

FUTURE INDEX

Professional expectations and development of adolescents in Ukraine

May 2025

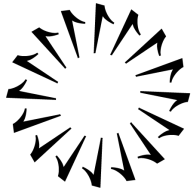


Research initiated by



Olena Zelenska
Foundation

About



Olena Zelenska
Foundation

Research was initiated by
the Olena Zelenska
Foundation.



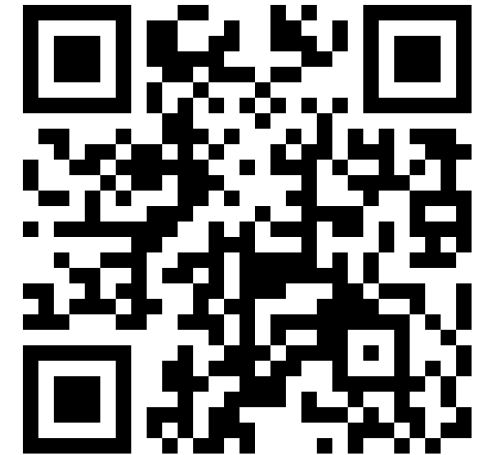
Research was prepared by the KSE
Institute in cooperation with the
humanitarian organization People in
Need and financial support from the
Czech people.

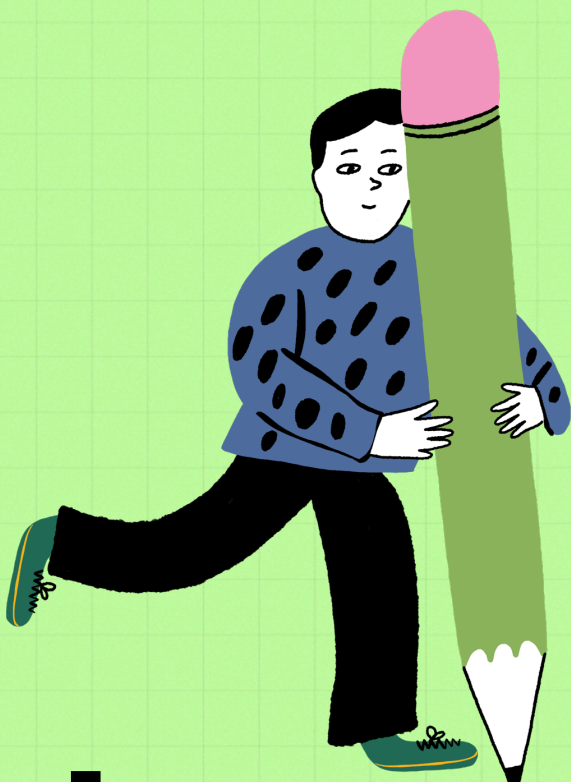
KSE | Institute



The presentation of research
implemented implemented in
partnership with UNICEF Ukraine.

**Research
findings:**





About

01



Background



- The country is in a **critical demographic situation**, with a population decline of about **10 million** over the past 30 years;
- The labor market is facing **an acute shortage of** qualified specialists, particularly in sectors which are important for the defense industry and reconstruction.



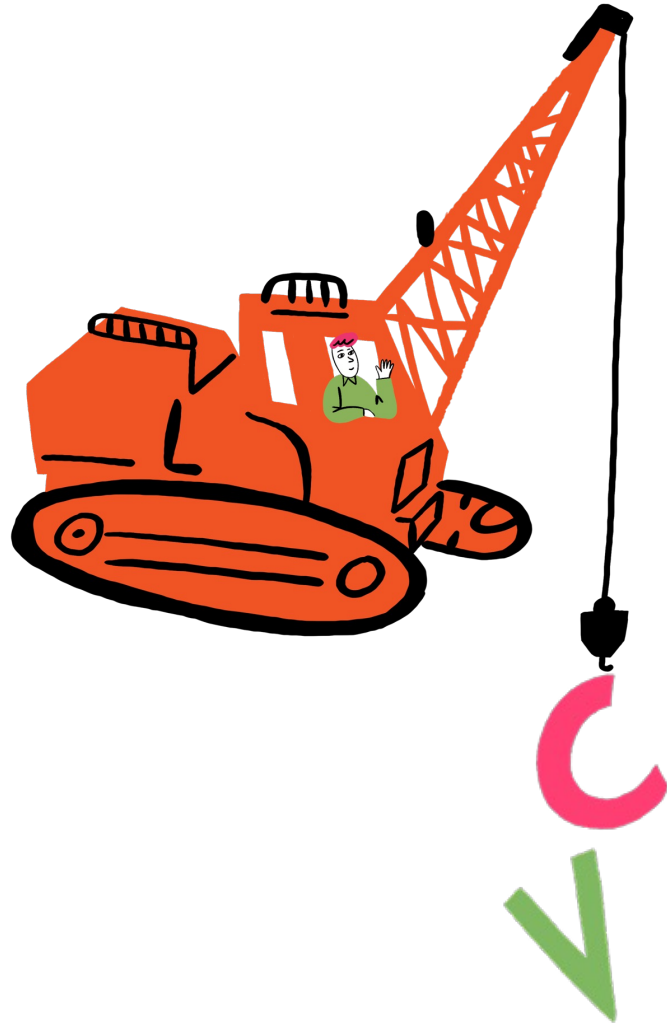
Beneficiaries



- Government and relevant ministries
- State Employment Service
- International partners and donors
- Local state administrations and local governments
- Educational managers and educational institutions
- Teachers, school psychologists, classroom teachers
- Parents and guardians



Objective



To gauge the professional aspirations of adolescents aged 13-16, what they expect from their future, and how these plans are influenced **by their parents/guardians and socioeconomic conditions**, as well as their **educational** and **psychological environment**.





Who this study is about

~ 1.3 million adolescents aged 13 to 16 remain in Ukraine

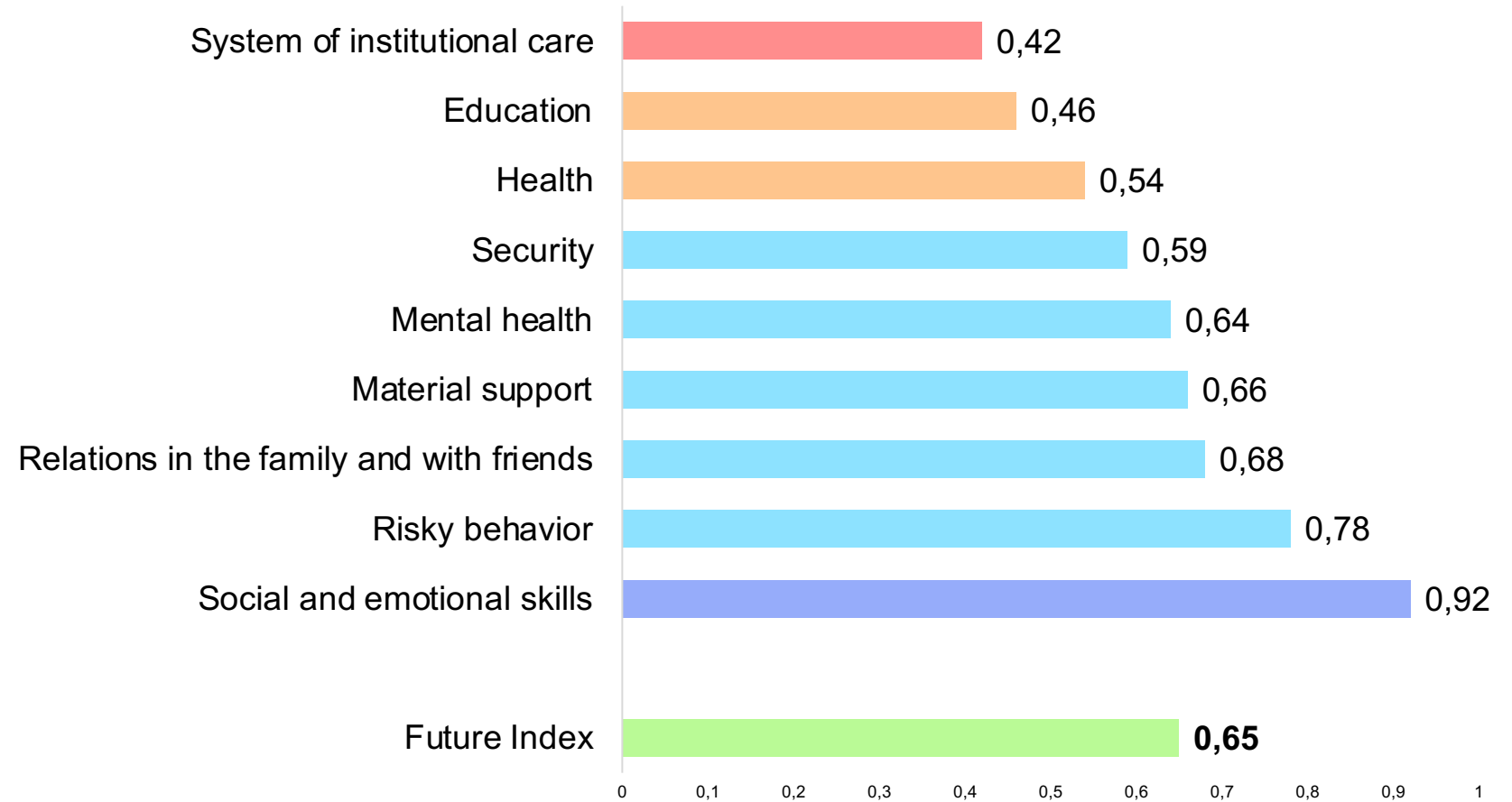




Relevance

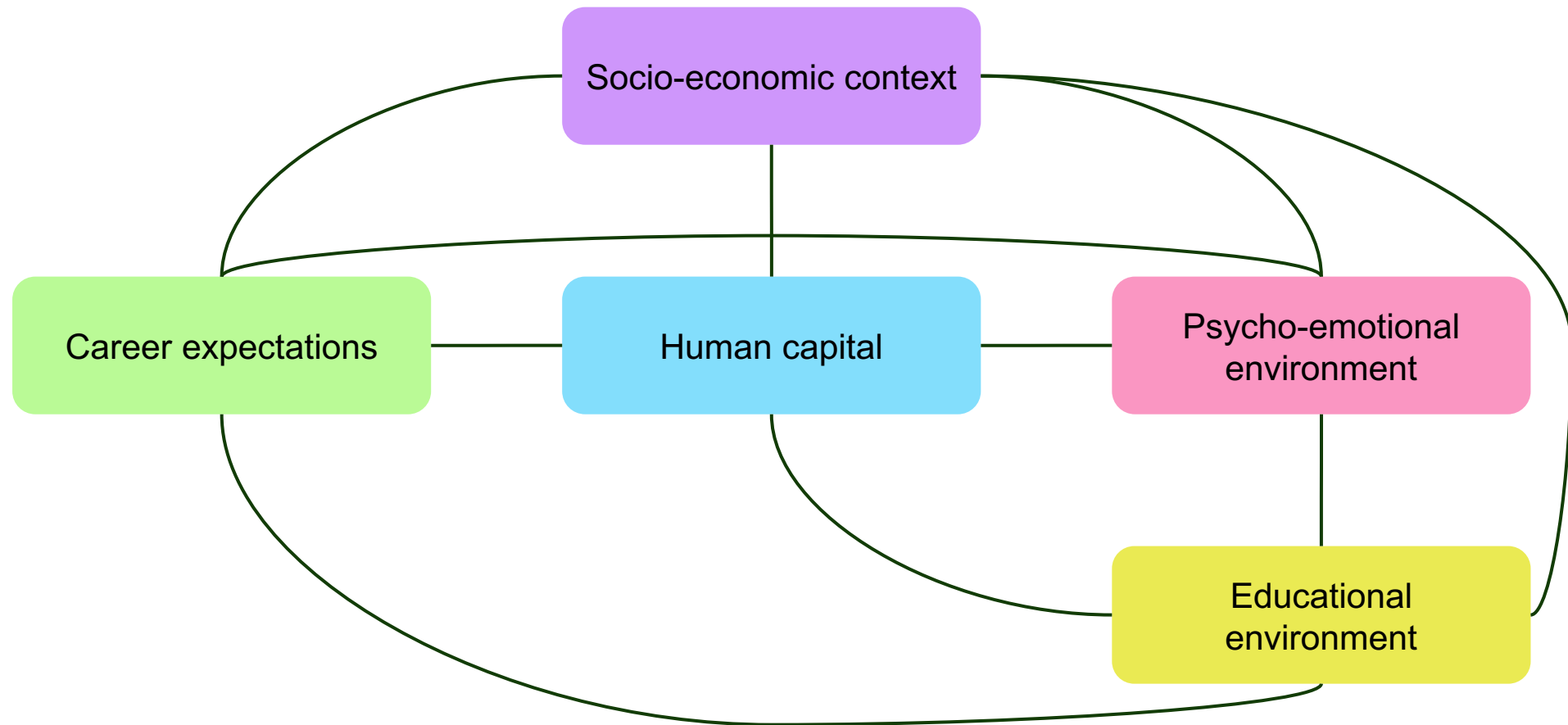
Studying education is **critical** as it had one of the **lowest scores** in the previous wave of the **Future Index**.

The Future Index





Influencing factors





Influencing factors

Why are these components in focus?

Socio-economic context

Identifies differences in **access to resources and opportunities**

Educational environment

One of the key factors in **human capital formation** and **career goals**

Psycho-emotional environment

Builds motivation, confidence and **the ability to think about the future**

Human capital

Covers the **knowledge, skills** and **personal traits** that shape a child's ability to form and achieve **career goals**

Extracurricular activities

Allows adolescents to acquire **new skills** and broaden their **vision of their future career**



Data sources:

1. State sources

2. Open sources

3. Quantitative survey of children and parents

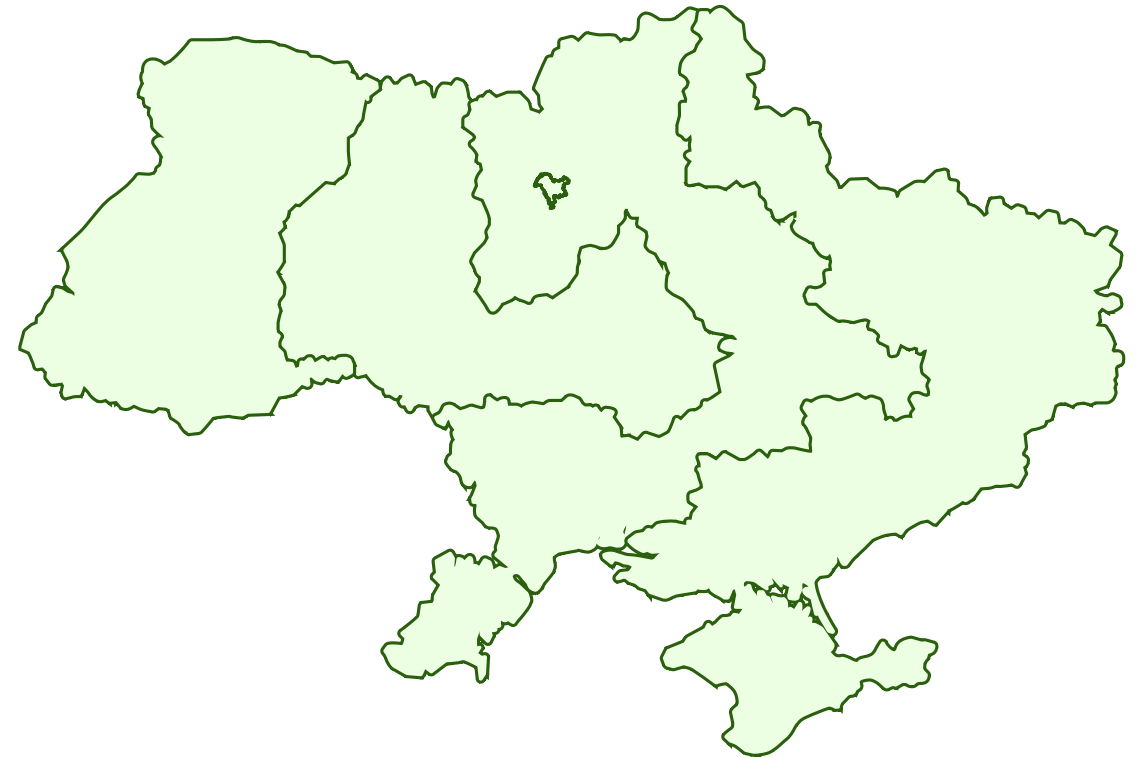
4. Expert interviews



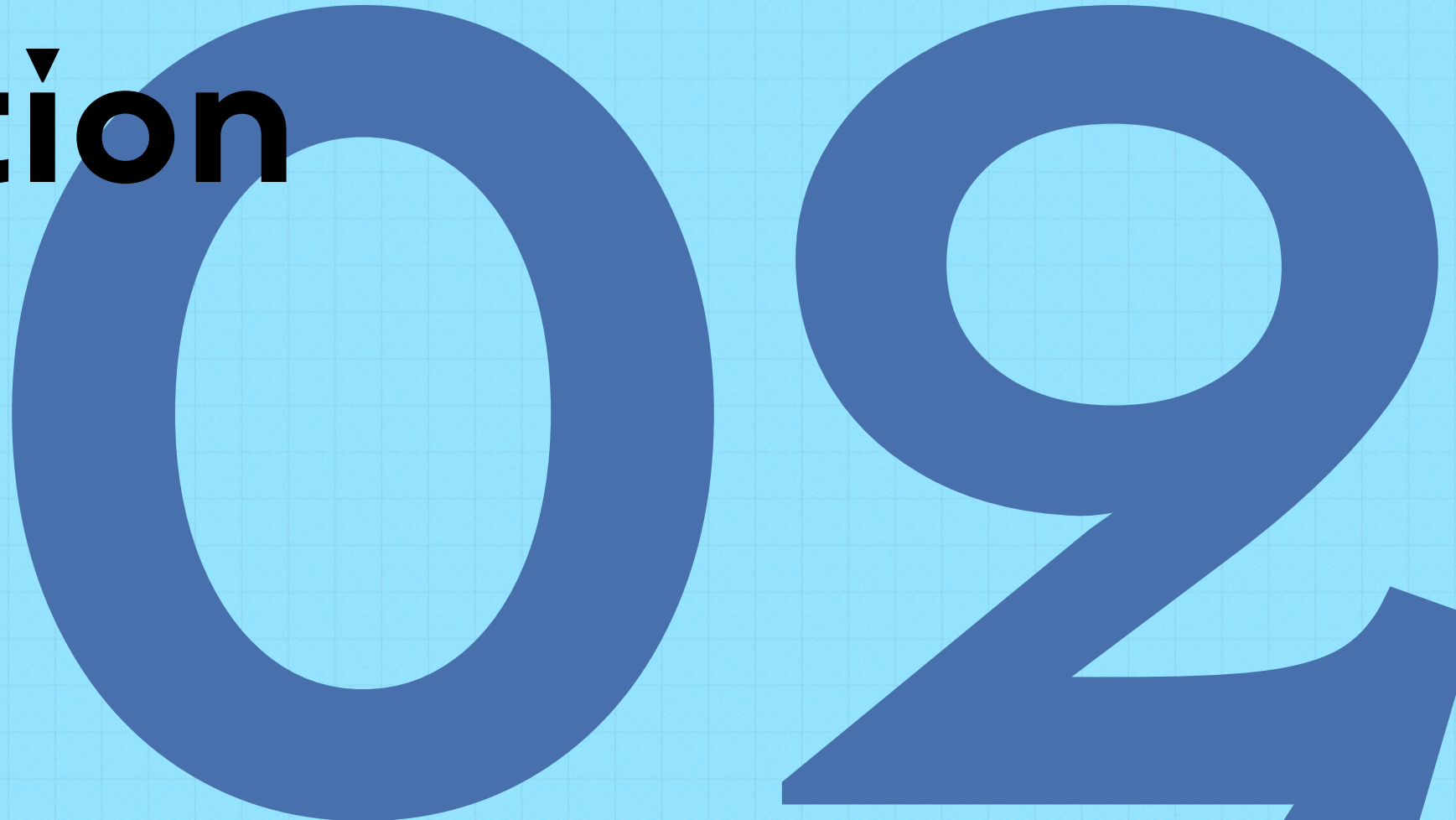
10,178 respondents(s)

20 interviews

- Among them are **5089 children** aged 13 to 16
- **5089 parents** or guardians
- The survey was conducted online in **March 2025**.
- All of Ukraine (except for the temporarily occupied territories)

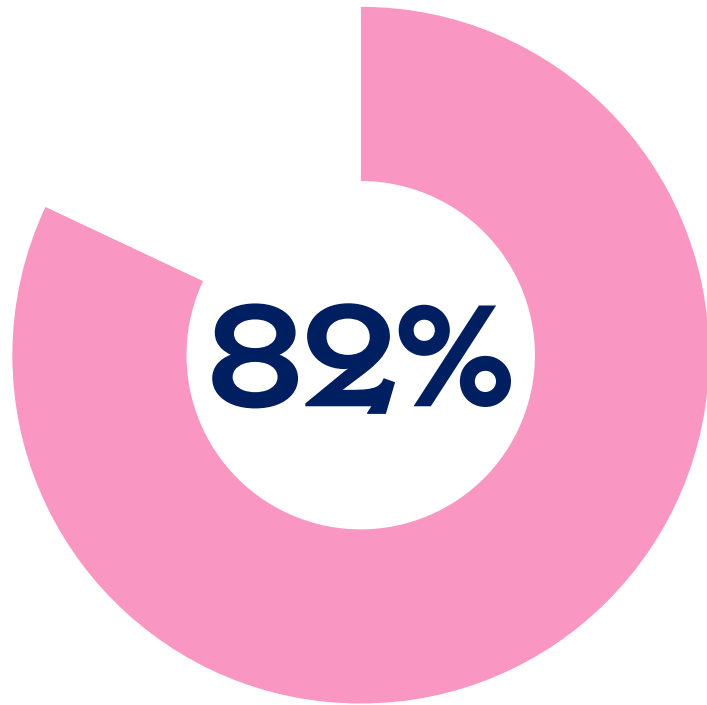


Thoughts on the future. Migration





Vision of the future



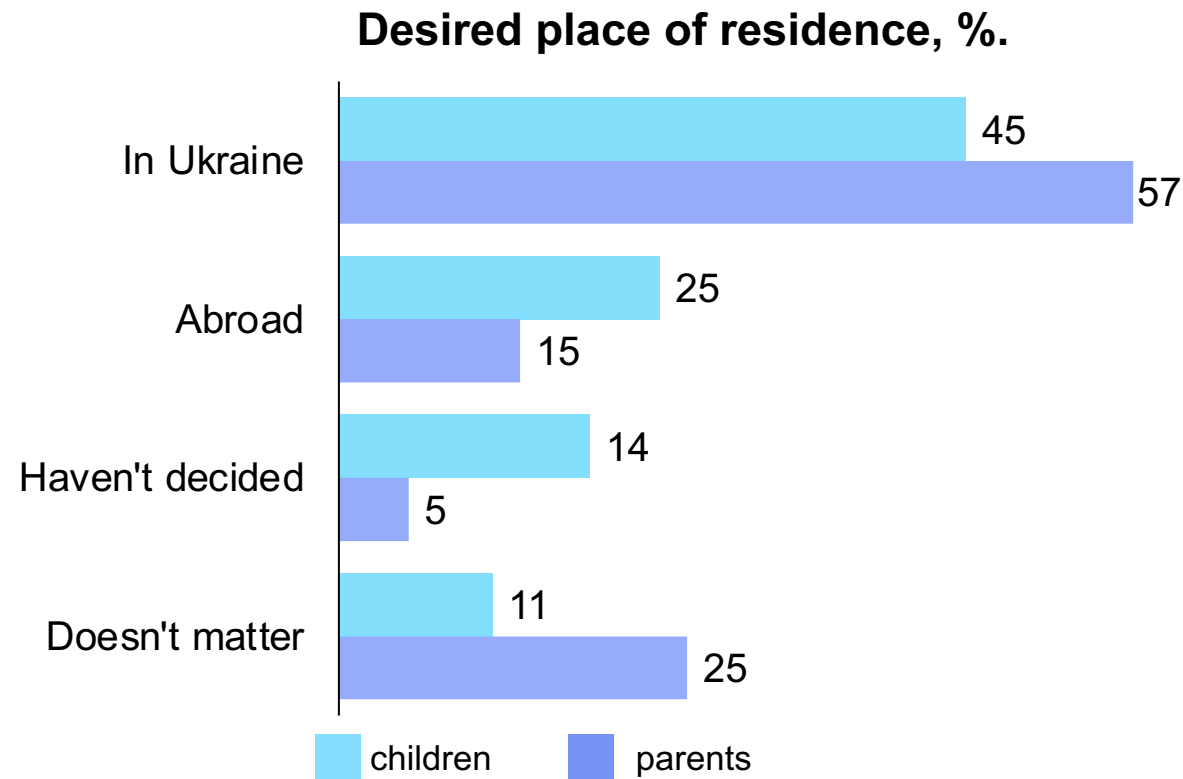
Adolescents see **their future** as promising.



Adolescents see the **future of Ukraine** as promising.



Migration



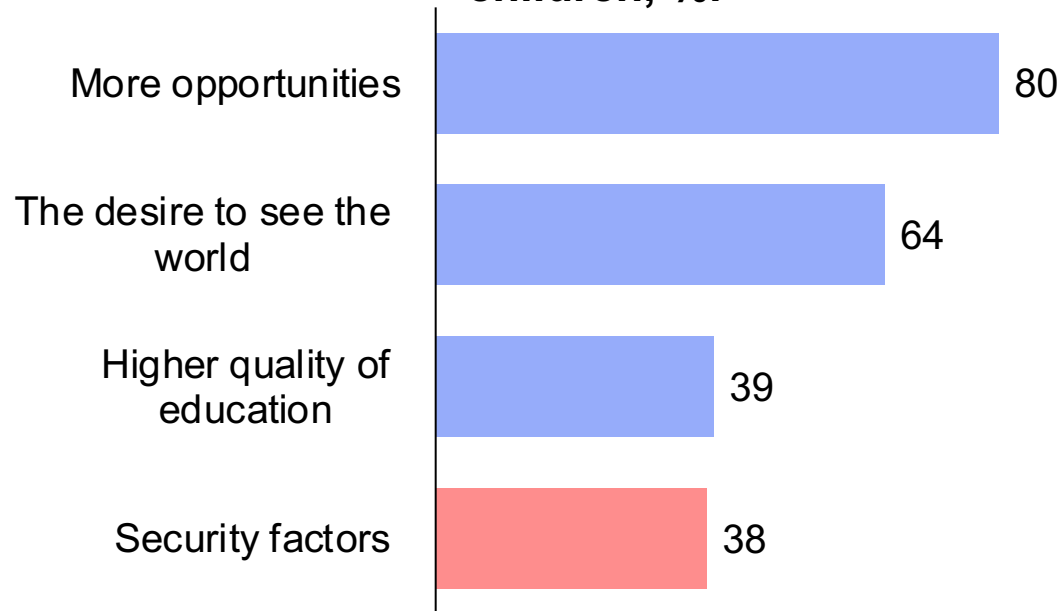
Every **4th** child is considering migration abroad.

More parents would like their children to stay in Ukraine.



Migration

Top 4 reasons for migration among children, %.



The determining factors in the choice of children are **development** and **opportunities**, not security considerations.



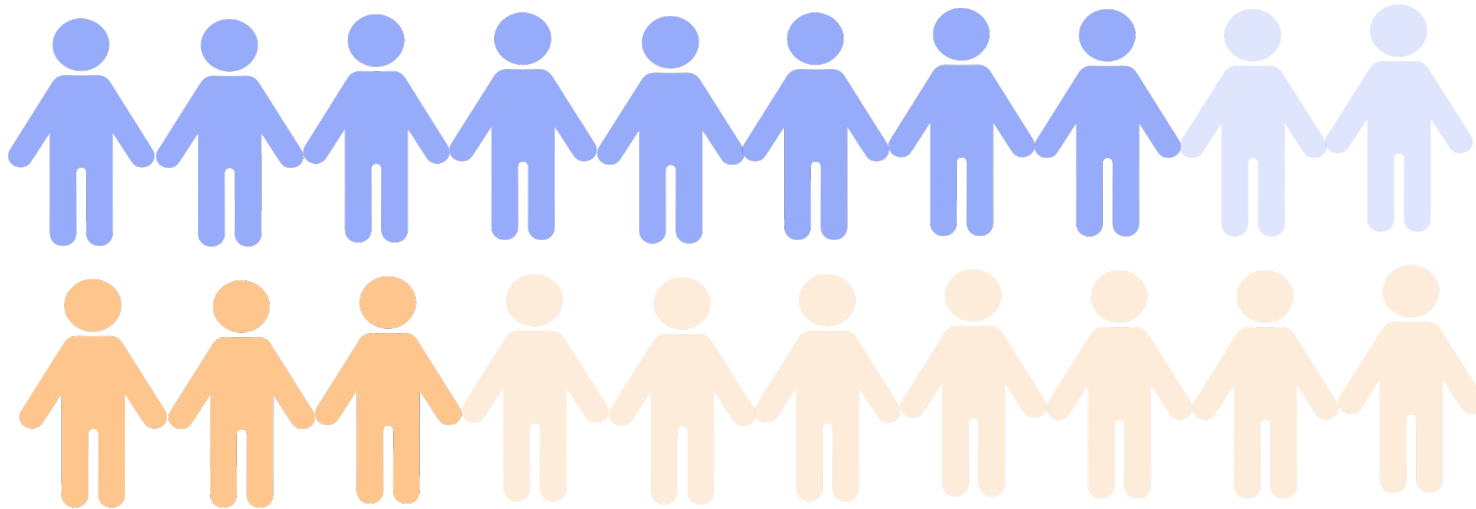


Vision of the future

The likelihood that a child will want to live outside **of Ukraine** increases with these characteristics:

- children from cities
- see the future of Ukraine as hopeless or rather hopeless
- parents have a higher level of education
- decided on their future profession
- have a higher level of confidence in their English abilities

Thoughts on the future



8 out of 10 children

have already thought about what profession they want to pursue in the future.

At the same time,

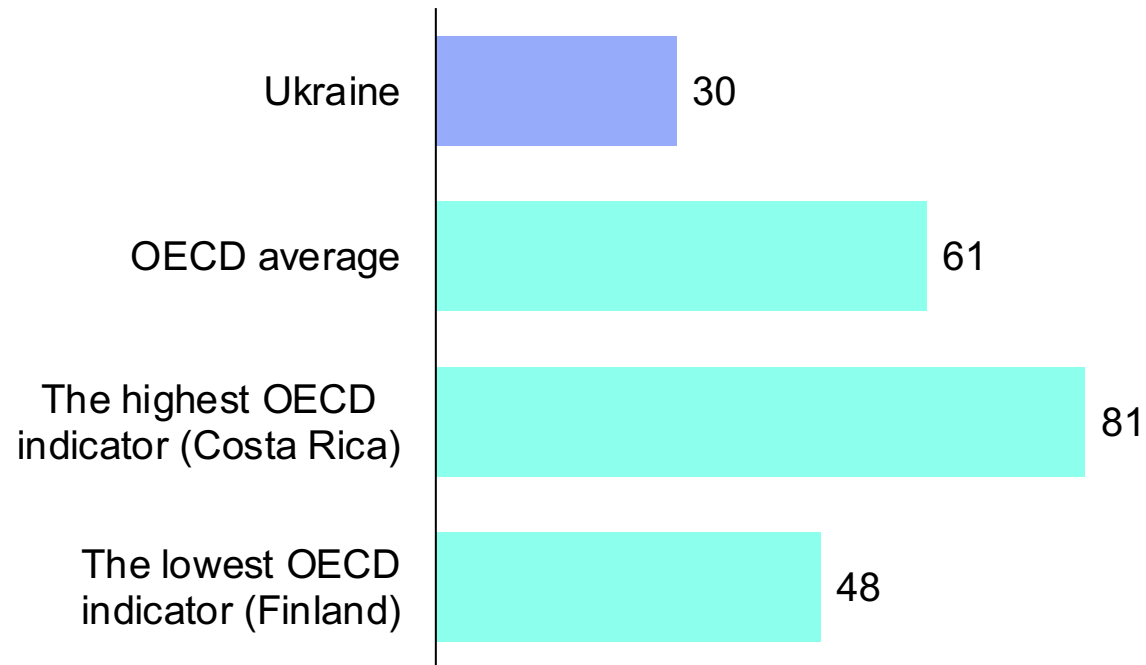
only 3 out of 10

children have a clear understanding of this issue.



Thoughts on the future

Adolescents who named their expected profession, %.



The question "What kind of job do you expect to have when you are about 30 years old?", OECD Database (2022).

30% of adolescents can name a specific profession or type of employment they would expect to have in 30 years — that's half the average in OECD countries.



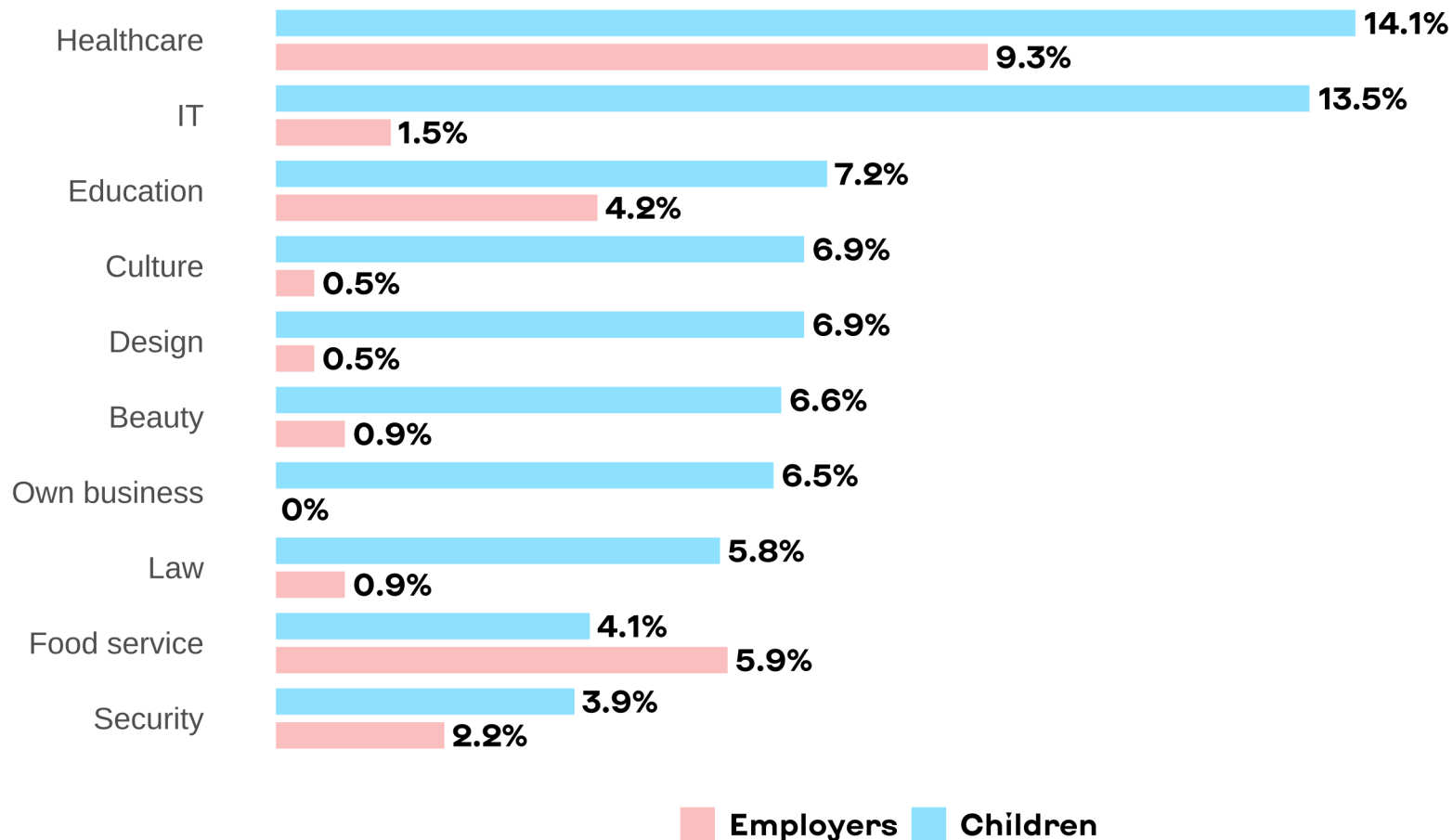
Thoughts on the future



agronomist
photographer rehabilitation specialist
profession programmer dog trainer
games for example beautician sooner
footballer salary manager choreographer programmer foreign
options future psychologist good help confectioner salary
accountant leave this benefit companies engineer teacher wanted hobby
profession designer many perhaps highly paid IT translator favorite
this languages translator pleasure doctor o manager related
which has income architect that own lawyer wanted economist
cafe tied few own which programmer become design find
for salary very like work work be not doctor works related
security service English life work work be not doctor works related
people serviceman have refusal designer salary judge
above chief police business to answer dentist actress from cook
to provide musician know maybe close
enough surgeon earn yet coach Ukraine
master cook yet it lawyer exactly possibility
mechanic wellpaid field interior veterinarian
schedule stable brings bring case actress
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profitable developer your that which itself
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will end good dentists something wanted programmer I have biologist
businessman programming graphic cook now c high activity
some autorepair do interesting money good actor pilot E clothes
illustrator I see veterinarian journalist artist home
clinic enough Ukraine which one I can pharmacist
will come out policeman such coach by whom to become
public prosecutor auto mechanic position beauty sphere electrician languages
entrepreneur need stable salary
country apparently
policewoman

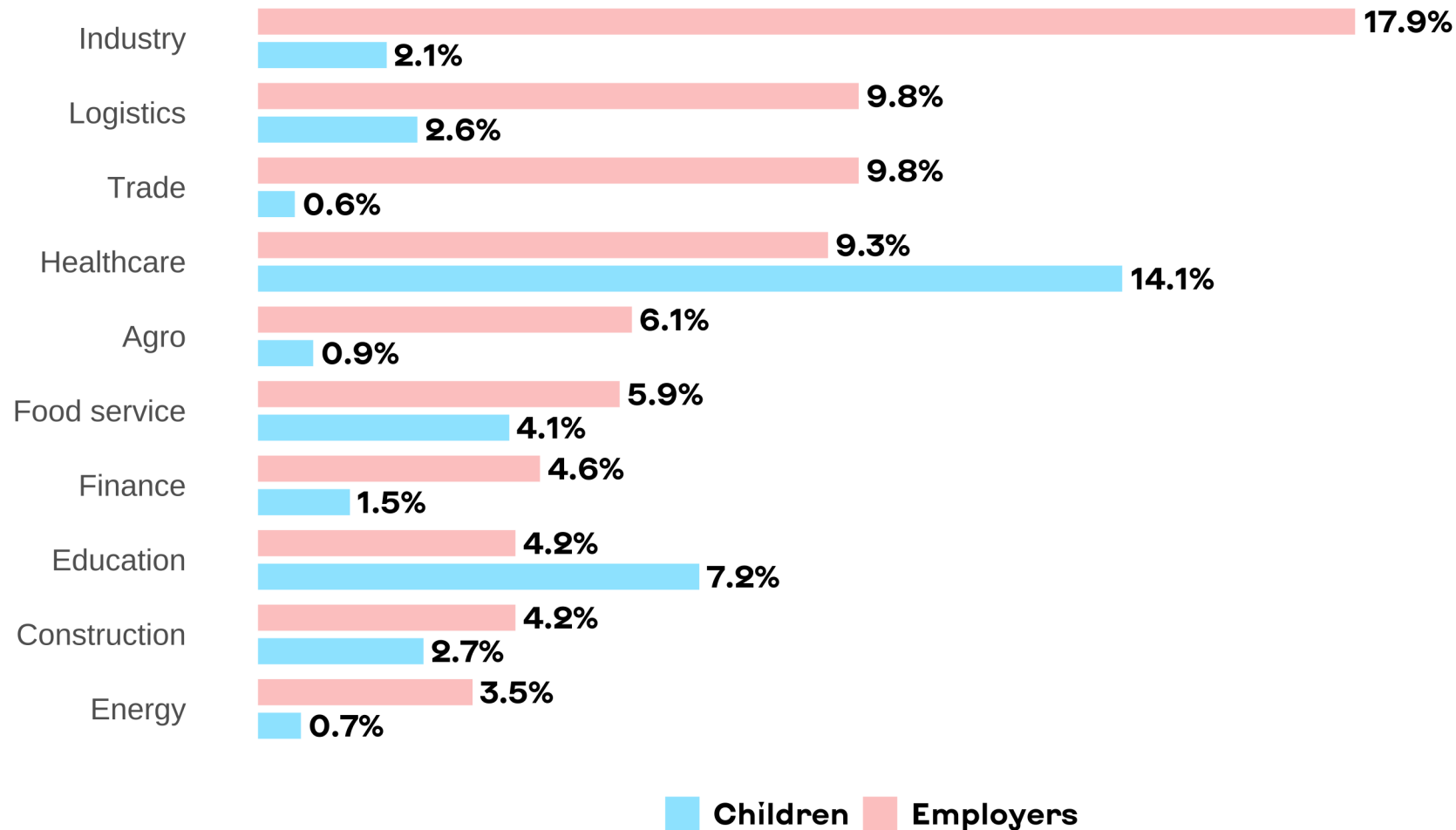
Thoughts on the future

Top-10 Professions by Children's Expectations



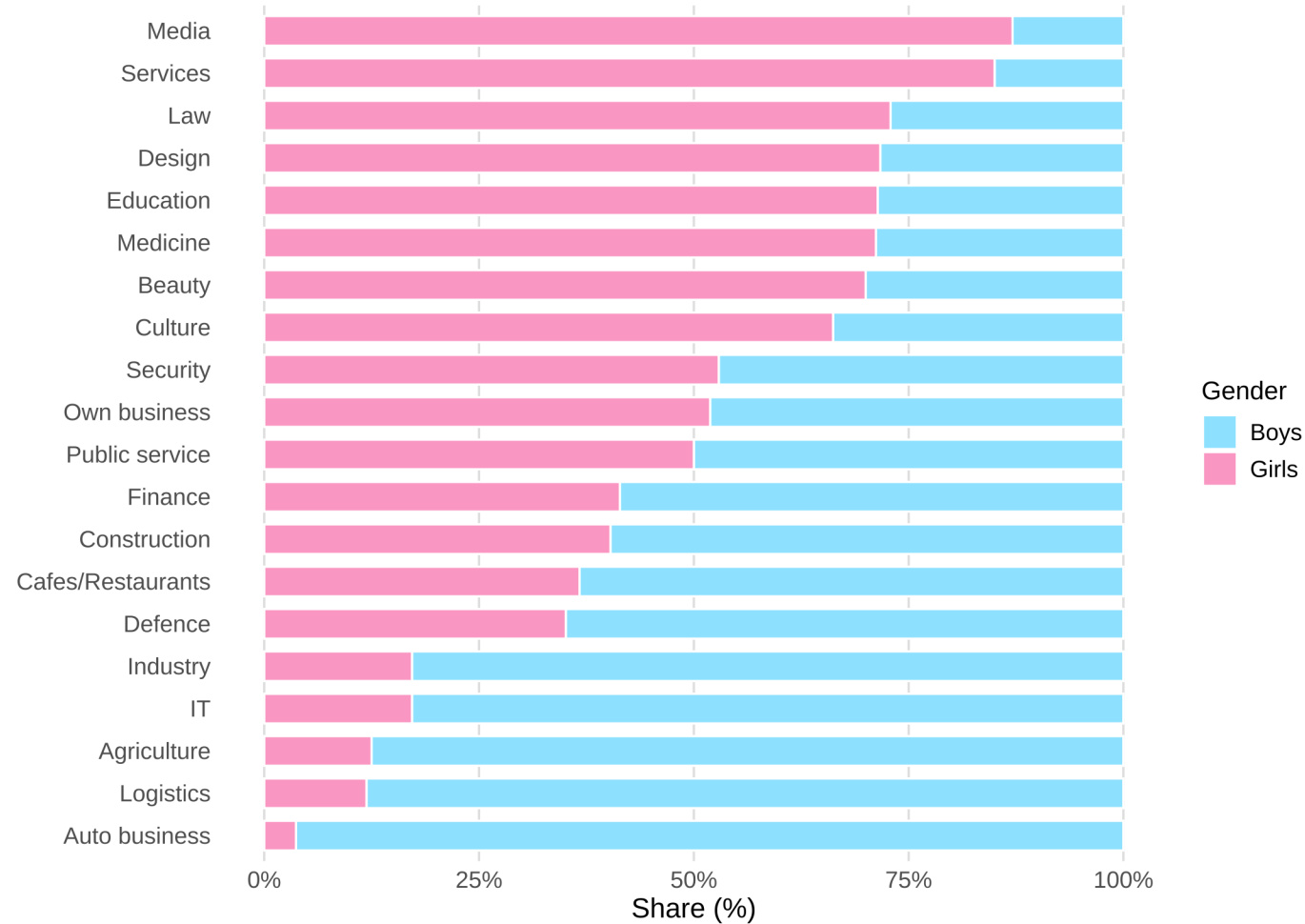
Thoughts on the future

Top-10 Professions by Market demand



Thoughts on the future

Top 20 Career Fields Chosen by Boys and Girls



Thoughts on the future

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...today, young people's vision of their future is mostly about working with a computer in an office. Unfortunately, this vision does not include physical labor. This trend is very common. Also, young people's salary expectations are often too high. They want to do less work in very convenient and comfortable conditions and still get a big salary. There is a significant **discrepancy between the expectations of employers and young people looking for work.**

**Iryna Shumik, Director General of the
Directorate of Vocational Education at the
Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine**

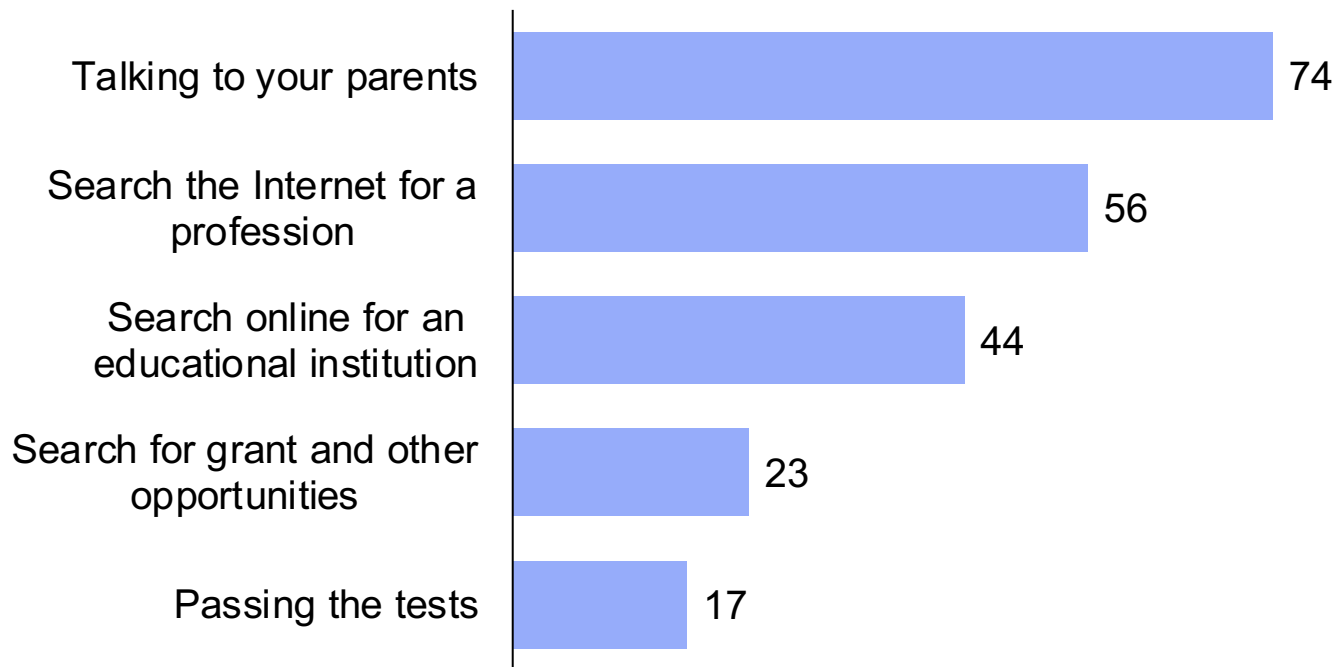
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Thoughts on the future

**Top 5 most common career guidance activities
among children aged 13-16, %.**



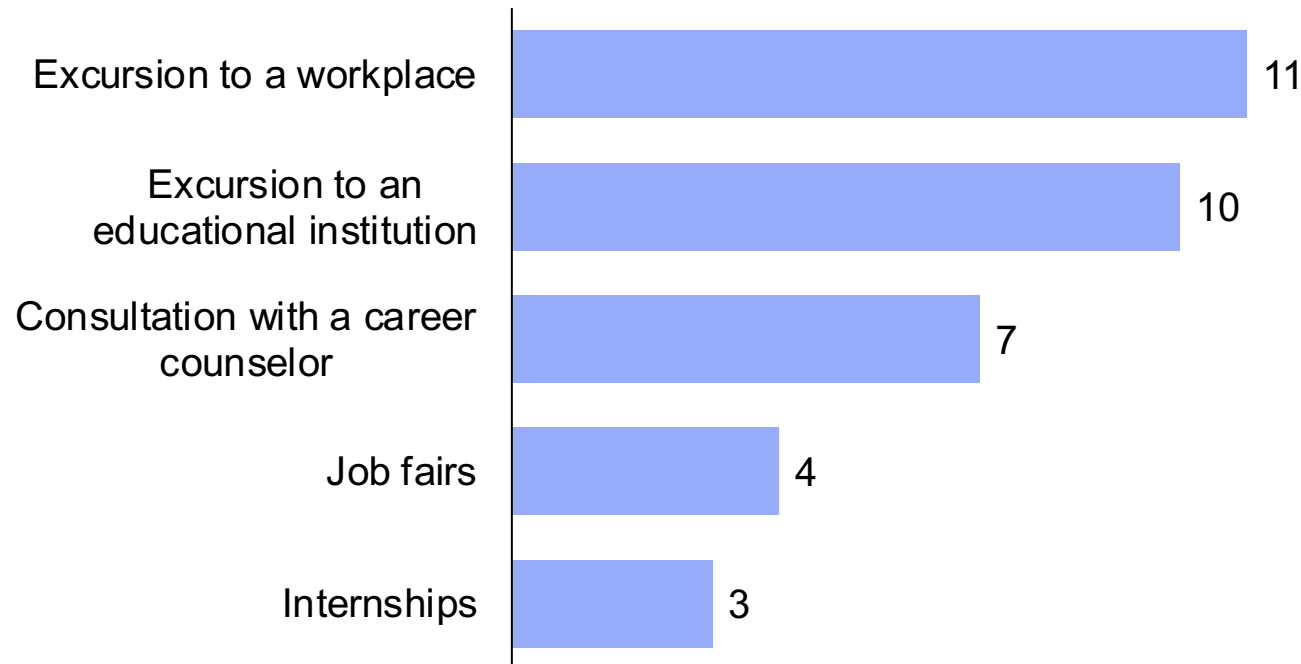
On average, girls are **14% more likely** to engage with these **career guidance activities** than boys.

More girls are thinking about their future profession
85% compared to **74%** of boys.



Thoughts on the future

**Career guidance activities are less popular
among children aged 13-16, %.**

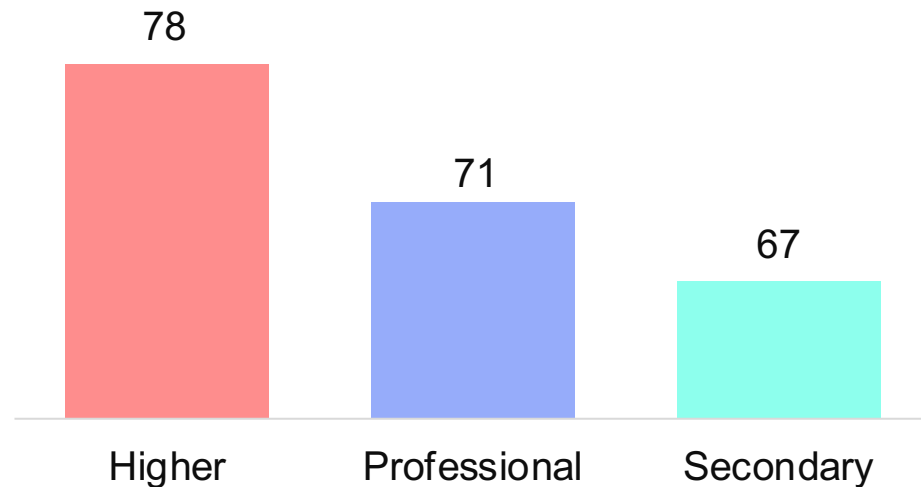


Adolescents rarely do internships or attend excursions to enterprises and educational institutions, although **these activities are also important for choosing a profession** (PISA study).



Thoughts on the future

**Discussion of the future with parents
among children aged 13-16, %.**



The **higher the level of education of parents**, the **more often** children discuss their future with them.

Children with whom parents discuss the future are **more likely to think about their future profession** –

83% vs **60%**.

Human capital



Human capital (self-assessment)

Among skills, **empathy (75%)** and **motivation (68%)** are the best developed, while adaptability (55%), leadership (47%) and analytical thinking (37%) have lower scores.

	Overall	Girls	Boys
Motivation	68%	65%	71%
Leadership	47%	51%	43%
Adaptability	55%	46%	64%
Empathy	75%	78%	73%
Analytical thinking	37%	35%	40%

Human capital (self-assessment)

Weighted average self-assessment of skills

Text comprehension

2.86 / 4

The majority of children demonstrate confidence in their text comprehension skills

English language

2.38 / 4

A significant proportion of children are confident in their basic English skills, but confidence decreases with increasing complexity of tasks

Math

2.30 / 4

Meanwhile they are much less confident in their math skills

Educational environment

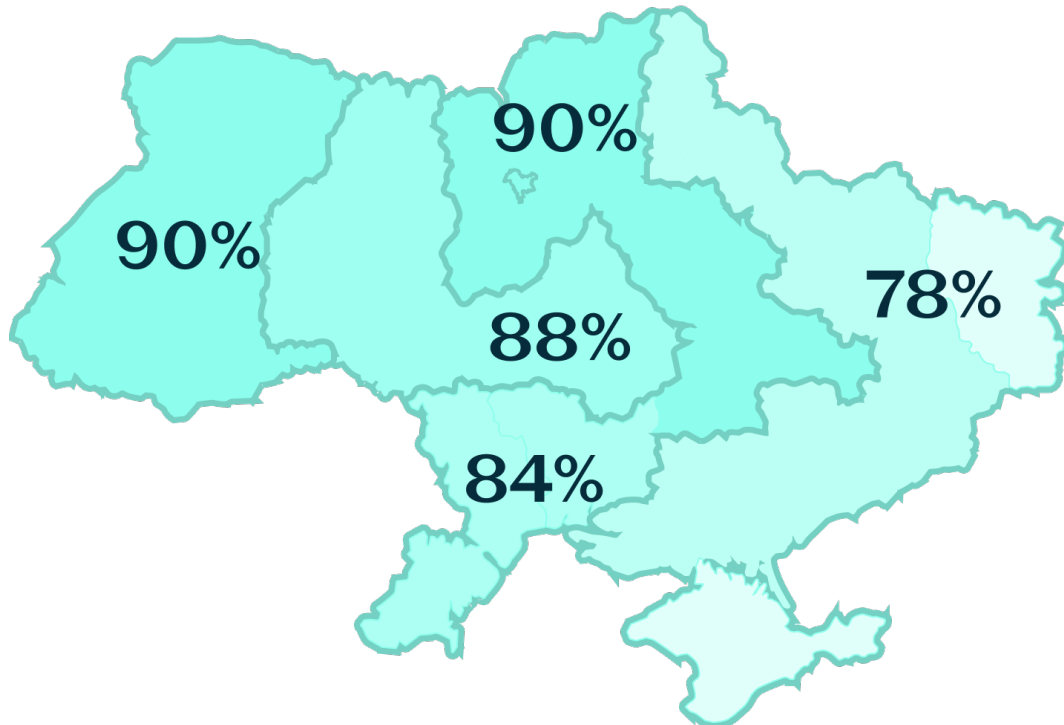




Extracurricular activities

9 out of 10 children attend extracurricular activities, and **8 out of 10** among IDPs.

The regions with the **lowest coverage of** out-of-school activities are those located on **the first (78%)** and **second (84%)** lines of defense.

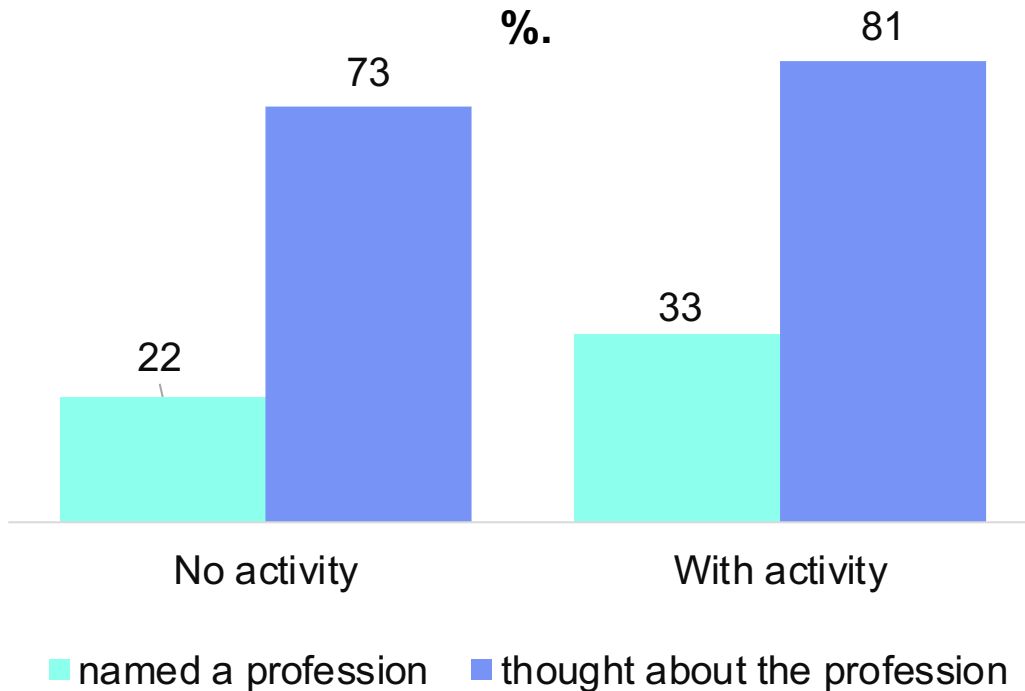




Extracurricular activities

Children who have thought about a profession and can name it, by participation in extracurricular activities,

%.



Participation in extracurricular education is associated with **a higher probability** that a child **has already thought about and named** his or her future profession.



Extracurricular activities



37% No desire



36% Lack of financial capacity

50% among IDPs



33% Physical absence of clubs

62% among children from villages

Top 5 reasons for the lack of extracurricular activities:



30% Security situation

62% among children in frontline regions



12% Lack of transportation infrastructure

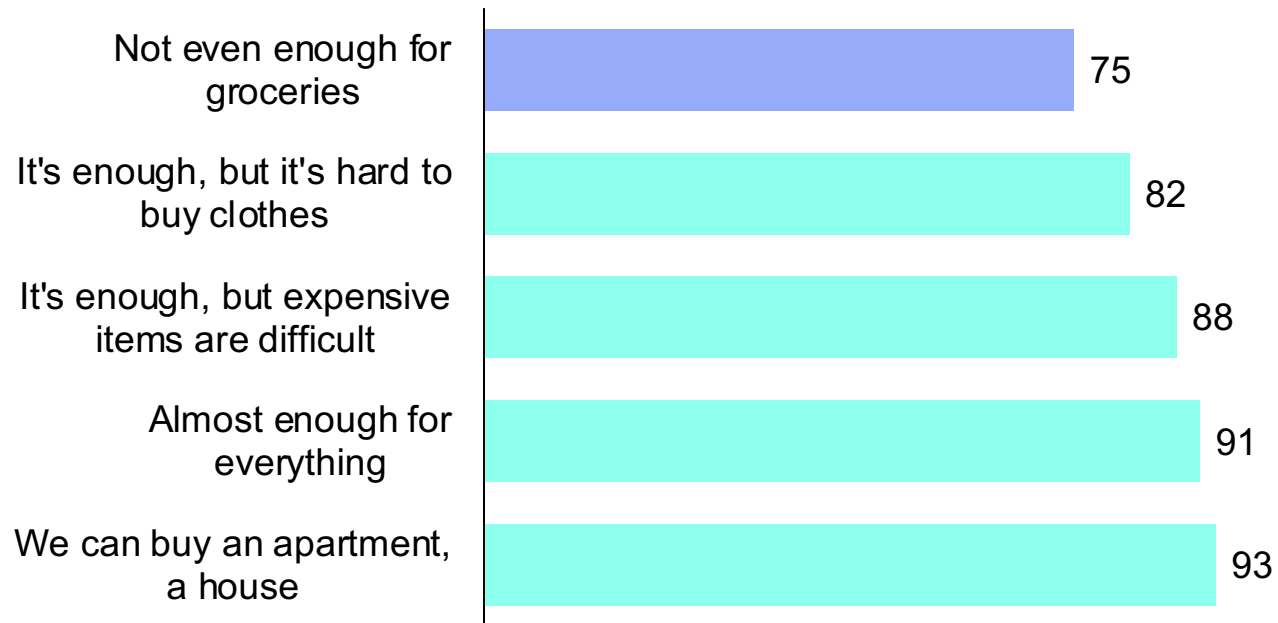
62% among children from villages

Other less significant reasons for not attending extracurricular activities are **lack of time for the child** (11%), **other** (7%), **lack of time for parents** (6%), and parents' **lack of understanding of the importance** (2%).



Extracurricular activities

Level of participation in extracurricular activities depending on family income, %.

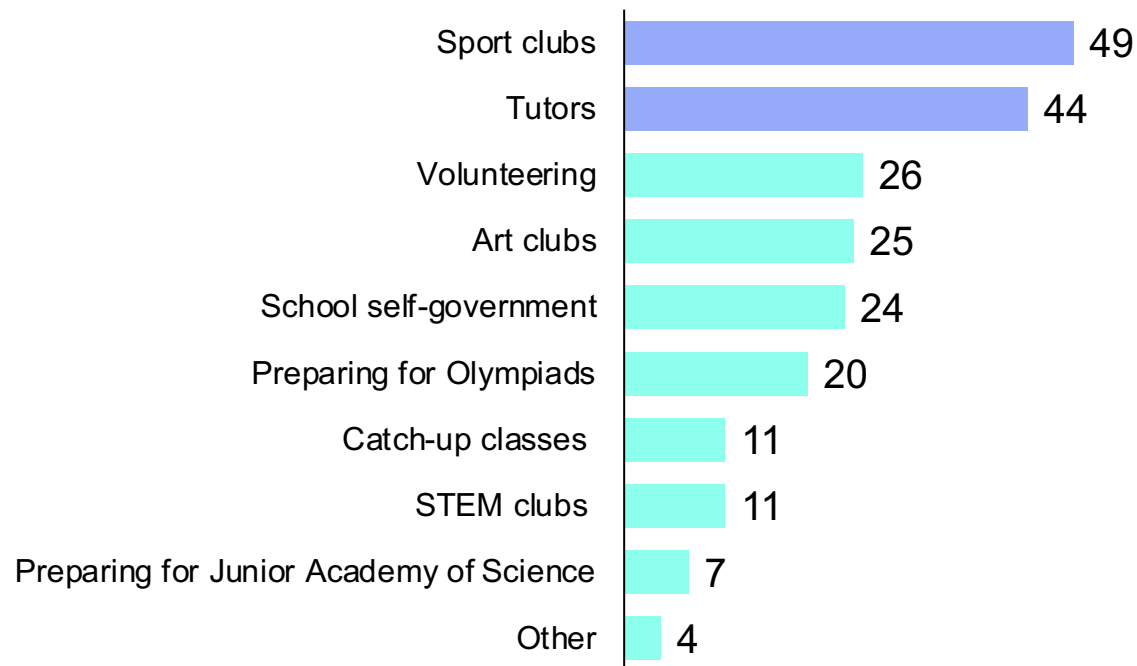


The financial capacity of the family and the level of education of parents influence children's participation in extracurricular activities.



Extracurricular activities

Participation of children in extracurricular activities by type of activity, %.



In **cities** and **regional centers**, children are much more likely to attend **sports clubs and work with tutors**.

Meanwhile in **villages**, children are **most involved** in volunteering (**32%**), school self-government (**30%**) and preparing for Olympiads (**28%**).

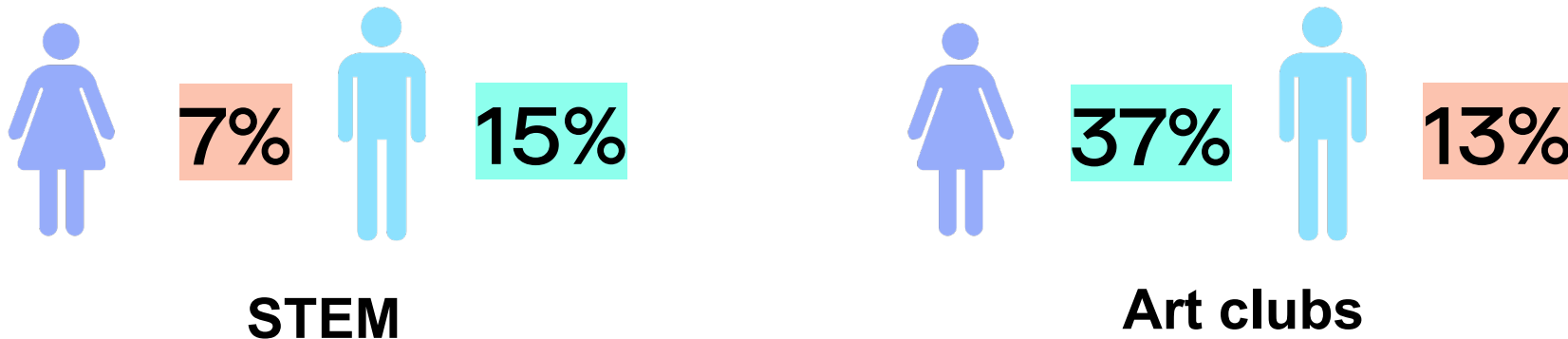


Extracurricular activities



Only **1 in 10** adolescents are engaged in STEM clubs and preparation for the Junior Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Competitions.

Girls less frequently attend STEM clubs.





Extracurricular activities

More girls are participating in school governance, volunteering, and competitions.

Volunteering



28%



22%

School self-government



28%



20%

Olympiads (scientific competitions)



23%



17%

Psycho-emotional environment





Psycho-emotional state

Participation in extracurricular activities is associated with better psychological health of children.



Group activities are associated with a higher level of well-being than individual ones.



Those who **attend extracurricular classes more often** have the highest level of well-being.

Psycho-emotional state

”

Firstly, extracurricular education **provides an opportunity for emotional distraction** - it helps children to psychologically unload from the daily stressors that often overwhelm modern life. Extracurricular activities are a different space, safe and interesting, where there is no constant evaluation, pressure or expectations. And secondly, many extracurricular activities today can be **an impetus for professional self-development**.

“

Olena Antonenko, director of the educational and methodological center, psychological service, in the education system of Chernihiv region





Psycho-emotional state

24% of children feel pressure from their parents to study.






Children who experience such pressure **have lower overall grade point averages** than those who do not.

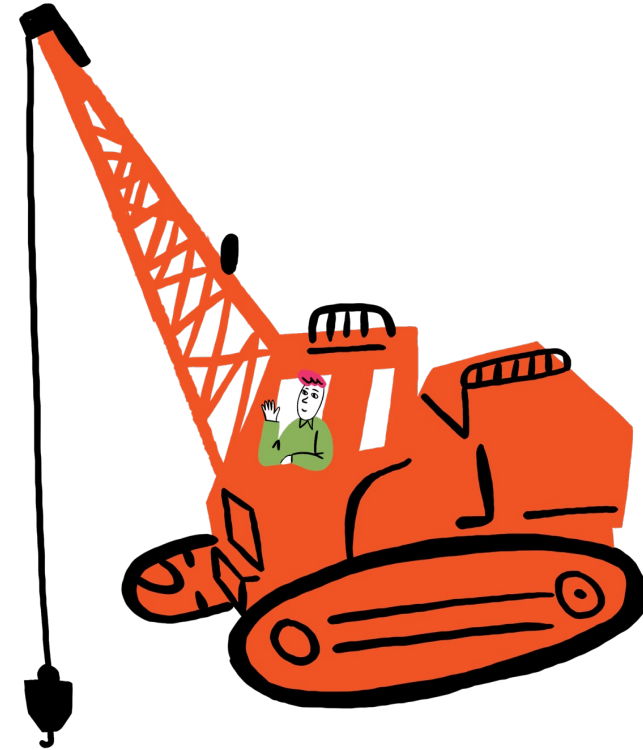
Professional orientation. In-depth interviews



Career guidance at school

Main challenges:

-  Lack of consistency - vocational guidance does not cover all educational levels, but occurs mainly in grades 8-9
-  Lack of relevant specialists
-  Increased role of parents as "home career counselors"
-  The primary weakness of the current model is the passive involvement of children rather than active encouragement
-  Small number of external partner platforms (e.g., cooperation with businesses or the State Employment Service)





Career guidance for children with special educational needs

The main barriers:

- physical inaccessibility of educational institutions
- shortage of specialists
- stigmatization by society and even teachers
- remote format

”

Very often, a child is forced to limit himself to what is available to him. For example, a child with a hearing impairment cannot choose an architectural university because there is no sign language interpretation. The choice should not be based solely on the availability of an interpreter

“

Expert on inclusion



Career guidance for children in institutional care



No parent / guardian support and counseling



Weak focus on essential life skills



Lack of professional orientation planning



Lack of platform to try professions



Regularly conduct a "check-up" of strengths, interests and areas for development. Help the child understand what he or she likes and what is needed to work in a particular field - from the necessary skills to specific steps.



Kyrylo Nevdokha, Head of the Office for Children and Youth "DIYMO" at the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine



Key results



8 out of 10 children thought about their future profession, but only **3 out of 10 indicated a specific profession.**



Every 4th child is considering migration abroad. The main drivers are **development and opportunities, not lack of security.**



Children's **career aspirations** are formed **in isolation** from labor market demand.



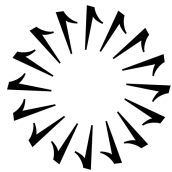
The average level of involvement in **extracurricular** activities is **high** (slightly lower in frontline regions). Nevertheless, attendance is **negatively associated with lack of funds, physical absence, and security concerns.**



Children exhibit strong **empathy and motivation**, whereas their **analytical thinking** skills appear to be the weakest.



Due to a lack of information and gaps in the system, **parents are the main agents of** career guidance.



Olena Zelenska
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Thank you!

