

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kyiv: Lost in the City or Agents of Change?

A Case Study of Refugees in Towns
Kyiv, Ukraine

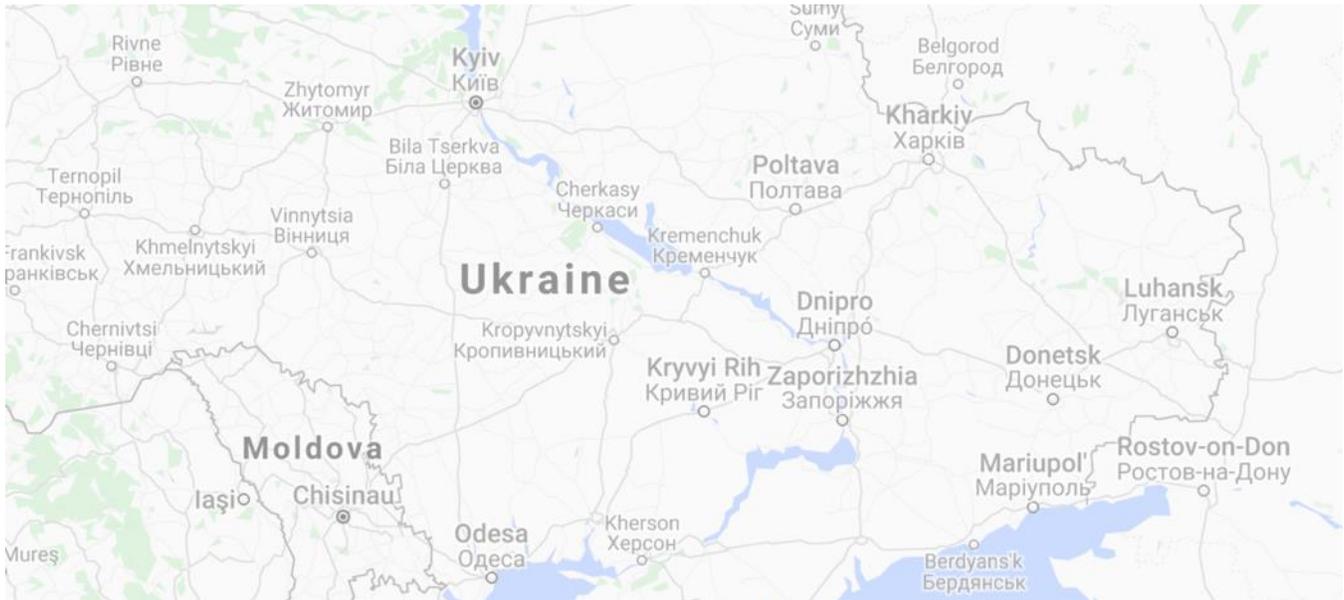
Yuliia Kabanets

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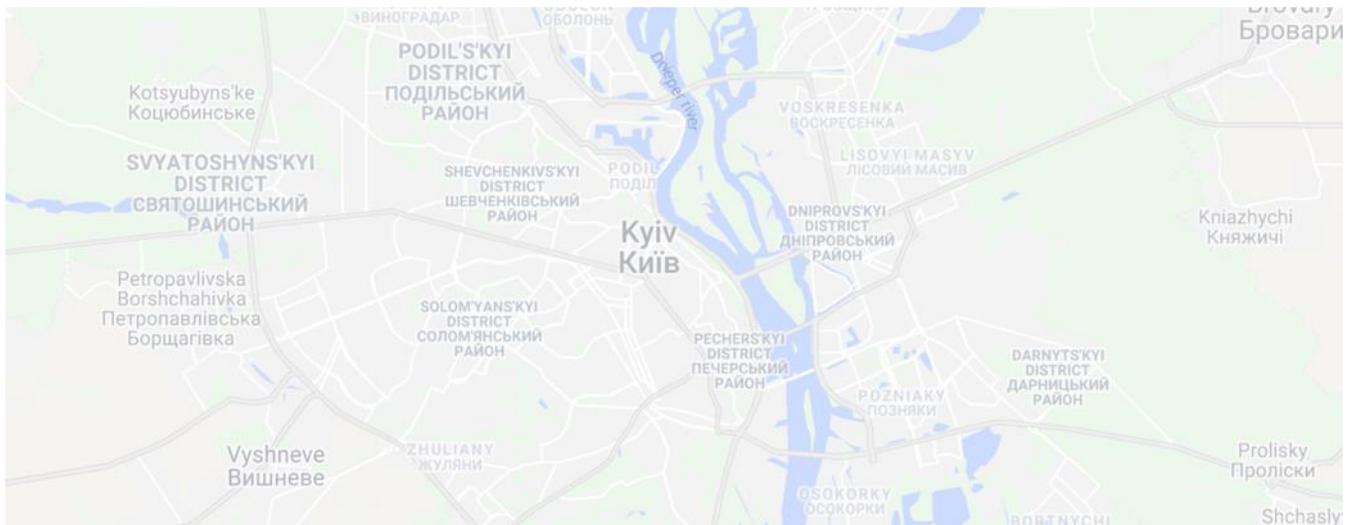
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Cover photo is of the main pedestrian bridge over Dnieper River in the city center. Photo used with permission by Bogdan Kupriets.

Location



Kyiv is located in north-central Ukraine, some 800 km (500 mi) from the conflict areas in the east around Luhansk, Donetsk, and Mariupol, and the south near the port city of Odesa.



Kyiv is a large city of almost 3 million people, giving newly-arriving IDPs some obscurity. IDPs are distributed throughout the city, rather than clustered in particular neighborhoods.

Base map imagery © Google 2019.

For more information on IDPs in Ukraine and Kyiv, continue to the appendices.

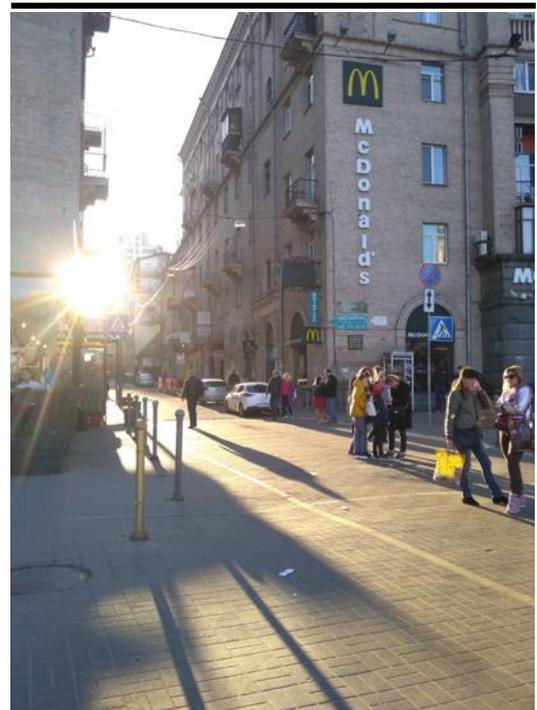
Introduction

In November 2013, tens of thousands of people in Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, protested against the government's decision to abandon plans to sign an association agreement with the European Union (EU).¹ The protests erupted into what is known as the Revolution of Dignity. In February 2014, security forces killed about 100 activists, President Viktor Yanukovich fled to Russia, and the opposition took over. In the spring of 2014, Russian military forces annexed Crimea. That summer, pro-Russian armed groups seized parts of Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*,² and Ukrainian government forces launched a military response. Today there is a 500-kilometer line of separation between the Russian-supported separatist districts of Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* and the rest of Ukraine.³

Kyiv is the largest city in Ukraine, with almost 6% of the population living there. The city is located in northern Ukraine and is the political, economic, transportation, and educational center of the country. Kyiv has a long history; it was founded in 482 AD (see Appendix B) and has always been a multicultural city that has attracted people from different regions because of its ample job opportunities.

In 2014, Kyiv had almost three million people, some of whom had fled Donetsk and Luhansk and moved there. In March 2018, there were 160,287 registered internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kyiv, but there are many more unregistered.⁴ Donetsk City, the capital of Donetsk *oblast*, has a population of about one million people, so IDPs found life in the similarly sized city of Kyiv to be familiar and comfortable. Some IDPs first went to smaller cities and towns of Ukraine but could not adjust to life there, so they moved to Kyiv. IDPs have different backgrounds—socially, financially, and in terms of educational attainment. Many are active and ambitious people making a positive impact on Kyiv, but there are others who came to Kyiv as supporters of Russia who hate Ukraine.

Maidan Nezalezhnosti



Maidan Nezalezhnosti, the main square of Kyiv. Photo by Yuliia Kabanets.

¹ The association agreement is between the European Union, its Member States, and Ukraine. See https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2016/november/tradoc_155103.pdf.

² An *oblast* (Ukrainian: область) is an administrative unit, of which Ukraine has 24.

³ Kabanets, 2018.

⁴ This number is increasing faster in Kyiv compared to other regions of Ukraine. However, the number is likely flawed because some people moved in 2014 and were registered as IDPs. Some have since gone back home but have remained registered. In Ukraine, the registration procedure allows an IDP to receive a relocation certificate that gives them access to financial aid and other help from the government. However, many IDPs do not apply for this certificate because the financial aid is only for select categories of people and is a very small amount, from USD 20 to about USD 50 per month.

Kyiv’s City Council welcomed IDPs, but relationships between IDPs and locals were tense at first because of stereotypes and xenophobia. Over the four years of conflict in Ukraine, suspicious attitudes have given way to understanding and tolerance of IDPs. This report explores the social integration of the IDPs and their impact on the local economy, the housing market, and on people’s attitudes toward Ukrainians coming from the east of the country.

A Note on Terminology in Ukraine

When the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine broke out, the word “refugee” was first used. Eventually, as internal migration increased, the state adopted the term “internally displaced person” (IDP), translated as “внутрішньо переміщена особа” in Ukrainian. Researchers and journalists use the terms “forced migrant,” “displaced person,” and “IDP,” often interchangeably. However, the most common words used in Ukraine are “resettler” or “relocatee” (“переселенець” in Ukrainian).⁵ IDPs are familiar with the term “IDP” from government reports or because they are involved with international organizations that support IDPs, so I decided to use this term here.

The word “integration” translates into Ukrainian as “інтеграція,” which means both the process and the result of the process whereby migrants become accepted by the host society. In my interviews, I asked IDPs about the meaning of integration for them personally.

⁵ Kabanets, 2018.

The Author's Position in Kyiv and Experiences Researching this Case

At the beginning of 2014, I was living with my mother, father, and grandmother in a flat in the center of Donetsk City. That year, pro-Russian forces took over the city. I was a student at one of the few Ukrainian-speaking lyceums⁶ in the city. We had several traditions, such as wearing Ukrainian embroidered shirts for celebrations. As pro-Russian sentiment grew, it became dangerous for us to express our Ukrainian identity. For example, on my graduation day, I walked to the lyceum in regular clothes and changed into the traditional shirt for the ceremony.

I left Donetsk for Lviv in June 2014 with my parents to take my entrance exams for university.⁷ We planned to stay away only a month, but the conflict worsened, and we were not able to return until December. Soon after returning, I moved to Kyiv to begin classes at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. My parents wanted to stay in Donetsk, but my mother moved to Pokrovsk with her university, and my father lost his job in Donetsk. This was the hardest part for me: the separation of our family, with my mother in Pokrovsk, my father in Donetsk, my grandmother in Poltava *oblast*, and some relatives and me in Kyiv.

However, for students like me it was not so painful since we had finished our secondary schooling and started a new page at universities in different cities in Ukraine. In many ways, the move was normal. I started my new life in Kyiv pretty well. Almost all of my new friends were from the western part of Ukraine, and we felt similar, all having been raised outside Kyiv. Ukraine is not a homogeneous country: we have different cultural backgrounds, traditions, and even languages and dialects, but we shared our sense of being newcomers to the city.

My new friends had a strong desire to understand my experience and what it is like for IDPs in Ukraine. I feel it is my duty to tell people what is happening in my home city and how we were forced to change our lives. I felt support and empathy from my friends and professors at the university. However, I also felt homesick all the time. Even now, I daydream about walking the streets of Donetsk. My dormitory friends go home regularly, but it was impossible for me due to the long waits at the checkpoints.

⁶ A lyceum is a secondary comprehensive educational institution that provides education beyond the state educational minimum and conducts scientific and practical trainings of talented youth.

⁷ Ukrainian secondary school graduates who want to go to university take independent examinations, usually held at their city of residence. In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Science could not hold the exams in some parts of Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* due to the hostilities.

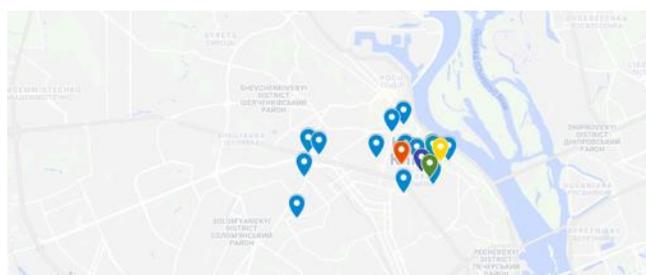
When I did go home for New Year's and Christmas, I found the city of Donetsk changed completely. Before the war, there were about one million people living there, and the streets were full of smiling people and cars in a hurry. Now it is empty, dark, and unfriendly. Armed forces supported by Russia patrol the streets, people do not go out in the evening, neighbors are afraid to talk to each other about the situation because you never know someone's political position and the self-proclaimed authorities encourage informants. My home city exists on the map, but it does not exist in reality. Home is a category that brings a person back to their roots, to childhood. Donetsk has become a completely different place, and I cannot say it is my home now.

This situation made me want to do something for my country. In September 2016, I joined one of the biggest youth non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ukraine, "Foundation of Regional Initiatives." I have chaired the Kyiv branch for almost a year, which has helped me to connect with a community of young, inspired people who believe in building a future for the country. I am connected to a cause that is important to the community and the country. It has helped me understand what integration means and what being a citizen means. It is from this perspective as an IDP and activist that I undertook this study.

Kyiv as an IDP Destination

The wave of arrivals from the armed conflict began when large companies in eastern Ukraine relocated to Kyiv, bringing their workers with them. According to statistics, Kyiv is the most popular city in Ukraine for the relocation of companies from the Donbas region.⁸ Many others moved to the capital believing there would be opportunities for jobs.

For people from Donetsk, Kyiv is a good destination as it is big, multicultural, and very friendly to new people. Nobody pays attention where you are from, what language you speak, or what you do. It is easy to restart life, and there is no need to get used to new traditions or to act differently, as IDPs often have to do in smaller towns in Ukraine.

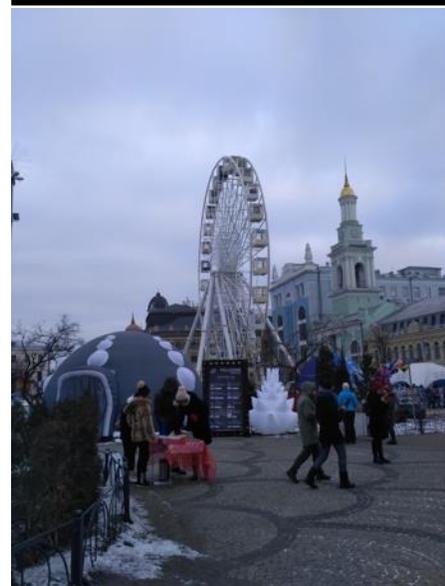


Kyiv's government institutions are clustered in the downtown area (Ministries in blue, city administrations in orange, parliament in yellow, presidential administration in purple, court of law in yellow). However, Kyiv's IDP residents are distributed across the city, not clustered in one particular neighborhood or another. Map by author. Base map imagery © Google 2019.

⁸ Gordon UA. (2017). "This Year More than 2000 Companies Moved from the ATO Zone." Available at: <https://gordonua.com/ukr/news/money/-za-rik-iz-zoni-ato-perejihalo-ponad-2000-kompanij-217117.html>

According to the people I spoke to, the main factor for determining whether someone felt comfortable or not in Kyiv was the characteristics of the city or town that they came from. People from Donetsk and Mariupol told me they felt comfortable. People from smaller cities or towns mentioned they at first could not get used to big city life and commuting. In both cases, IDPs described not feeling comfortable for the first one to two years after arriving in Kyiv because of uncertainty about whether they would stay or return to their former homes. It was difficult to decide what to do; nobody could predict how long the conflict would last. Most people thought they were moving for a couple of months and were reluctant to admit to themselves that they would be starting a new life from scratch.

Maidan Nezalezhnosti



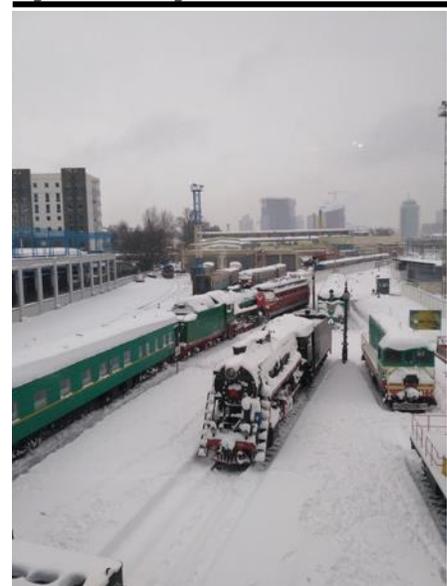
Kontraktova Square, the historical part of Kyiv. Photo by Yuliia Kabanets.

IDPs' Experiences

Most IDPs in Kyiv I spoke with felt integrated into the local community. They said social connections and communication were the most important things, especially feeling empathy and positive attitudes from locals. For example, Kateryna said many locals voiced respect that she was not afraid to tell her origins. Most IDPs I spoke with described people in Kyiv as sympathetic and said they had never had a negative experience.

A second component of social integration was the feeling of being absorbed into the crowds of other new arrivals. Yegor mentioned that there are so many people from different regions in Kyiv that nobody pays attention to where you are from. Kateryna told me that she feels like everyone is a stranger, and you feel more comfortable in that ambiguity. Coming to Kyiv, IDPs lose connection with their old friends and colleagues because, as the conflict drags on, it is difficult to communicate with people living in the occupied territory. So people make new social connections in Kyiv. For Nikita, his circle of friends has changed from when he lived in Donetsk. He has many relatives and friends who are still living in the occupied region, but since he hasn't been home since 2014, he struggles to keep connected with these people.

Kyiv Railway Station



Kyiv Railway Station, view from the bridge. Photo by Yuliia Kabanets.

Being connected to an institution helps develop new social connections. Andriy changed jobs four times, moving between universities and research institutes. He lost touch with friends in the occupied territory. Now he works at Military Institute of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv on a research project about psychological profiles of military cadet IDPs. He feels the Institute and his work brings IDPs socially closer together, even between professors and cadets. They feel they share the same problems. Another example is Alina from Toretsk, who doesn't want to go back to her hometown and feels integrated in Kyiv because of her social links with people from her university and the community organizations she works for.

The Kyiv Skyline



Urban area near Kyiv Railway Station. Photo by Maksym Klovak.

These institutions help build new social connections but are not effective at maintaining old connections or building deep feelings of belonging to Kyiv. Volodymyr from Donetsk said he feels comfortable in Kyiv, but he still identifies himself as a Donetsk citizen and says this is very important to him. Working with a youth NGO, he noticed that many IDPs in Kyiv are losing their connection with the Donetsk region and changing their identities. He gave the example of the Donetsk football club, Shakhtar, which had to move from Donetsk to Kyiv. The club is active, but members feel like guests in Kyiv, and they note the lack of Donetsk spirit at the matches now.

Other Newcomers' Experiences

In comparing the experiences of IDPs from the Donbas to migrants from other regions in Ukraine who were not forcibly displaced, I found that internal migrants in Ukraine have the same problems as IDPs, and both feel not fully integrated. Katia, an internal migrant from Kozova, is socially active and feels part of the community, but she cannot take part in municipal elections because she is registered in her hometown in western Ukraine, a frustration she shares with IDPs registered in eastern Ukraine. Non-IDP migrants also experience stereotypes. Diana, from Ternopil *oblast* in western Ukraine, is often assumed by others to be a nationalist. While there are many similarities, the difference between these two groups is that internal migrants can go back home if they do not like Kyiv and its lifestyle, while IDPs cannot. Internal migrants feel connected with their homes, which can hinder their integration. However, IDPs' connection is broken, and that forces them to find their place in the new city and to integrate.

Experiences of Kyiv’s Longtime Residents

Ukraine is full of stereotypes, mostly caused by the distance between the country’s east, west, north, and south, and worsened by media portrayals of IDPs. However, conversations with Kyiv natives suggest that IDPs have changed some people’s opinions about life in the Donbas and their attitudes toward the IDPs from there. For example, my peers at the university had no idea what was going on in Donetsk or in the occupied territory in 2014. Some were shocked that I have not been able to visit my home since June 2014. Many were surprised that I speak Ukrainian fluently since I come from a city in which Russian is the predominant language.⁹

Some other common stereotypes about IDPs include that they are aggressive and rude, that they do not want to work and only want to receive financial aid from the government, that they all are separatists, and that they are not well educated.¹⁰ However, Kyiv locals have become more tolerant toward IDPs and are interested in learning about them. Most of the IDPs I spoke with said that over the past four years, stereotypes have declined as people have become accustomed to IDPs’ presence and as locals and IDPs have gotten to know each other. When stereotypes emerge, it is usually not because people are intentionally hostile.

Instead, they come from ignorance about circumstance outside of Kyiv and insensitivity. People generally¹¹ do not want to offend IDPs but they ask about our houses and families—where they work and live—and why we did not react antagonistically to the pro-Russian rallies. Sometimes these conversations are not comfortable because people usually do not understand that it raises harmful memories and negative emotions. It can be exhausting to answer questions connected with Donetsk. Some IDPs choose silence and do not want to say where they are from. I choose to speak about it, although it is sometimes not comfortable for me, because I think it is important to help the local population get rid of stereotypes.

Trukhaniv Island Park



Trukhaniv Island Park in the center of the city runs along the west bank of the Dnieper river. Photo by Maksym Klovak.

⁹ In the eastern and southern part of Ukraine, there are a lot of Russian-speaking cities and towns.

¹⁰ This stereotype stems from the coal mines in the Donbas, where people working as miners often do not pursue higher education.

¹¹ In some cases, people do want to offend IDPs because of prejudice or political opinions, but these are not the majority of interactions.

Language Issues

Ukrainian is the official language of the country, but Russian is widely spoken, especially in the eastern *oblasts*, meaning most IDPs speak Russian. Kyiv is bilingual; 25% of people speak Ukrainian in their homes, 38% speak Russian, and 37% speak both Ukrainian and Russian.¹² I spoke Russian at home, and learned Ukrainian at school and lyceum, so I speak both languages fluently. Ukrainian and Russian are linguistically similar but it takes time for a native speaker to learn the other language, and people's mother tongue is apparent from their accents and language usage. Languages carry political implications and may lead to prejudice. Therefore, while language differences are not a barrier to economic integration or access to services, language is an issue affecting social integration across Ukraine.

After the Revolution of Dignity in 2014,¹³ the language difference became even more important. In Kyiv, some people think Russian speakers are against Ukraine. However, in my experience in Kyiv, this type of language discrimination is not common, and many conversations happen in Ukrainian and Russian. When I moved to Kyiv, most of my new friends spoke Ukrainian because they come from western Ukraine. I therefore use Ukrainian in everyday life and with people who do not speak Russian well, or in public places like shops, buses, trains, or medical facilities.

Some IDPs from the Donbas are native Russian speakers, but choose to only speak Ukrainian. For example, Olia only speaks Ukrainian out of nationalist principles. She wanted to speak Ukrainian in her hometown Severodonetsk, but nobody spoke Ukrainian there, so she had to get by on Russian. In Kyiv, she can choose the language she wants to use.

We both believe true independence for the country starts with cultural expressions like language. In the Soviet Union there were 15 republics, each of which had its own language, but the only official language was Russian. Therefore, many people in the region associate the Russian language with the Russian state's aggression and see speaking national languages as an expression of genuine independence. This goes beyond making a political point and actually limits foreign influence: Ukraine historically has had a lot of TV channels and news in the Russian language, but Russian media are especially susceptible to Russian government pressure and tend to project a strongly pro-Russian slant. For this reason, I have begun trying to speak Ukrainian more, and I choose to use only the Ukrainian language in social media.

¹² Monitoring, 2018, Ukrainian language wins broadcast.

¹³ Shveda and Ho Park, 2015.

Trukhaniv Island Park



Yerevanska street in western Kyiv. Walking down the street it is impossible to tell the neighborhood's IDP residents from its lifelong

Migrants' Urban Impact

As a large city (three million people officially), the arrival of IDPs did not have a major impact on the economy, public services like healthcare and education, or infrastructures like the roadways in Kyiv. The number of arrivals did not come close to exceeding the existing capacities of the city's hospitals, clinics, police force, and transportation infrastructures.

There were some education difficulties for older IDP students. While there are enough primary schools in Kyiv to meet everyone's needs, secondary and tertiary education are more problematic. If a student graduates from school in an occupied territory and wants to apply to a university, he or she needs a new certificate of educational attainment because certificates and diplomas issued in the occupied territories are not recognized in the rest of Ukraine. Some universities in Kyiv have quotas for IDPs who have the right to study for free, but this is only true in law, not in practice.

Impact on Housing

Finding affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges for newcomers in Kyiv. It is the most expensive city in Ukraine, so without savings, a high-paid job, or relatives and friends who can help, it is hard to survive. Those who arrived with an employer or a business in Kyiv had the easiest time: often their employers provided them with housing. Some came with savings, but usually not enough to buy a flat in Kyiv or pay high rental prices, and they relied on support from family. For example, when Andriy moved to Kyiv, he had financial problems and relied on his brother to help him and his family with housing. IDPs live throughout Kyiv, except in the city center, where rent is high. Most live in areas that are inexpensive, comfortable, and connected to the city center and business areas by public transit.

Although IDPs are distributed across the city, they do impact the housing market. Rent prices increased rapidly during the first two months of the conflict, when large numbers of people came from eastern Ukraine. In May 2014, rent for an average flat was Ukrainian Hryvnia (UAH) 3,000 (USD 250) per month. By July 2014, it had risen to UAH 4,500 (USD 370) per month.¹⁴ Today, the same flat is UAH 9,000 (USD 740),¹⁵ as rents leveled off as new arrivals slowed and inflation stabilized.

For IDPs who cannot afford apartments, there are old buildings that have been converted into low-cost dormitories (USD 80–100), with some fully subsidized so tenants pay no rent. However, there are only

¹⁴ There is no housing cost data for that period in Kyiv, but I provide averages based on the experiences with rental costs of the Kyiv residents I spoke with.

¹⁵ USD rate has increased 3.5 times since 2014 (from UAH 11–12 per USD to UAH 27–28 per USD). However, wage growth has not kept pace with the dollar.

IDP & Host Apartments



A mixed use area with residential buildings near Kyiv Railway Station. Photo by Yuliia Kabanets.

ten of these dormitories, and they house less than 1% of the IDPs in Kyiv.¹⁶ The dormitories were not created for IDPs; they are for low-income people who cannot afford anywhere else, and conditions are terrible. For example, they do not have electricity or heat.¹⁷ In 2017, some changes in municipal law required the city to build new “social houses” for IDPs, but nothing has been built so far.

Experiences Renting Apartments

Discrimination by landlords toward IDPs in Kyiv is not as big a problem as in other regions of Ukraine. The worst period of discrimination was in 2014–15 when locals used stereotypes. Even after four years of conflict, some people do not want to deal with IDPs. When I was looking for a flat in 2018, I found some ads saying “no IDPs,” and “IDPs are asked not to bother.” Landlords always asked where I was from, and if I mentioned that I am from Donetsk, about half of the landlords I met with had a viscerally negative reaction. When Alina moved with her mother and grandmother to Kyiv from Toretsk (now on the contact line),¹⁸ they found that landlords did not want IDPs to live in their flats. Eventually, they found a landlord who had friends from Donetsk, and they have been renting his flat for more than three years.

Yegor had a similar experience. He is originally from Mariupol, a city in Donetsk *oblast*, on the north coast of the Sea of Azov. He moved to Kyiv in 2014 with his wife. When they arrived, they were about to sign a rental agreement but when the landlord learned they were from Mariupol, she changed her mind. She told them she thought they would be unreliable about paying her, so they had to look for another flat. This is the only discrimination Yegor has experienced in Kyiv.

However, my interviews suggest the situation has improved as Kyiv’s residents—landlords included—have gotten used to IDPs and have overcome their initial stereotypes.

Social and Cultural Impact

Many IDPs believe that if we had been more active and attentive to social and political life at home, we would have been able to change the situation in the Donbas before the occupation. IDPs are therefore socially and politically alert and are very active at both starting a new life in the city and empowering Kyiv’s civil society.

Poshtova Square



Poshtova Square, city center. Photo by Maksym Klovak.

¹⁶ Roman, Christina. (2017). “Life in exile: how the state tries to solve the housing problems of settlers.” *RU*. Available at: <https://daily.rbc.ua/rus/show/gosudarstvo-pytaetsya-reshit-zhilishchnye-1507007580.html>

¹⁷ Life in exile: How the state tries to solve the housing problems of settlers.

¹⁸ A demarcation between the government-controlled and non-government-controlled territories of Ukraine.

IDPs are involved in local community groups like “Donetsk Kyiv People” (“Донецкие Киевские”), a Facebook group that supports IDPs from Donetsk. Today there are almost 47,000 members. People ask for help, offer jobs to IDPs, and discuss daily issues. Since 2014, cultural events and initiatives connected with IDPs in Ukraine have increased. For example, “The Resettlers’ Theatre” has performances and provides IDPs with psychological support.

There are also examples of community engagement through social entrepreneurship. One young entrepreneur had a café in Donetsk that held concerts, poetry evenings, and other cultural events before 2014. After the war began, this café owner was displaced and became a co-founder of a pizzeria with locations in Mariupol and Kyiv that caters to the general public but also provides food to soldiers on the contact line.¹⁹

Another example is the founder of “Soupculture” («Супкультура»), who moved from Mariupol to Kyiv in 2014. He came up with the idea of creating a fast food joint that serves soup as its main dish. The chain has become successful and popular in Ukraine and even abroad. Since 2014, restaurants with Crimean-Tatarian cuisine have cropped up in Kyiv, enabling Kyiv natives to get acquainted with the culture and daily life of different cultures across Ukraine. Crimean-Tatarian culture has become so ubiquitous that after Crimea was annexed, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv introduced a course on Crimean-Tatar language and literature.

Gulliver Shopping Mall



A visit to Kyiv for young people from all over Ukraine organized by the NGO “Foundation of Regional Initiatives.” This initiative aims at increasing mutual understanding of young people from different parts of Ukraine. Photo by Kristina Ursuliak.

Veterano Pizza



A “social pizzeria” in Kyiv. Photo by Yuliia Kabanets.

¹⁹ <https://posteat.ua/obzory/bogdan-chaban-razgovor-o-veterano-pizza-dostavke-piccy-v-zone-oos-i-planax-na-budushhee/>.

Conclusion

Most of the IDPs I talked to do not expect the conflict to decrease in the next few years and do not have plans to go back soon. Many want to live in Donetsk eventually, but only if it becomes Ukrainian again. For me, Kyiv is a perfect place for IDPs from the Donbas because it is multicultural and has become friendly toward strangers over time. IDPs who are used to living in a big city are integrating and feel comfortable. There are still problems with integration: there is a lack of government programs for IDPs, especially affordable housing and higher-level education, widespread stereotypes persist, and sometimes language differences lead to prejudice.

Because IDPs did not cluster in one part of Kyiv and are distributed throughout the city, they have easily connected with local people, remain anonymous when they choose to, and try to dispel local stereotypes when they can. IDPs appear to be making Kyiv a more open and tolerant place through the new businesses they have opened, the new social organizations they have launched, and their openness to sharing their stories of displacement. Therefore, IDPs have brought progress to Kyiv and Ukraine.

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Appendix A: Methods

Work on this case report started in November 2018 and is based on conversations with 23 people (10 men and 13 women), whom I know well. They have been living in Kyiv from half a year to their entire lives, and are aged between 20 and 50 years old. Seven respondents are students, and one works at a university. Four belong to the youth organization called “Foundation of Regional Initiatives,” which organizes non-formal educational events for young people. Three are not IDPs but came from the Donbas²⁰ region, two are from western Ukraine, twelve came from cities and towns in Donetsk *oblast*, and the remainder are lifelong Kyiv residents.

Limitations

I did not speak to IDPs who do not have a university education, so this report misses their experiences. They are typically more connected with the occupied territory and are more likely to want to go back to their homes compared with those in my personal network. I also did not interview IDPs older than 60. Older IDPs who are retired have difficulties receiving pensions and have greater needs for healthcare services. All my respondents have a pro-Ukrainian position, so the report does not include pro-Russian people’s experience, who might have different experiences than myself or those I spoke with.

Appendix B: Background on the Conflict in Ukraine

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine became an independent state, with a population of more than 52 million people. Since then, the population has been declining at a rate faster than any other country, the main reasons being fertility decline, progressive aging of the population, and increased labor emigration to Europe and former Soviet countries. Migratory movements of skilled and highly skilled professionals have been a major component of emigration since the 2000s. In 2017, Ukraine’s population was estimated at 42.5 million people.

The Ukrainian Revolution of 2014 was caused by the Ukrainian government’s decision to suspend the signing of an association agreement with the European Union. This decision led to the Crimean crisis, which resulted in Ukraine’s autonomous Republic of Crimea being annexed by Russia. In 2014, parts of Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*, which border the Russian Federation, were seized by anti-government,

²⁰ The Donbas is a historical, cultural, and economic region in eastern Ukraine and southwestern Russia. It includes the main parts of Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*.

pro-Russian separatists, and they declared independence from the rest of the country. Since then, fighting between pro-Ukrainian forces on one side and forces supporting the self-proclaimed republics on the other side have escalated into war. As a result, about two million people were forced to leave their homeland, which is now occupied by pro-Russian forces.²¹

Internal Migration in Ukraine

Ukraine has the world's ninth-largest population of displaced persons and the largest population of displaced persons in Europe. According to the Global Report on Internal Displacement by Norwegian Refugee Council (2017),²² 4% of the Ukrainian population is displaced (1,653,000 people). More than half of these IDPs are settled in Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*, referred to together as the Donbas, which is near the conflict zone. Despite the enormity of the displacement in Ukraine, the crisis has drawn little international attention and humanitarian support.

In 2014, there were several waves of migration. The first wave consisted mostly of women with children who left because they worried about their children's lives and mental health in the conflict zone. Men stayed behind to take care of their property and wait for the government to resolve the conflict. This wave of displaced people often stayed with relatives or at collective temporary accommodation provided by the government. The second wave of internal migration was in the autumn of 2014, when it became clear that the conflict would drag on. IDPs had to decide whether to stay in government-controlled areas or go to non-government-controlled areas.²³

Since 2014, 17,000 buildings are reported to have been damaged or destroyed by military activities, leaving many with no place to return to. Further, since many companies were displaced, their workers left the occupied zone with them.

There are many cases when IDPs lived somewhere but then decided to return to the occupied territory because of accommodation issues, relatives, or other reasons.

Appendix C: Background on Kyiv

The city has a long history of cultural diversity: compared to other Ukrainian big cities, Kyiv is very multilingual and open-minded. In 882, Kyiv became the capital of the large and powerful medieval state Kyiver Rus. Since then, the city has remained economically and politically important in the region. In the thirteenth century, Kyiv became an arena for political discord in the country and was conquered by the Mongols. During the next 800 years, Ukraine was conquered by several countries and was often divided into parts. However, throughout this time, Kyiv continued to play the role of a strong regional center of strategic importance. In the USSR, Kyiv attracted people from all over the Ukrainian territory because of educational opportunities. In modern Ukraine, Kyiv continues to have a special status and

²¹ Kabanets, 2018.

²² Norwegian Refugee Council, 2017.

²³ Kabanets, 2018.

build on its legacy as a geostrategic center, an educational and jobs hub, and an area with ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity.

Economic situation

In addition to its security, Kyiv draws migrants because of its economic vitality and availability of jobs. The city is responsible for about a quarter of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), and for almost a third of foreign direct investment. Per capita GDP in Kyiv is 75% higher than the national average. The majority of people work in the service sector, of which the two largest sub-sectors are trade and real estate. Other important services subsectors for the economy of Kyiv include transportation, communications, legal services, and financial services. The key growing sectors of the economy are retail, information technology, and finance.²⁴ Unlike the industry-heavy towns of eastern Ukraine, in Kyiv only 20% of inhabitants are employed in industrial production.

Political structure

Kyiv is managed by the Kyiv City Council and the Kyiv City State Administration. Kyiv City Council is an administrative-territorial unit and a local self-government body of the city. Deputies of the Kyiv City Council are elected.

Kyiv's Mayor is the main official in the legislative and executive system of the city. The Mayor of Kyiv is the head of the City Council and is directly elected, but in a separate election from the Council. According to the political system, he is also the Head of the Kyiv City State Administration. The Kyiv City State Administration is the national-level branch of the Government of Ukraine responsible for management of the city. In Kyiv, there are also national governmental offices: Verkhovna Rada (the parliament of Ukraine), the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (the highest body of state executive power in Ukraine), and all of the country's other ministerial offices.

²⁴ Jones Lang LaSalle, 2006.

About the RIT Project

The **Refugees in Towns (RIT)** project promotes understanding of the migrant/refugee experience in urban settings. Our goal is to understand and promote refugee integration by drawing on the knowledge and perspective of refugees and locals to develop deeper understanding of the towns in which they live. The project was conceived and is led by Karen Jacobsen. It is based at the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University and funded by the Henry J. Leir Foundation.

Our goals are twofold

Our first long-term goal is to build a theory of integration from the ground up by compiling a global database of case studies and reports to help us analyze and understand the process of immigrant/refugee integration. These cases provide a range of local insights about the many different factors that enable or obstruct integration, and the ways in which migrants and hosts co-exist, adapt, and struggle in urban spaces. We draw our cases from towns in resettlement countries, transit countries, and countries of first asylum around the world.

Our second more immediate goal is to support community leaders, aid organizations, and local governments in shaping policy, practice, and interventions. We engage policymakers and community leaders through town visits, workshops, conferences, and participatory research that identifies needs in their communities, encourages dialogue on integration, and shares good practices and lessons learned.

Why now?

The United States—among many other refugee-hosting countries—is undergoing a shift in its refugee policy through travel bans and the suspension of parts of its refugee program. Towns across the U.S. are responding in different ways: some resist national policy changes by declaring themselves “sanctuary cities,” while others support travel bans and exclusionary policies. In this period of social and political change, we seek to deepen our understanding of integration and the ways in which refugees, migrants, and their hosts interact. Our RIT project draws on and gives voice to both refugees and hosts in their experiences with integration around the world.

For more on RIT

On our website, there are many more case studies and reports from other towns and urban neighborhoods around the world, and we regularly release more reports as our project develops.

www.refugeesintowns.org

About the Author

Yuliia is currently living in Kyiv, Ukraine. She holds bachelor`s degree from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. She works at the International Organization for Migration (the UN migration agency). Yuliia is a member of youth NGO “Foundation of Regional Initiatives,” has participated in many international projects, and has been a volunteer in Ukraine and abroad. In 2014, she moved to Kyiv from Donetsk because of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. Being an internally displaced person herself, Yuliia has a strong interest in this topic. The case for the RIT project focuses on the displacement of individuals to Kyiv and the problems they have, and their impact on the city.

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Refugees in Towns is a project of the Feinstein International Center. More information on the project, including more case study reports, is available at <https://www.refugeesintowns.org/>

The Feinstein International Center is a research and teaching center based at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. Our mission is to promote the use of evidence and learning in operational and policy responses to protect and strengthen the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of people affected by or at risk of humanitarian crises.

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