passports and other documents)	7.5 / 7.2	Druzhkivska, Kostiantynivska and Kramatorska (all 0), Khersonska (4.8)
Welfare payments those in need (e.g. disabled, unemployed, pensioners, scholarships (стипендія))	7.9 / 7.6	Khersonska (4.8), Kostiantynivska (5)
Quality of roads	5.4 / 5.7	Boromlianska (2.5), Vysokopilka (3.1), Shostkynska (4.2), Kostiantynivska, and Kochubeivska (all 3.8), Iziumska (4.3), Sumska (4.4)
Public transportation	7.2 / 7.2	Boromlianska (2.5), Novovorontsovka (3.3), Vysokopilka (3.4)
Provision of basic utilities (e.g. water, heating, electricity and waste disposal.)	7.5 / 7.7	Pokrovska (5)
Access to the Internet	8.1 / 8.1	Kostiantynivska (4.4), Kramatorska (4.4)
Emergency services (e.g. firefighters, ambulances)	7.7 / n/a	Kostiantynivska (3.3), Kramatorska (4.2), Novomoskovska (5.3)

** Hromadas with fewer than 3 respondents are not presented as standalone scores to ensure the robustness and credibility of the reported data. However, Sviatohirska and Lymanska key informants (two and one interviewed experts respectively) raised multiple concerns about service provisions in their hromadas.*



“The first pressing issue is that, due to our proximity to the Russian border, we are affected by constant shelling. Our **bomb shelters are inadequately equipped** to accommodate citizens. They are cold, with no toilets, nothing. The second issue is socio-economic: **lack of employment in Sumy city for the majority of men**. It is necessary to create new jobs, attract investments to the region, and develop the remaining industries.”

Sumska hromada, CSOs representative



“We have always been involved in landscaping the areas around the houses under our management, maintaining the cleanliness of entrances, and ensuring integrity. Now, we have lost some functions, and the entrances are open. We started heating very late; there were issues with gas for almost one and a half seasons. We have problems with electricity; people complain, and we try to fix it all. But the biggest problem is the war; the **safety of people is a major concern**. We have issues with the internet. There are issues with water; it’s disrupted here and there.”

Kostiantynivska hromada, starosta representative



“There is a **problem with pharmacies**: in some districts of the city, they are not available. There is an **issue with ATMs**; not all of them work, and sometimes it’s impossible to withdraw money. **Problems with social payments**: some people received it several times, while others did not receive anything at all. This is also a pressing issue that remains unresolved¹⁴. The current **waste removal** issue is alarming: it’s either not happening or inappropriately done.”

Khersonska hromada, public sector representative



“To provide services to residents, the current priority is the **restoration of the operation of administrative service centers and remote workplaces in settlements**. Assistance is needed to communities to procure furniture... and efficiently deliver services to residents. The most in need are communities in occupied territories, especially those that have not yet established administrative service centers, particularly in communities with a population of more than 10,000. There are about 10 communities requiring help, either in opening administrative service centers or establishing remote workplaces. Additionally, human resources need to be involved, as it is challenging to find professionals in de-occupied territories.”

Kharkivska hromada, hromada office representative



“We receive numerous requests from the de-occupied areas, and we deliver products ... as much as we can. However, providing aid to the civilian population is challenging because there is a lack of funds or food supplies. Nevertheless, people keep calling and expressing their needs. Hot meals are distributed in the city, but not everyone can go to receive this assistance. The mayor of our city and the deputies provide some help, but not everyone can access it. **The organization of this assistance is poor. It is essential to distribute aid properly and fairly, especially for more vulnerable population groups.**”

Kharkivska hromada, CSO representative

14 Multiple quotes from different localities reveal the widespread observations that humanitarian aid is unfairly distributed across different groups. Also, there are certain categories that may be over-supported and some invisible demographics that fall out of the vulnerability taxonomies and receive little or no aid. Relevant reports indicate similar systemic issues with humanitarian aid distribution and perception that date back to the pre-2022 period. For instance, families with one or two children and two young unemployed parents or a single unemployed woman aged 50 may remain ineligible. For these categories, livelihood or community-based enterprise development may be more sustainable solutions. See, for example: Working paper on implementation of EU crisis response in Ukraine // *Good intentions, mixed results: A conflict-sensitive unpacking of the EU comprehensive approach to conflict and crisis mechanisms*, European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, January 2018, pp.22,23.



*“Many volunteers from other countries help us, which is great. However, their assistance is categorized in the same way: 60+, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, and large families with many children. **All the volunteers who come here are focused on these same categories.** Meanwhile, our youth is returning to the village. ... I have two daughters—one is a student, and the other is in school. We need to clothe them, feed them, and pay for their education. This is challenging because our house is in disrepair, the yard is a mess, and all our agricultural equipment is in need. No one helps us; we receive no assistance. Why? Who will uplift the village, grandmothers aged 60+? The youth also suffer. ... Many children are returning to us, including little ones who need kindergarten. Currently, the buildings are ruined, and there is no space for a kindergarten. Volunteers don’t deal with these issues. ... Parents say if the school isn’t rebuilt, we have nothing to do here. They will go where there is a school.”*

Novovorontsovka hromada, public sector representative

Table 4. **Basic Needs: Average Scores and Hromadas with Substantially Below-Average Performance**

	Average score for 32 surveyed hromadas / national sample	Hromadas with lower-than-average scores
Medicine	9.4 / 8.6	Kochubeivska (6.3), Novomoskovska (7)
Food	9.7 / 9.8	Novovorontsovka (8.3)
Housing (rental accommodation and real estate)	9.0 / 9.0	Novomoskovska (5), Pavlohradska (6)
Cash to withdraw	9.1 / 7.9	Kochubeivska (0), Boromlianska (5)
Bomb shelters and specially equipped facilities	6.1 / 5.8	Boromlianska (3.3), Sumska (3.6), Kochubeivska (3.8), Pavlohradska (4), Vysokopilka (4.2), Novovorontsovka (4.4), Shostkynska (4.6)
Childcare (functioning kindergartens, childminders, after kindergarten clubs etc.)	6.6 / 8.0	Kostiantynivska and Kramatorska (all 0), Novovorontsovka (1.1), Vysokopilka (1.9), Druzhkivska (2.5), Khersonska (3), Iziumska (3.6),
Water supply	8.9 / 9.2	Kostiantynivska and Kramatorska (all 5), Vysokopilka (5.4), Novovorontsovka (5.6), Druzhkivska (6.3), Pokrovska (7)
Waste disposal	9.1 / 8.9	Novovorontsovka (2.2), Kochubeivska (5), Khersonska (5.7)
Fuel	9.2 / 9.0	Kochubeivska (2.5), Vysokopilka (4.2)

See continuation of the Table 4 on the next page ►►

►► Continuation of the Table 4. Basic Needs: Average Scores and Hromadas with Substantially Below-Average Performance

	Average score for 32 surveyed hromadas / national sample	Hromadas with lower-than-average scores
Mobile reception	8.2 / 9.2	Iziumska (2.9), Druzhkivska (2.5), Kostiantynivka, Kramatorska (0), Rubizhanska (4), Kochubeivska (5), Mykolaivska (5.8),
Cultural centres and leisure facilities (e.g. libraries, parks, sports, theatre)	7.8 / 7.7	Druzhkivska, Kostiantynivska and Kramatorska (all 0), Vysokopilka (1.9), Novovorontsovska (3.6), Khersonska (4.1)
Psychological counselling and support	7.5 / 5.0	Kochubeivska (3.3), Khersonska (4.5), Vysokopilka (4.8), Kreminska (5.4), Novomoskovska (5.5), Boromlianska (5.8)

* Hromadas with fewer than 3 respondents are not presented as standalone scores to ensure the robustness and credibility of the reported data. However, Sviatohirska and Lymanska key informants (two and one interviewed experts respectively) raised multiple concerns about basic needs provisions in their hromadas.

Table 4, detailing the average scores and hromadas with below-average performance in Basic Needs and Support services, illuminates significant variations in the provision of essential amenities across surveyed communities. Specifically, key informants in hromadas of Donetska (frontline) and Khersonska (de-occupied) oblasts report lower assessment of the basic needs’ provisions in multiple categories. It is important to note that the resilience capacities of communities in addressing various challenges related to the provision of basic needs may vary. Notably, despite facing challenges in specific basic needs, Kochubeivska hromada exhibits commendable performance across other indicators¹⁵.

reSCORE’s Hromada study findings echo the findings of the recent UNDP Human Impact Assessment¹⁶ study regarding the damage to national infrastructure and its negative effect on inclusivity and accessibility of services. Hromada key informants indicated challenges in access to services for groups with vulnerabilities (people living with disabilities (PLWD), people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), IDPs, older people, children – refer to *Reflections* below).

15 Factors such as size, urbanity, the duration of occupation, and distance from the frontline (though beyond the scope of this study) may contribute to the varying levels of resilience observed among hromadas. Specifically, despite being under occupation for two weeks in 2022, Kochubeivska rural hromada demonstrated remarkable resilience and was able to largely restore its functioning after liberation.

16 See: *UNDP Human Impact Assessment Report*: <https://api.scoreforpeace.org/storage/pdfs/undp-ua-hia-3.pdf>



“First of all, there are needs for **people with disabilities. They need... both material and psychological assistance**, as there is a lack of assistance at home. There are psychologists, but no one comes to their homes. For a certain period, we need something to be done for transport. In the evening, there is no transport at all, and mini-busses are dirty. Establishing some points where people could address their issues might help. Currently, everyone remains isolated with their problems. They need a place to come, to sort out their issues, and social workers to assist them. We need to connect them to international organizations.”

Sumska hromada, public sector representative



“We have a lot of **internally displaced persons in need**. Some of the displaced individuals have relatives who have also now arrived and are requesting separate accommodations, but we have limited dormitories. When six people live in a one-bedroom apartment, this is not normal. ... Our resources are quite limited, and if there were any sponsorship available, we would not refuse. Additionally, assistance is needed for our poorest population, especially **the elderly pensioners who struggle to make ends meet**. While they receive some help, it’s not enough, and more support would be greatly appreciated.”

Zaporizka hromada, OSBB representative



“As of today [May-June 2023], there is a need to **provide food and medications for the elderly people in our community**. Not for the internally displaced persons, but for our own community members. They rely solely on their pensions and have nothing else. They often face a choice between buying medication or purchasing food. Some of them cannot even afford to pay for their utilities, and they end up sitting hungry.”

Dniprovskya hromada, OSBB representative



“Attention should be given to **individuals living with HIV as they lack regular employment and struggle with accessing proper treatment and nutrition**. It is our primary duty to care for them in medical facilities and engage in conversations with them. More focus should also be placed on **low-income individuals, especially mothers** who are now left with nothing, and providing products for children is a significant challenge for every mother. Additional funds should be provided because a mother cannot feed a child with just 2000 hryvnias a month. A mother cannot get any help from the authorities, and they need diapers, expensive children’s items, there is no help at all. If they live with a child, they also need to pay utility bills. For **children who now stay at home**, not only schools but also sanatoriums or camps are needed, but they should be equipped with bomb shelters. Currently, there is no normal bomb shelter in any kindergarten, and children stay at home constantly, which is also not all right. Our hospitals pose a significant problem when it comes to making an appointment. Waiting for a month is a common issue. If a person has a chronic illness, it is not a realistic term. As for the reform, the same applies to military conscripts. Many soldiers who do not receive money rely on their wives, who also cannot properly provide for their families. Attention should be paid to people’s salaries. They are cutting them instead of increasing them.”

Dniprovskya hromada, hromada office representative



*“It would be very beneficial to establish **spaces for children, especially social spaces for teenagers where professionals can work with them.** They are currently traumatized, understanding everything that is happening.*

*Psychological rehabilitation involving international psychologists, not our own, is a significant challenge. In the USA, for instance, there are rehabilitation programs for veterans, spouses of military personnel, and individuals affected by military aggression. This is something that is sorely lacking. We are facing a not very cheerful future after the war ends. Right now, they are there, they are sick, but they are in their own environment. We need to **open rehabilitation centers and offices to help the military (veterans) adjust to peaceful life.** They will not be able to do it on their own.”*

Dniprovskya hromada, CSO representative



*“It needs to be formalized... **People who are in need cannot fill out the forms** [to apply for assistance]. There are people who undeservedly receive [aid]. I don’t know if they check it or not. Everything should be checked.*

Regular humanitarian aid is also unclear: sometimes it’s there, sometimes it’s not. Some people get a lot, some don’t get any at all. There is humanitarian aid, but it just lies and goes to waste, in schools, in kindergartens. There are things that get thrown away because they weren’t distributed, and the expiration date has passed, like children’s food, porridge, everything.”

Zaporizka hromada, hromada office representative



*“As of today, we have a significant number of **elderly people who require both medical and humanitarian assistance because there are individuals who cannot go outside to purchase what they need or attend to their necessities.** We need humanitarian corridors to be established, bringing in more medication and more food supplies. Transportation needs to improve because currently, it’s running poorly, to the extent that you could say it’s not running at all.*

Medications are extremely expensive. Humanitarian aid is only given to those who have received it multiple times, and there are populated areas and populations that haven’t received anything at all. We would like assistance to function more efficiently. We hardly have any shelters, and if they do exist, they are in such a condition that it’s impossible to stay in them. We need the air raid alert system to work better, with at least a minimum of 10-15 minutes’ notice for air raids. Not a situation where they notify you, and two seconds later, it’s already here.”

Khersonska hromada, public service representative



“The main problem in our community is daily shelling; there is no safe location. We practically hear a shot, and 35 seconds later, there’s an explosion. So, the need for safety is paramount. The second need is to provide civilians with basic first aid supplies, satisfying basic needs. I’ve already mentioned safety, and the others are ensuring livelihoods.

*This includes food products, hygiene items, hygiene products for **people with disabilities and bedridden patients**, additional household chemicals, as well as rapid repair tools. The overall problem in the city, still related to shelling, is that the economy isn’t functioning; it’s practically in a state of stagnation. Large enterprises are not operating, and overall economic activity is paralyzed.*

*The service sector, in the form of retail networks and service providers, is more or less functioning, and banks are represented but not extensively. There are no judicial institutions; legal support is not available in the city. Another aspect we’re currently focusing on and acting upon is providing **psychological support to the population in safe cities, especially for children and adults. Responding to domestic violence and recording sexual violence, especially against children.** ... We’re making maximum efforts for recovery, and we plan to expand it by creating such institutions as “Barnahus” integrated centers based on polyclinics.”*

Khersonska hromada, hromada office representative



MAIN TAKEAWAY & RECOMMENDATION 2

In the context of the ongoing war, operational efficiency of frontline hromadas has faced significant challenges. Maintaining uninterrupted delivery of essential services and meeting basic needs has become particularly difficult, especially for severely affected hromadas in the southeast. Ecological challenges resulting from the war, notably impacting water quality, agricultural sustainability, and overall community welfare, are pressing issues. The study emphasizes the critical role of contingency measures, highlighting a clear link between lower preparedness levels and systemic challenges in ensuring the provision of basic services. While variations exist in service provision across surveyed hromadas, the demonstrated resilience of specific localities underscores the tangible potential for communities to effectively navigate and overcome multifaceted challenges. Implementing tailored interventions and policies that strengthen local institutions and enable them to address urgent needs, with focus on vulnerable groups (PLWD, PLWHA, IDPs, older people, children) will promote hromada recovery and unlock the potential for further development. Suggested measures might include allocating financial resources for investments in services in the highly affected hromadas of the southeast and north, emphasizing the importance of concurrent capacity building and training programs to ensure sustainable development and effective service delivery.

Social functioning: Trust, Community Civic Participation Mechanisms and Communication

Trust is a crucial element of community performance. When community members trust that local institutions are transparent, accountable, and capable of meeting their needs, it fosters a positive environment. Trust acts as a cornerstone for effective governance, encouraging civic participation, community engagement, and collaboration. In contrast, if institutions are perceived as inefficient or unresponsive, trust can erode, leading to dissatisfaction and a breakdown in community cohesion. Other SCORE, reSCORE and SHARP studies also corroborate these relationships empirically, and

speak to their importance for fostering cohesion and resilience.¹⁷ In this section, we will offer an overview of the overall performance of the surveyed hromadas on these indicators, with a specific focus on communities exhibiting weaker performance and requiring attention.

As comparative results from the main reSCORE survey and hromada survey suggest, trust in central institutions, local institutions, and NGOs/CSOs is lower in the national sample compared to key informants. This points to a confidence disparity between the evaluation of the hromada representatives and the evaluation of the general population, where the latter’s evaluation is more negative. Yet, both hromadas’ key informants and the general population express higher levels of trust in local institutions and civil society compared to central institutions. This lower trust in central institutions across both samples could suggest an emerging challenge that may lead to a lack of support for government policies and initiatives and hinder effective communication between local and central authorities. Addressing this disparity, while it is low, is crucial to ensuring effective governance at all levels and to avoid potential disconnect between communities or local actors and national authorities. At the same time, the elevated trust in local institutions and civil society should be utilized as a driving force for participatory community governance and collaboration.

Table 5. Trust in Institutions: Average Scores and Hromadas with Substantially Below-Average Performance

	Average score for 32 surveyed hromadas / national general population sample	Hromadas with lower-than-average scores
Trust to central institutions (overall)	5.3 / 4.4	Boromlianska (3.5), Dniprovska (4.1), Kostiantynivska (3), Kramatorska (4)
Trust to local institutions (overall)	6.1 / 5.0	Shostkynska (3.9), Novomoskovska (4.2), Kostiantynivska (4), Zaporizka (4.8), Odeska (4.9)
Trust to NGOs / CSOs	7.4 / 6.7	Druzhkivska (5.8), Kostiantynivska (4.2)

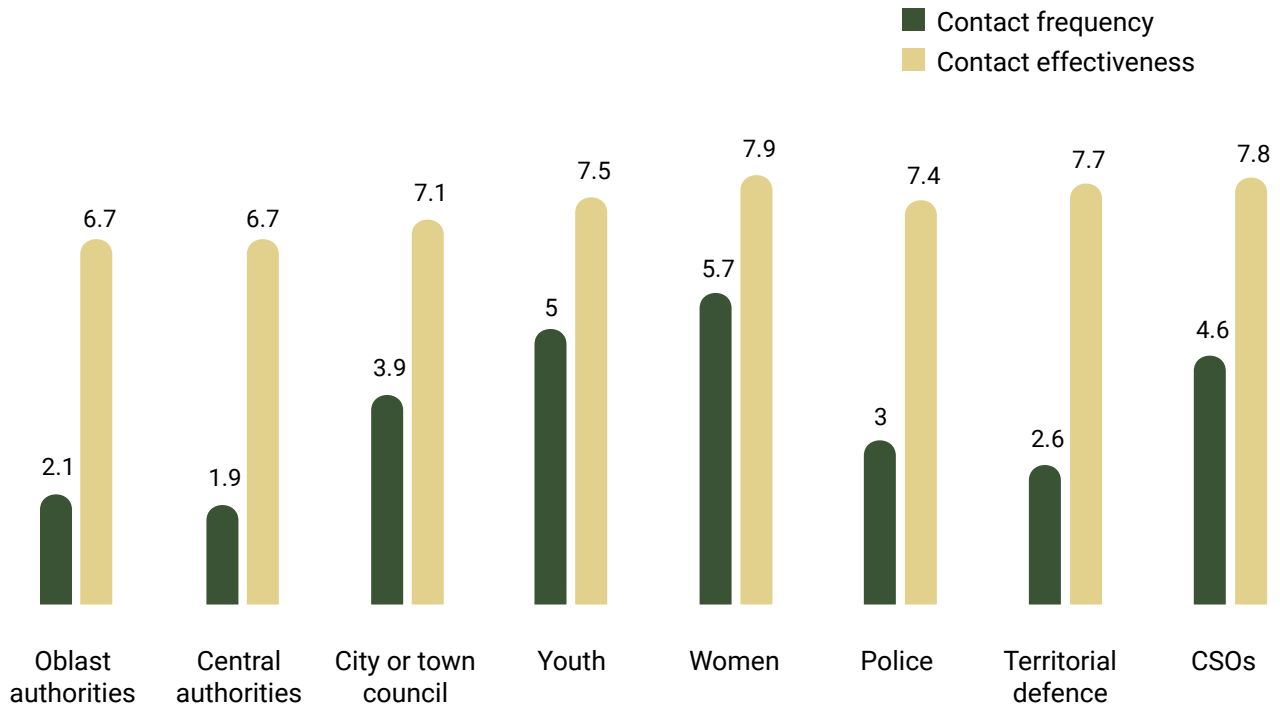
¹⁷ See for more here: <https://scoreforpeace.org/en/publications?cld=25&tld=&lld=>

Table 5, which assesses trust in institutions across surveyed hromadas, unveils that hromadas with substantially below-average scores in services and basic needs provision, such as Boromlianska, Kostiantynivska, and Kramatorska, demonstrate lower trust in central institutions. Additionally, larger urban hromadas, traditionally more skeptical towards institutions, such as Odeska and Zaporizka, exhibit lower-than-average trust in local institutions. Two frontline hromadas, Druzhkivska and Kostiantynivska, which also reported lower scores in service and basic needs provisions, show lower trust in NGOs/CSOs. Low trust in institutions can hinder the resilience of communities in selected hromadas, affecting internal cooperation and external collaboration with other actors. Recognizing and addressing these trust dynamics is crucial for fostering a more resilient and collaborative community environment.

Analyzing the dynamics of cooperation within a community is instrumental in understanding the fabric of resilience that underpins hromadas' institutional functionality. As we have seen in the previous section, the effectiveness of collaboration across various entities, including youth, women, and CSOs, contribute to a better overall hromada performance (see *Factors defining positive outliers among hromadas*, Table 2 above). The set of questions asked to measure Community Cooperation within the hromada survey explores the community's internal bonds by assessing the extent to which they actively collaborate to address shared issues. This provides a comprehensive snapshot of how different stakeholders engage with the community, influencing its overall cooperation and ability to respond to collective challenges, thus by extension, its resilience.

The survey indicates availability of diverse community civic participation mechanisms in surveyed hromadas. Overall, a significant 71% of key informants report the presence of social media and online chats as an available mode of engagement, followed closely by hotlines at 67%. Town hall meetings are listed as available by 41% of respondents, while local gatherings at community centers, businesses, schools, etc., are reported as available by 45%, and in-person or virtual consultations – by 34%. Participatory budgeting is listed as an accessible option by 23%. Surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and other public opinion research initiated by local authorities are indicated as available by 21%, highlighting a moderate presence of these initiatives. While the average score for availability of community civic participation mechanisms is 4.3 for all 32 surveyed hromadas, those underperforming reported considerably lower scores (this included Shostkynska (1.1), Boromlianska (1.1), Zaporizka (2.5), Sumska and Odeska (both 3.2), Mykolaivska (3.3).

Picture 4. Estimated frequency and effectiveness of contacts on hromada level (overall scores)



These findings reveal varying levels of contact frequency and effectiveness across diverse authorities and organizations (see *Picture 4*). Significantly, interactions with youth, women, and CSOs are consistently frequent and perceived as highly effective when they occur¹⁸. In contrast, aligning with local interactions, engagements with city or town councils are less frequent and generally considered less effective. Contacts with oblast and central authorities are significantly less frequent, a logical outcome given their inherently lower occurrence compared to local contacts. More importantly, they are perceived as less effective than interactions at other levels with other actors. Contacts with the police and territorial defence are reported as less frequent but relatively effective. These results underscore the necessity for tailored communication strategies and improvements in meaningful engagement approaches to enhance the perceived effectiveness of contacts, particularly with central and oblast authorities.

¹⁸ While acknowledging that youth and women may be affiliated with or working for authorities, the survey measured the subjective perception of effectiveness in interactions with various groups and actors ('youth from your hromada', 'women from your hromada', 'CSOs', 'City/town council', 'oblast authorities', etc.).

The Good Governance score assesses the feedback mechanism between hromada key actors and members through consultation about the decision-making, receiving criticism about their work, collecting information about needs, availability of resources to resolve disputes, and smooth cooperation process. Overall hromada office representatives and OSBB leaders report higher scores (4.9 and 4.7 out of 10 respectively), while the representatives of public services and CSOs report lower scores for this indicator (3.5 and 4.1 out of 10 respectively). Up to 38% of the CSOs' and 52% of public services' representatives reported that they never consulted with hromada members about the decisions they make and up to 48% of CSOs' and 56% of public services' representatives stated that hromada members never gave feedback and criticism about their work (see *Table 6* below).

Rather low scores among all target groups signal a need for enhanced consultation, feedback processes and better interaction between hromada leaders and hromada members and a need to promote culture of constructive feedback and better horizontal engagement.

Table 6. Feedback Mechanism as Indicators of Good Governance, across hromada target groups (in %).

		Hromada office	CSO representative	OSBB or starosta	Public service
I consulted with hromada members about the decisions I make	Never	19	38	19	52
	Rarely	11	9	19	8
	Sometimes	16	23	19	13
	Often	20	13	21	10
	Always	17	4	17	4
	DK	18	13	5	13
		Hromada office	CSO representative	OSBB or starosta	Public service
Hromada members gave feedback and criticism about my work	Never	30	48	28	56
	Rarely	12	10	24	10
	Sometimes	24	18	32	12
	Often	13	13	8	7
	Always	7	1	5	2
	DK	15	10	4	13



KEY TAKEAWAY AND RECOMMENDATION 3

To address the observed disparities in trust between representatives and general population within hromadas, a focused effort is needed to bridge the communication and meaningful engagement gap between hromadas and local and central authorities (and civic-military administrations, where applicable¹⁹). Initiatives should be designed to strengthen trust in central institutions and NGOs/CSOs, especially in frontline hromadas facing challenges in services and basic needs provision²⁰. Enhancing civic participation mechanisms is crucial with specific attention to increasing the frequency and effectiveness of city or town council meetings. Moreover, promoting a more robust and participatory feedback mechanism among hromada actors and members is essential. Suggested measures might include: implementing participatory budgeting initiatives to enhance community involvement in financial decision-making; forming civic assemblies to facilitate ongoing communication and collaborative decision-making within the community; establishing dedicated community liaison departments to strengthen connections and engagement between local authorities, police and hromada residents. The proposed measures not only aim to enhance trust but also play a crucial role in fostering more meaningful civic engagement. While civic engagement has increased since the invasion, it is essential to recognize that it has become predominantly charity-driven. Our recommendation seeks to shift the focus towards agency and participation in decision-making processes, ensuring a more sustainable and empowered form of civic involvement.

19 Given the constraints imposed by martial law, it is imperative to recognize the unique challenges that may impede the full implementation of Recommendation 3 across all hromadas. The current political and security situation requires a flexible and adaptive approach, acknowledging that certain aspects of the recommendation may be more feasible in hromadas where the local government representatives are both willing and able to engage. To address this limitation, we propose a nuanced assessment of the viability and practicality of Recommendation 3 in select 'fertile' hromadas. This assessment can be conducted both quantitatively, by integrating and layering it into the hromada-level survey, and qualitatively, by working closely with DGE and other relevant partners' teams on the ground.

20 On November 28, 2023, the team from the Center for Sociological Research, Decentralization Studies, and Regional Development at the KSE Institute presented the findings of their study in collaboration with ULEAD with Europe, focusing on hromada resilience. Notably, out of the 138 surveyed communities, only three demonstrated a high readiness for crisis response. However, despite this, 66% of communities where active combat did not take place continued to provide administrative services to the population. The presentation delved into the impact of war on the interaction between local self-government bodies and military administrations. It emphasized that own revenues and effective cooperation are pivotal factors contributing to resilience. See: <https://voxukraine.org/en/a-year-of-experience-governance-processes-and-the-territorial-communities-resilience-to-wartime-challenges/>

Recovery mindset: Democratic/Authoritarian values, Support for reforms, Recovery priorities, and Awareness about Partners' programs (with focus on the target groups)

A recovery mindset in the context of local communities refers to a collective proactive approach to overcoming challenges, adversity, or crises and working towards rebuilding, resilience, and improvement. Democratic values, in contrast to authoritarian tendencies, serve as ideological foundations for actions, influencing the participatory nature of community decision-making. Examining community's sentiments about reforms (support vs scepticism for reforms, including decentralization), offers insights into its dynamic engagement with change. Furthermore, an analysis of recovery priorities, coupled with awareness about partners' programs, enriches the understanding of possible development interventions within local communities.

Overall, nuanced exploration of attitudes toward democratic values among various hromada actors is particularly important for post-war elections and follow-up democratization transformations. The table below indicates some variations in democratic and authoritarian values across different hromada actors (see *Table 7*). Notably, while there is a consensus on the importance of civil rights in general as a safeguard against state oppression, CSO representatives demonstrate the highest figure across all groups. In contrast to high support for civil rights, all groups express strong conviction that obedience and respect for authority is among the most important virtues for children. Along the same lines, hromada office representatives manifest more commitment to egalitarian and meritocratic mission (suggesting that it's important to work hard so to provide equal opportunities for wealth and happiness for everyone), they also admit that some people's vote matters more than others²¹. Although these dissonances might be a temporary concern during martial law, it could point to a practical need for not only tailoring programs for communal (group) needs but also directing attention to individual leadership skill development. Specifically, there is a need for inclusive programs that empower individuals with the requisite capacities to actively engage in democratic processes and meaningfully contribute to decision-making within their communities. This involvement may take various forms, such as engagement in participatory budgeting or in other facets of hromada life. Key skills integral to this endeavor encompass critical

21 It is also worth noting that social tolerance towards selected minority groups is relatively low among hromada key informants (particularly disturbing is low acceptance of Roma – 6.4 out of 10 and – and LGBT – 5.3 out of 10 points). Tendencies of low acceptance of minority groups, that might be coupled with authoritarian values prioritizing control and uniformity, warrant careful observation.

thinking, negotiation, collaborative decision-making, mediation, problem-solving, rights-based approaches, inclusion-sensitivity, and intersectionality (similar to racial sensitivity). These competencies are pivotal in cultivating an informed and participatory citizenry. To instill these skills, initiatives could employ diverse methods such as training sessions, workshops, and lectures tailored for hromada youth, women, and potential activists within the community, including representatives from the veterans’ community. Furthermore, there is a notable demand for training programs targeting fund-raisers and grant managers within hromadas.

Table 7. Democratic vs authoritarian values, across hromada target groups (in %, combined item ‘somewhat agree’ and ‘strongly agree’).

	Average frequency for 32 surveyed hromadas	Hromada office	CSO representative	OSBB or starosta	Public service
Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn	59	60	56	63	58
Some people’s vote matters more than others	14	22	13	7	12
Civil rights should protect people from state oppression	90	83	95	93	90
We should work hard so to provide equal opportunities for wealth and happiness for everyone	87	94	81	84	87

The data below reveals some differences in the level of support for reforms among various hromada target groups. Overall, scepticism about reforms is only slightly lower among hromada informants than among general population²². Support for decentralization, justice, health and anti-corruption reforms is most pronounced among Hromada office representatives (see *Table 8*). The data indicates that the potential for reform support in all groups of key informants is far from being exhausted. It emphasizes the importance of adopting targeted approaches when advocating for the sustainability of

²² Although comparison of reSCORE household survey and hromada survey was not an objective of this study, we refer to some comparative indicators to gain a broader perspective on the local dynamics and cross-validate the findings across different sources of data.

different reforms among various groups. Moreover, confidence in the EU stability and perceived benefits for a majority of the sectors (e.g. manufacturing, farming, education, services) if Ukraine joins the EU is reported at the level of 7 out of 10 points (for both hromada sample and general population). This emphasizes the critical need for a reform-oriented mindset, particularly as Ukraine advances towards EU integration which require increased public engagement for sustained positive outcomes.

Table 8. Support for reforms, across hromada target groups (score)

	Average frequency for 32 surveyed hromadas / general population national sample	Hromada office	CSO representative	OSBB or starosta	Public service
Scepticism about reforms	4.6 / 5.1	3.7	5.0	4.7	4.8
Support for decentralization reform	5.4 / 4.8	6.4	4.9	5.4	5.1
Support for health reform	4.9 / 4.9	5.8	4.6	4.7	4.6
Support for justice reform	6.0 / 5.3	6.8	5.7	5.9	5.8
Support for anti-corruption reform	5.5 / 5.1	7.1	4.9	5.4	5.1

The top-five priorities for recovery and reconstruction in hromadas, as identified by surveyed target groups, vary in ranking but consistently include Health and Education Facilities, with over half of respondents emphasizing these sectors. Transport, Energy, and Technology also emerge as crucial areas, noted by more than a third of respondents (see *Table 9*). However, variations exist in hromadas across oblasts. Notably, Health is a top priority in hromadas of Luhanska, Donetska, Kharkivska, and Odeska oblasts (all over 7 score points). Energy is particularly pressing in hromadas of Donetska (8.0) and Zaporizka oblasts (5.8). Transport as a sector for prioritized investment takes precedence in Khersonska (6.7) and Mykolaivska oblasts (5.5). Investments in educational facilities are deemed most essential in hromadas of Luhanska and Khersonska (both 7.1), and Mykolaivska oblasts (8.8) (see *Table 10*). These findings underscore the diverse regional needs that should inform targeted investment strategies for effective recovery and reconstruction efforts (also refer to *Reflections* below).

Table 9. Priorities for recovery and reconstruction, across hromada target groups (in %)

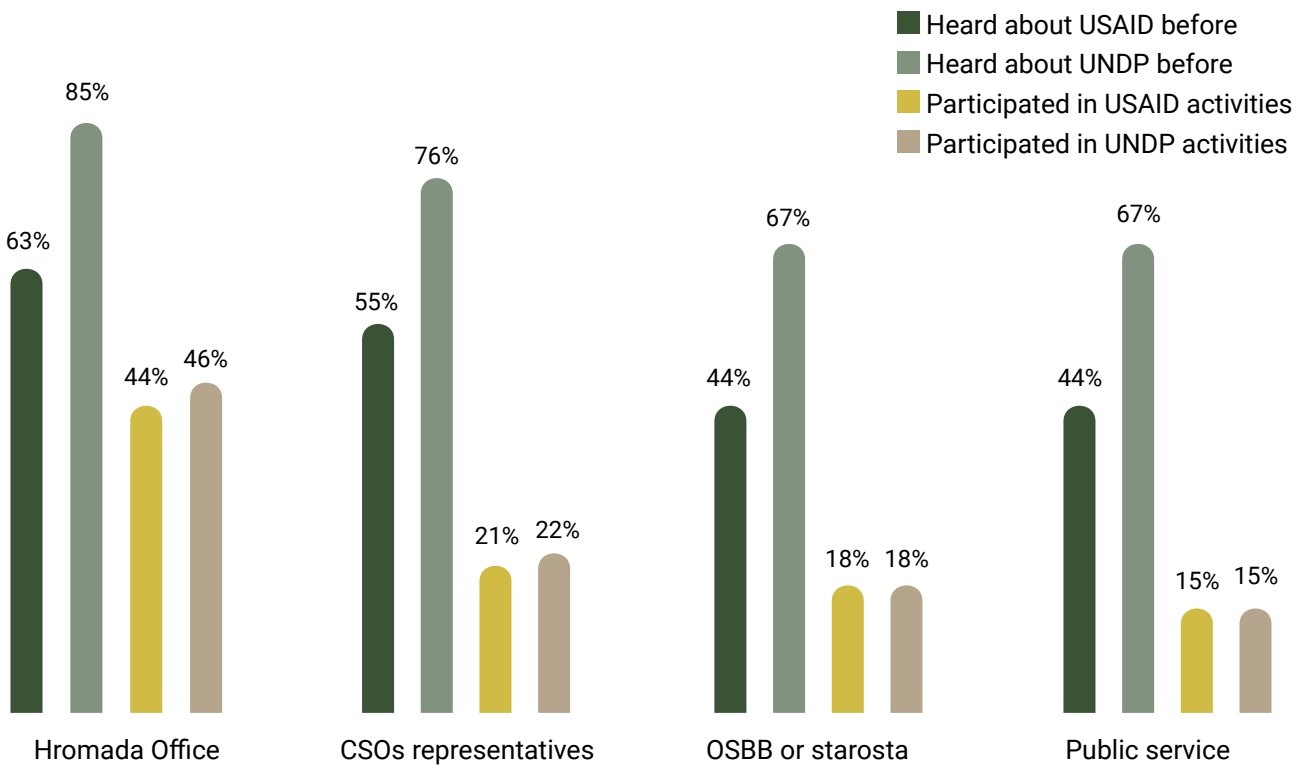
	Average hromada frequency for 32 surveyed hromadas	Hromada office	CSO representative	OSBB or starosta	Public service
Health	62	60	59	69	60
Education facilities	59	61	57	46	67
Transport	40	38	40	40	43
Energy	36	45	41	44	21
Technology	35	46	34	38	26
Parks and green spaces	22	18	18	25	26
Information and Communication	13	13	16	12	11
Libraries, museums and galleries	6	3	3	3	12
Theatres and cinema	5	5	6	2	6

Table 10. Hromadas' priorities for recovery and reconstruction, across oblasts (scores)

	Kirovohradska	Kharkivska	Sumska	Dnipropetrovska	Luhanska	Donetska	Zaporizka	Khersonska	Odeska	Mykolaivska
Education facilities	6.2	6.3	5.6	6.2	7.1	1.0	3.4	7.1	5.4	8.8
Libraries, museums and galleries	0.4	0.0	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.2	1.5	0.6	0.0
Theatres and cinema	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.2	0.3
Parks and green spaces	0.6	2.5	3.2	2.5	2.9	0.5	3.4	2.5	1.8	0.6
Leisure facilities including restaurants and bars	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6
Transport	2.0	3.1	3.0	4.4	2.9	4.0	4.0	6.7	4.2	5.5
Energy	2.2	4.0	4.0	2.8	3.3	8.0	5.8	1.7	3.8	3.9
Health	5.2	7.7	5.4	6.4	8.6	7.0	5.2	4.4	7.2	5.8
Information and Communication	2.2	1.5	1.8	0.7	0.0	1.5	2.2	0.6	1.4	0.9
Technology	5.0	2.9	4.0	3.8	2.9	3.0	2.4	2.3	3.6	3.3

Regarding the awareness of the opportunities offered by international partners, a majority of the respondents (51%) have heard about USAID and nearly a quarter (23%) have participated in activities organized in partnership or funded by USAID. Awareness about UNDP is more widespread (73% of respondents have heard about it), while a share of those who participated in the UNDP-organized or funded programs is comparable to that of USAID (24%). The highest awareness and involvement in partners' programs are observed among hromada office representatives (see *Picture 5*). Overall, 81% of key informants agree that international donors are responsive to the needs of their hromadas and that development investments have a positive impact on their hromadas (also refer to the *Reflections* below).

Picture 5. Awareness about Partners' Programs among Hromada Target Groups (%)



*"We need to restore our hromada and its cultural life. We must restore the gymnasium, so that the children can start their academic year. Many buildings still need repairs because we suffered greatly from the aggression. **We will endure everything, but we need the help of international donors.** Building materials and investment are needed. People are returning; I think around 80 percent of them need employment."*

Vysokopiliska hromada, OSBB representative



“Even considering that many Odesa inhabitants have left, **those who have stayed are still struggling to find work**. This leads to various other problems. It would be excellent if some international projects could be initiated, providing people with **opportunities to start their businesses**. This would enable them to earn, pay taxes, and integrate socially in new territories. Currently, our main focus is the war, and everyone is eagerly waiting for its end. During this period, the central government’s unclear personnel policy becomes a major destabilizing factor for most people. It involves appointing individuals in our region with questionable biographies, explicit corruption scandals, and histories of holding dual citizenship. People holding high positions, with Russian citizenship, are not being held accountable. I believe we need an open personnel policy where society can see and understand the reasons behind the appointment of each official. Perhaps some think that we lack experts in Ukraine, but that’s not the case. It seems that there’s a circle of close associates who get appointed regardless of their qualifications or history. If we talk about development, **we need a transparent system for appointing officials**, as the current one is not working. I believe international partners should exert pressure on our government regarding personnel policies.”

Odeska hromada, hromada office representative



“**International partners and organizations need to collaborate much more with our civil sector**. That is, active citizens, those willing to sacrifice their time, energy, talents, and opportunities for their country, are the most productive. Together, with the help of international partners, we can transform the country for the better and, in particular, influence the decisions of the government, which is often incompetent, inert, and dependent on Soviet stereotypes and imagination. I believe that relying on civil society, on the active minority of Ukrainians, will lead us to a normal, civilized, and successful country.”

Kryvorizka hromada, CSO representative



“We would like to have some **investments made in our hromada so that we can establish a small processing plant**. We hope that our youth will return to us, but unfortunately, many have left. Our roads are in poor condition, and there is no transportation connection. Our villages seem to be slowly fading away, with only elderly people remaining. We offer them business plans and assistance, but they are of such an age that they are not interested, and there is no young generation. Before the war, we had plans to open a small dairy processing plant, and USAID helped us acquire equipment. However, when the war started, everything fell apart.”

Kochubeivska Hromada, hromada office representative



“**Improving our roads is crucial**; our children study in Kherson, Mykolaiv, Odesa, and Kryvyi Rih, so better connections to these cities are essential. **Job opportunities** are needed to invigorate our community. We have the potential to transform our territory into a recreational haven with parks, attracting tourism and creating jobs and revenue. Rebuilding our villages is key, considering residents of all ages. If conditions improve, people will stay, bringing in younger generations and ensuring the vitality of our villages. **Establishing businesses**, attracting investors, and possibly opening dairy or cheese factories can provide employment and encourage youth to stay and contribute to our community’s growth.”

Kochubeivska hromada, CSO representative



MAIN TAKEAWAY & RECOMMENDATION 4.

These findings suggest that strategies for targeted outreach should include providing more information about new initiatives and encouraging participation in partners' programs for different target groups. Since hromada office representatives show the highest awareness and involvement in partners' programs, this group could serve as channels and multipliers for donor initiatives within the community. Collaborating closely with them to showcase the tangible outcomes, build on positive perception, and engage a wider circle of beneficiaries could be advantageous. Also, exploring the barriers to participation for different groups of potential recipients could inform strategies to increase engagement and guide targeted awareness campaigns through various channels, including community events, social media, and local meetings.

Box 1.**Setting the Hromada Scene through Decentralization Process (what is important to know about the current role of hromada in Ukraine)**

This overview provides a snapshot of the hromadas decentralization process in Ukraine, reflecting the current situation up to November 2023.

Definition: Amalgamated hromada (AH) is the unification of several settlements with a single administrative center. Any amalgamated hromada (community) with a city as an administrative center is an urban hromada, any amalgamated hromada with an urban-type settlement as an administrative center is a settlement hromada, and any amalgamated hromada with a village as an administrative center is a rural hromada²³.

Background: Following Ukraine's independence in 1991, the country retained a centralized governance system. Local councils at regional, district, and community levels held limited decision-making powers, relying heavily on central government administration²⁴. It was not until 2014 that Ukraine initiated a decentralization reform to devolve authority from the center to local entities.

Key Reforms: In December 2014, amendments to the budget code facilitated voluntary amalgamation of villages and cities into larger local bodies known as 'territorial hromadas.' The new entities gained fiscal independence through direct transfers from the Ministry of Finance and a share of locally collected personal income tax. A law enacted in February 2015 allowed villages to unite into new hromadas, granting them responsibilities for local public services such as schools, healthcare, libraries, local transport, waste management etc. While some decision-making remained centrally managed (such as, for example, taxes and tariffs), hromadas assumed control over school administration, local road maintenance, land use planning and other issues²⁵.

Challenges: The decentralization reform was initiated mainly during a period when the war in Donbas had already started. The historical absence of local self-governance, particularly in regions previously under a long Russian or Soviet rule, left those territories under the influence of

23 See *Decentralization Glossary*. Available at: <https://decentralization.gov.ua/en/glossary>

24 See Arends H., Brik T., Herrmann B., Roesel F. (2023). Decentralization and trust in government: Quasi-experimental evidence from Ukraine // *Journal of Comparative Economics*. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0147596723000689?via%3Dihub>

25 The list of issues falling within the jurisdiction of the local self-government bodies of the territorial community is established in accordance with the Law of Ukraine "On Local Self-Government in Ukraine," other laws of Ukraine, taking into account the provisions of Article 4 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. For more details, see *Practical Guide on the Organization of the work of local self-government bodies of Amalgamated Territorial Communities*, USAID, Association of Cities of Ukraine, Kyiv, 2016.

old authoritarian elites typically favoring centralization²⁶. Pioneers of local governance faced limited support and, in some cases, resistance from the authorities²⁷.

Achievements: Despite complexities, the reform gained momentum, leading to the creation of a total of 1,469 territorial communities throughout Ukraine, including: 409 urban communities with the center in a city, 435 township communities with the center in an urban-type settlement, and 625 rural communities with the center in a rural populated place – a village. These hromadas now exercise significant autonomy in local governance.

Evolution prior to and during the war: The decentralization reform's initial phase was marked by intensive citizen engagement and grassroots initiatives that has shifted Ukraine towards a greater involvement of the local population and civil society in local governance. In the face of the Russian aggression, the resilience of Ukraine owes a significant debt to the agility and effectiveness of local self-governance²⁸. The ability of local self-governance bodies to make swift and coordinated decisions about hromada's life at the grassroots level played a crucial role during the first months of the war response. Notably, in March 2022 the rapid convening of the Kherson Regional Council's session thwarted the aggressors' plans to create Kherson People's Republic and provided a legitimate hromada response to Russian propaganda. Hromadas throughout Ukraine have established humanitarian centers to address local needs on a large scale and formed hromada volunteer units to respond to the Russian aggression. As the findings of a recent oral history study in areas that have been under occupation showed, despite the challenging circumstances, Ukrainian communities that have gained experience of self-governance, displayed a high level of resilience and demonstrated an ability to self-organize and rely on informal networks. Notably, public institutions, including schools (if they were not demolished²⁹), managed to effectively function even when detached from their national-level counterparts³⁰.

26 Arends H., Brik T., Herrmann B., Roesel F. (2023). Ukraine's resilience: How an administrative reform boosted social capital and trust in Ukrainian communities // *Vox EU*, 23 August, 2023.

27 See Arends H., Brik T., Herrmann B., Roesel F. (2023). Decentralization and trust in government: Quasi-experimental evidence from Ukraine // *Journal of Comparative Economics*. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0147596723000689?via%3Dihub>

28 Rebuilding Ukraine by Reinforcing Regional and Municipal Governance / *OECD Report*, December 2022. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/63a6b479-en>

29 According to the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, 3,798 educational institutions have been affected by bombings and shelling. Among them, 365 have been completely destroyed. The interactive map of the statistics of school destructions across oblasts is available here: <https://saveschools.in.ua/en/>

30 Mikheieva O., Danylov S. (2023). Living Under Russia's Occupation. The Locals' Tale // *ERIC: European Resilience Initiative Center*, 21 September, 2023. Available at: <https://european-resilience.org/analytics/living-under-russias-occupation-locals-tale?fbclid=IwAR2X4Zx766A5AZ0Nj-7efC3M3efw7fKcyw71Cs-bgkHB5QaELUrLPNJDbEQ>

Box 2. Understanding Current Front-Line Communities Landscape: Impact of War and Evidence of Resilience

According to the [UNDP Human Impact Assessment Report \(HIA\)](#) published in June 2023, which assesses the aggregated human impact of war on macroregions, while the past year has seen the entire country grappling with the impact of the ongoing conflict, the most pressing and acute needs have been concentrated predominantly in the northern and southeastern macro-regions. Among the primary dimensions of war, impact on these territories are the following:

Impact on Livelihood Conditions. Households report compromised safety, reduced employment access, heightened reliance on humanitarian aid, and dwindling incomes.

Food Security Challenges. While households nationwide face challenges in meeting basic nutritional needs, the most affected regions experience the most significant deficits in food consumption in 2022.

Sectoral Regress and Poverty. The primary sectors affected include housing, transportation, energy, commerce and industry, and agriculture. Since the onset of the full-scale aggression, there has been a sharp increase in the poverty rate from 5.5% in 2021 to 24.1% in 2022³¹.

In February 2023, the RDNA ([Recovery and Damage Needs Assessment](#)) projected that within a year, the direct destruction of buildings and infrastructure had incurred a cost of \$135 billion. The overall estimated requirements for recovery and reconstruction reached a staggering \$411 billion. This geographical damage was particularly concentrated in the northern and southeastern macro-regions of Ukraine, including the frontline oblasts which have been in the focus of reSCORE hromada research (Donetska, Kharkivska, Luhanska, Zaporizka, Khersonska, Mykolaivska)³². These communities stand out as facing the most acute challenges, both in terms of economic sustenance and food security, particularly for the most vulnerable (elderly, people with disabilities, and children) underscoring the urgent need for targeted support and interventions.

Kyiv School of Economics (KSE) Study '[Explaining Ukraine's Resilience to Russia's Invasion: The Role of Local Governance and Decentralization Reform](#)' explored the dynamic roles and potential of hromadas in alleviating

31 *Human Impact Assessment Report Ukraine* / UNDP, June 2023, pp.20, 69. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/rAJP4>

32 *Recovery and Damage Needs Assessment* / UN, March 2023, p.9. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/dIU15>

the adversities of war. It delved into the profound repercussions of Preparedness, Robustness, and Adaptability as dimensions of resilience in wartime local communities.

Preparedness refers to a hromada's state of readiness for emergencies, involving continuous planning, organizing, training, and stockpiling resources. Robustness is the hromada's institutional ability to maintain functionality during shocks and to quickly resume operations. Adaptability involves the hromada's deliberate changes in practices to respond to shocks, exemplified by organizing functions during, for example, prolonged electricity cuts or after infrastructure damage from external events.

The analysis establishes a positive relationship between hromadas' resilience and the Preparedness Index, with urban areas exhibiting higher scores. Economic indicators support the assumption that higher own revenue percentages positively impact the Index, emphasizing fiscal self-sufficiency. The presence of business support centers correlates with higher preparedness, suggesting a role in fostering business activity. Cooperation agreements between hromadas over time are linked to increased preparedness, highlighting the importance of collaborative resource-sharing. Geographic factors also influence adaptation, with northern regions showing positive correlations with winter preparation measures.

The research underscores the significance of both economic and social predictors in hromadas' preparedness. Social capital, reflected in physical hubs and virtual networks, contributes to resilience, emphasizing the importance of governance and engagement. Active cooperation agreements enhance administrative robustness, emphasizing the value of inter-local government collaboration. The study concludes that economic capabilities, social networks, citizens' participation, and decentralization reforms play pivotal roles in strengthening hromadas' resilience to institutional shocks during wartime³³.

33 Rabinovych M., Brik T., Darkovich A., Savisko M., Hatsko V., Tytiuk S., Piddubnyi I. Explaining Ukraine's resilience to Russia's invasion: The role of local governance // *Governance*, 06 October 2023. Available here: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/gove.12827>

ABOUT RESCORE

reSCORE Ukraine is a joint initiative funded by the USAID and UNDP, and implemented by SeeD. It serves as an annual assessment tool of societal resilience and recovery that informs the policies and programming of national, regional, and international partners. Like its predecessor, SCORE 2018 and SCORE 2021, it aims to identify pathways and respond to complex needs, geared at strengthening individual and collective coping mechanisms, and fostering a democratic, just, inclusive, and cohesive Ukraine.

ABOUT PARTNERS

Democratic Governance East Activity (DG East) is an 8-year programme of The United States Agency for International Development (USAID). DG East works with civil society, local government entities, and independent media outlets in and from eastern and southern Ukraine to strengthen the connection and trust between citizens and their government. The overall objectives of DG East are to 1) support greater acceptance of a shared civic culture based on common values and understanding; and 2) promote participation to improve Ukraine's governance, reform processes, and help resolve community problems. The programme addresses immediate war-response needs, promotes good governance, and strengthens an inclusive civic identity.

USAID's Transformation Communications Activity (TCA) is a six-year activity of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which aims to strengthen Ukrainian democracy through comprehensive research, innovative communication initiatives, and the creation of socially meaningful content.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supports strategic capacity development initiatives to promote inclusive growth and sustainable human development. Through partnerships with national, regional, and local governments, civil society, and the private sector, UNDP strives to support Ukraine in its efforts to eliminate poverty, develop the population's capacity, achieve equitable results, sustain the environment, and advance democratic governance.

ABOUT SEED

SeeD is a research driven innovation hub run by an international coalition of peacebuilding and development researcher-practitioners. It focuses on developing cutting edge scientific methodologies to understand social dynamics in conflict and post-conflict contexts, and to empower local communities with participatory research and intervention design methods. SeeD works with international development organizations, governments and civil society leaders to design and implement people-centered and evidence-based strategies for promoting peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies. In Ukraine, SeeD supports peace and development architects (USAID, UNDP, Chemonics) to design and implement more evidence-based strategies and programs for increased social cohesion and resilience. For more details on the SeeD's activities in Ukraine, check here: <https://www.seedsofpeace.eu/where-we-work/europe/ukraine/>

METHODOLOGY

Data collection timing and method

ReSCORE hromada expert survey was conducted from May 6 to June 15, 2023. The data were primarily collected through face-to-face (F2F) standardized³⁴ interviews, accounting for 88% of the sample (445 out of 504 interviews were F2F). However, due to security considerations in the hard-to-reach frontline areas (specifically, in some hromadas located in the Donetsk, Kherson and Mykolaiv oblasts), the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) method was employed, which accounts for around 12% of the sample (59 interviews). Additionally, in some cases, respondents were interviewed by phone upon their request due to both security and scheduling constraints.

Sample plan, Geography and Target Groups

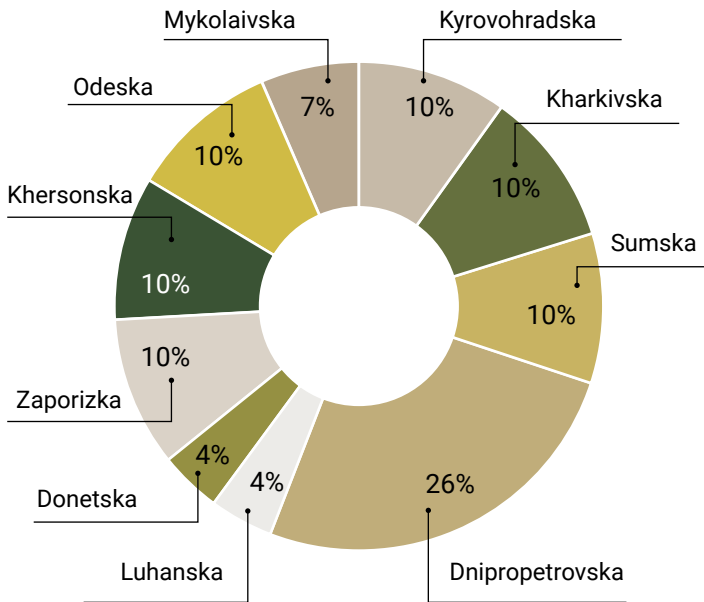
A total of 504 interviews were conducted across 32 hromadas in Kharkivska, Sumska, Dnipropetrovska, Kirovohradska, Zaporizka, Mykolaivska, Khersonska, Odeska, Donetsk, and Luhanska oblasts (see *Picture 6*). The survey encompassed designated urban, settlement, and rural³⁵ hromadas across all macroregions³⁶ of Ukraine, with the exception of the west/backline (see *Picture 7*). The geographical focus of the study aligned with the understanding that, although the Russian aggression targets the whole territory of Ukraine, hromadas in different parts of the country encounter different war-related experiences. Majority of the hromadas falling within the focus of this study were located in the southeast frontline

³⁴ The QNR utilized in the hromada survey consisted of a combination of pre-selected questions from the main survey, as well as questions specifically tailored for the hromada survey. The questionnaire was meticulously structured, primarily featuring closed-ended questions. Additionally, the questionnaire included only one open-ended question at the conclusion of the survey to capture the qualitative voices and opinions of the respondents about hromada conditions and pressing issues to be addressed by the donors and partners (see Annex 2). The average duration of the interview was 39 minutes. Respondents were given the option to choose the language for their interviews, either Russian or Ukrainian (finally, 62% of all interviews were conducted in Ukrainian).

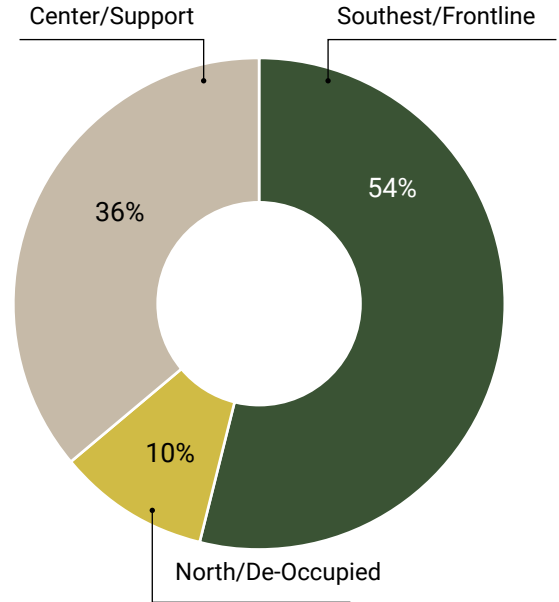
³⁵ In Ukraine, hromadas come in different types. They include urban (city/town) hromadas, settlement (semi-urban) and rural (village) type hromadas. These categories are based on the specific characteristics and administrative designations of the local communities within hromada. Within this reSCORE study, all types of hromadas were covered.

³⁶ In this brief, we use the definition of the macroregions aligned with those determined during the Ukraine Recovery Conference by the Government of Ukraine in Lugano in July 2022.

Picture 6. Distribution of the surveyed hromadas across oblasts



Picture 7. Distribution of the surveyed hromadas across macroregions

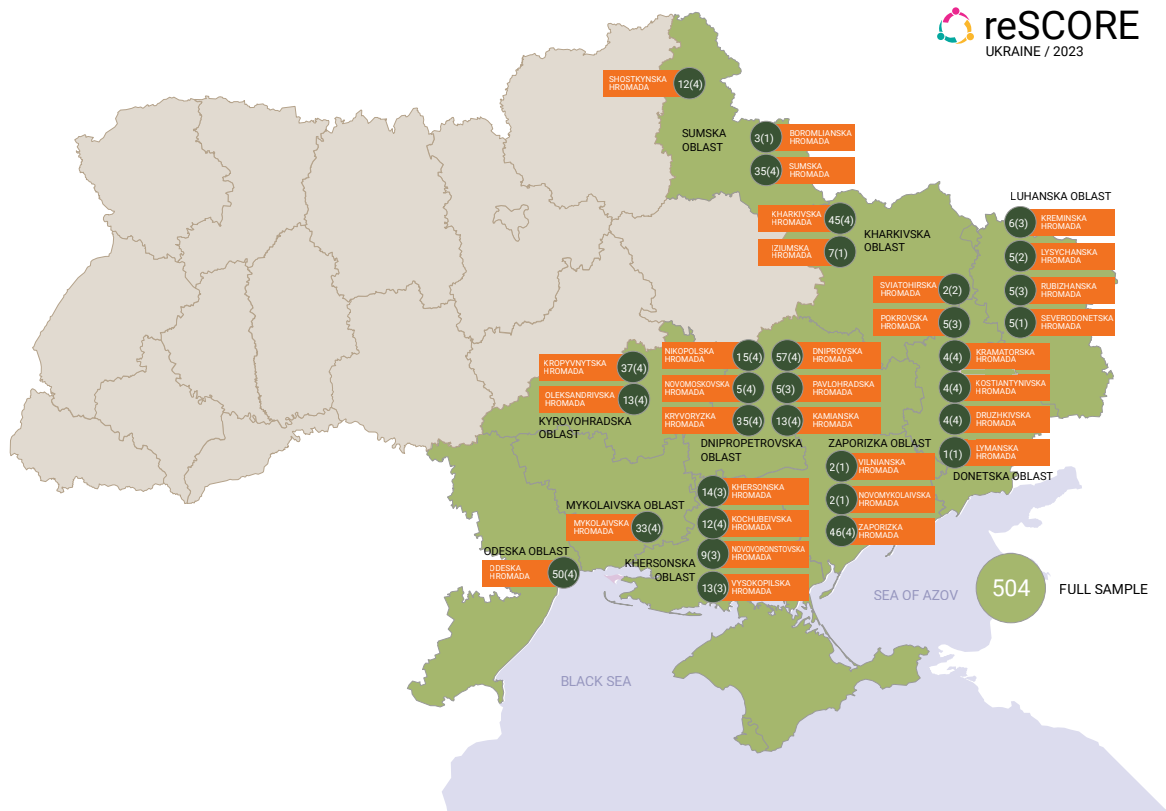


macroregion, which is the most affected area by Russia’s deliberate bombardment of critical civil infrastructure, as well as by risks of forcible occupation of territories. Although areas not under Ukrainian government control were not directly covered by the offline survey, efforts were made to engage with representatives from the currently occupied regions in their accessible host locations.

The target audience for the recruitment of key informants consisted of men and women over 18 years old³⁷ who were randomly selected from the four pre-defined groups: 1) Hromada office (including elected and appointed team members such as Deputy Head, Secretary etc.) – 22% of interviewees were from this group; 2) civil society (including NGO representatives, journalists, human rights

37 In the surveyed key informant group, 20% were between 18-34 years old, 73% fell within the 36-64 age range, and 7% were 65 years and older (with 74% of women and 26% men). The significant representation of women among key informants during times of war raises important questions about the underlying dynamics influencing their involvement and increasing role in the local communities’ life. Specifically, women made up 66% of the surveyed hromada office representatives, 65% of CSOs’, 74% of OSBB’ (starosta), and 86% of sector-specific public services’ representatives.

Picture 8. Surveyed hromadas' mapping (numbers in the brackets: total sample / number of target groups covered)



activists etc.) – 24% of interviewees; 3) Association of the owners of apartment buildings (OSBB, including head of finance departments, engineers or other technical staff,) or *starosta* in rural area – 21% of interviewees; 4) Sector-specific public service (including security & law enforcement sector such as police; emergency sector such as ambulance, emergency service, firefighters; infrastructure and utilities sectors water, energy, waste management; health sector, education sector; culture, environment & heritage) – 33% of informants. Although in some frontline as well as rural areas not all target groups were accessible, in a majority of hromadas either all four or at least three groups were covered (see Picture 8).

Data constraints

It is worth emphasizing that this research takes stock of assessments and observations from key informants and focuses exclusively on selected hromadas. Therefore, the findings are not representative of all hromadas, oblasts, or macroregions. The validity of findings derived from key informants' interviews is constrained by the limited

scope of their individual perspectives and experiences. However, the advantage of key informants interviews is that they can answer questions that would not fit for large scale household studies. To address the limitations posed by possible biases, our strategy was to engage a diverse range of key informants, ensuring representation from various backgrounds, roles, and viewpoints as mentioned in the paragraph above.

With samples ranging from as low as 1 in smaller and less accessible hromadas³⁸ to as high as 57 in larger and more accessible ones, the potential for in-depth inter-hromada comparisons was also constrained. As a result, the approach was to average out key informants' responses to discern the characteristics specific only to the surveyed hromada. Considering the nature of the expert survey design, which prioritizes input from individuals with empirical knowledge, expertise, and a deeper understanding of hromada situations, the concern about representativeness becomes less critical. Despite these limitations, the research provides a thorough account of the common practices, viewpoints, and needs of key informants from various hromadas, offering valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and donors. Hence, findings of this report should be taken into account with due attention.

Quality Assurance

The survey was designed to ensure robust data collection while adhering to rigorous quality control measures. This included weekly quality assessments coupled with comprehensive daily geolocation checks³⁹ and GPS coordinate verification⁴⁰ for a minimum of 50% of settlement survey points. Furthermore, a 100% coverage of audio recording analysis added an additional layer of scrutiny, while the utilization of electronic devices, such as tablets, equipped with advanced features like question duration tracking and audio recording, demonstrated a forward-thinking approach to data quality control in line with modern sociological research methodologies.

38 Due to security constraints, only one respondent was interviewed in Lyman. While we do not showcase averages for the smallest sample in the text, it is included in aggregated calculations for all surveyed hromadas. This implies that when a hromada is reported by a single expert, the average is based solely on that individual's assessment. In statistical terms, we are reporting the value without averaging.

39 Geolocation checks refer to the process of determining the approximate physical location of a device used by an enumerator.

40 GPS (Global Positioning System) coordinate verification is a method of determining precise geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude) of the surveyed locality using signals from GPS satellites.

Approach to identifying outliers

The assessment process involved classifying each hromada as either below or above the sample average for all 150 thematic survey indicators. Well-performing hromadas were identified as those exhibiting significantly higher scores in positive phenomena and lower scores in negative phenomena. Conversely, underperforming hromadas were selected based on significantly lower scores in positive phenomena and higher scores in negative phenomena.

To refine the analysis, cases where a hromada demonstrated both high performance in positive phenomena and high performance in negative phenomena were excluded, resulting in a focused set of seven hromadas in each category. Identification of factors defining positive and negative outliers among hromadas entailed selecting indicators that consistently contributed to a hromada's classification as 'well-performing' or 'underperforming.' Subsequently, a Kruskal-Wallis test was employed to assess statistically significant differences, considering indicators with a test p-value <0.05 as having a significant association with strong/weak performing hromada categorization.

ReSCORE Metrics

Scores for each indicator are given a value from 0 to 10, where 0 corresponds to the total absence of a phenomenon in a hromada, and 10 corresponds to its maximum possible presence. Heatmaps shown on the SeeD website, showcase the score achieved by each surveyed hromada for a given indicator. A dual approach in results presentation is employed, depending on the nature of the indicators at hand. In some cases, scores are presented to provide a quantitative assessment on a scale, while other selected indicators frequencies are used for illustration. This deliberate choice allows to convey a more comprehensive understanding of the data.

ANNEX

Sample information: surveyed hromadas and target groups

Territorial community (TC) / hromada ⁴¹	Estimated population as of 1st January 2022 (State Statistics Service of Ukraine Report) ⁴²	Sample	Group 1. Hromada office	Group 2. CSOs	Group 3. OSBB	Group 4. Sector-specific public service	Number of target groups covered
Dniprovska urban	971.078	57	14	15	13	15	4
Odeska urban	1.010.573	50	10	14	13	13	4
Zaporizka urban	710.052	46	8	13	13	12	4
Kharkivska urban	1.421.125	45	8	10	12	15	4
Kropyvnytska urban	228.007	37	8	8	7	14	4
Kyryvoryzka urban	606.584	35	10	11	6	8	4
Sumska urban	267.046	35	9	7	10	9	4
Mykolaivska urban	470.011	33	3	9	5	16	4
Nikopolska urban	105.160	15	1	2	6	6	4
Khersonska urban	317.752	14	3	0	2	9	3
Kamianska urban	233.701	13	4	2	3	4	4
Oleksandrivska rural	24.709	13	3	3	2	5	4
Vysokopil'ska stlmt	10.767	13	0	3	5	5	3
Shostkynska urban	90.591	12	3	2	1	6	4
Kochubeivska rural	2.844	12	4	3	3	2	4

See continuation on the next page ►►

41 Surveyed hromadas are ranked by sample size.

42 Number of Present Population of Ukraine, as of January 1 / State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Kyiv, 2022. Available at: https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2022/zb/08/zb_Ukraine%20in%20figures_21u.pdf

►► Continuation

Territorial community (TC) / hromada ⁴¹	Estimated population as of 1st January 2022 (State Statistics Service of Ukraine Report) ⁴²	Sample	Group 1. Hromada office	Group 2. CSOs	Group 3. OSBB	Group 4. Sector-specific public service	Number of target groups covered
Novovoronskivska stlmt	12.097	9	2	0	1	6	3
Iziumska urban	48.072	7	7	0	0	0	1
Kreminska urban	21.588	6	0	2	1	3	3
Pavlohradaska urban	101.430	5	2	2	0	1	3
Novomoskovska urban	69.855	5	1	2	1	1	4
Lysychanska urban	111.716	5	0	2	0	3	2
Pokrovska urban	81.029	5	0	2	1	2	3
Rubizhanska urban	58.824	5	1	3	0	1	3
Severodonetska urban	113.323	5	5	0	0	0	1
Druzhkivska urban	65.483	4	1	1	1	1	4
Kostiantynivska urban	65.483	4	1	1	1	1	4
Kramatorska urban	180.922	4	1	1	1	1	4
Boromlianska rural	4.920	3	0	0	0	3	1
Novomykolaivska rural*	5.847	2	2	0	0	0	1
Sviatohirska urban*	8.718	2	1	0	0	1	2
Vilnianska urban*	16.531	2	0	0	0	2	1
Lymanska urban*	40.195	1	0	1	0	0	1

* The recommended criterion for reporting at the hromada individual level was to have 3 or more surveyed key informants. The criterion is grounded in the triangulation principle, which enhances the reliability of findings by incorporating diverse perspectives. Hromadas with fewer than 3 respondents are included in aggregated calculations to maintain comprehensive insights but are not presented as standalone scores to ensure the robustness and credibility of the reported data.

