Project Completion Report 2023

Emergency Assistance for Ukrainian Women Refugees in Poland with Digital 4IR Training:
Bolstering Livelihoods

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UNITAR Division for Prosperity Training Programme: Emergency Assistance for Ukrainian Women Refugees in Poland with Digital 4IR Training

2023

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About Us

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), established in 1963, is the dedicated adult-learning training arm of the United Nations. We deliver innovative learning solutions to individuals and organizations to enhance decision-making and support action towards a better future.

The Division for Prosperity is one of the programmatic divisions of UNITAR and consists of the Public Finance and Trade Programme Unit and the Hiroshima Office. Driven to "leave no one behind", we provide creative, cutting-edge learning solutions to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

We strive to reach society's most vulnerable, including women, youth and those in conflict situations. Our clients are individuals and institutions in least developed countries, small island developing states and conflict and post-conflict countries.

With staff in Geneva and Hiroshima, as well as field staff across the world, our reach is global, allowing us to deliver critical training and support to learners from more than 90 countries.

On behalf of the Division, I thank you for your support for our work and vital mission. Working together, we can make meaningful progress in building the next generation of changemakers and move closer to eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities for a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future for all.

Mihoko Kumamoto
Director, Division for Prosperity

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Acknowledgements

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research extends its heartfelt appreciation to all our partners whose contributions have been instrumental in achieving the objectives of our programme. The evolution of this training programme from a mere vision to reality was made possible due to the unwavering commitment and dedication of our partners.

Our partners include:

Government Agencies:
- Government and People of Japan
- Embassy of Japan in Poland
- Embassies of Ukraine in Poland and Japan
- Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine

Academic and Educational Institutions:
- Polish Japanese Academy of Information Technology
- National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy
- Ukrainian Catholic University

Businesses and Business Associations:
- Pasona Group. Inc
- Eukarya. Inc
- Google for Startups Campus in Warsaw or Central Eastern Europe
- Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce
- Association of Business Service Leaders

Civil Society Organizations:
- Fundacja Studio M6
- Ukraine House
- Fundacja Q
- IT Poland Technology Cluster
- Kyiv IT cluster
- Polish Humanitarian Organization

We would like to express special gratitude to the Government and People of Japan for their generous donation, which enabled the launch of the programme.

We are equally thankful to the Government of Ukraine, especially the Embassies in Poland and Japan, for lending their unwavering support to the goals and objectives of digital reskilling and its importance for women's empowerment and income generation.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Poland played a pivotal role in promoting the programme among the intended participants, resulting in nearly a thousand applications from Ukrainian evacuees.

The programme also greatly benefited from the involvement of businesses and business associations, which facilitated direct communication between the training beneficiaries and the wider business community in Poland. They also contributed to the organizational aspects of the offline phases of the programme in Warsaw.

We would like to specifically acknowledge our Japanese business partner, Pasona Group, for their indispensable organizational support and valuable advice on the content of digital trainings throughout the programme. We are also grateful to Google for Startups in Poland and Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology for providing their premises for the launch and final events respectively, and to the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Association of Business Service Leaders for connecting our beneficiaries to interested companies and organizations during the final phases of the programme.

To devise practical and in-demand curriculum for the digital programme, we have forged a truly complimentary partnership with Ukrainian, Polish and Japanese academic institutions and entities. We offer our appreciation to all of our academic partners, and especially, all the instructors from each academic institution for their dedication and flexibility to develop training programmes in line with needs of the beneficiaries.

Executive Summary

In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, millions of evacuees [1] have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Poland has emerged as a primary destination for Ukrainian women evacuees, owing to cultural and linguistic affinities, and it continues to be among the leading countries hosting Ukrainian refugees. Although the employment rate of those who have settled in Poland is estimated to be relatively high [2], these job opportunities often do not align with their professional backgrounds and experiences and, in many cases, are low-paying manual labour positions. The Ukrainian digital reskilling programme was established to urgently respond to this humanitarian crisis. This initiative offered Ukrainian evacuees the opportunity to acquire new digital skills that either reinforced their previous professional experience to adapt to their new environment or opened ways for exploring new career paths.

Programme Objectives

The Digital Reskilling Programme, specifically designed for Ukrainian women evacuees, marks UNITAR Division for Prosperity's inaugural initiative in Poland. This programme is committed to enhancing their employability by providing them with tailored training content, materials, and expert guidance. Delivered in a practical, hands-on approach, the programme focuses on the most sought-after digital fields, thereby equipping these women with relevant skills for the modern job market. The programme's primary focus was on the following main objectives:

Bolstering livelihoods of Ukrainian women evacuees

Ukrainian women, renowned for their high level of education and specialized expertise in various professions, often find themselves engaged in unskilled and physical labour despite their extensive experience and qualifications, particularly those who have evacuated to Poland. To address this disparity, a programme has been implemented that offers practical training in digital fields, thereby broadening their employment prospects not only in Poland but also globally.

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[1] Upon request of the Government of Ukraine, and after consultations with Ukrainian Embassies in Poland and Japan, we decided to refer to the Ukrainians living abroad because of the war as Ukrainian evacuees to be in line with how the Government of Ukraine refers to them officially.

[2] UNHCR Poland & Deloitte Polska. (2024, March). Analysis of the impact of refugees from Ukraine on the economy of Poland: March 2024. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/106993.

Cultivating entrepreneurial skills and mindset

In addition to acquiring technical expertise in pertinent IT domains, the programme placed a strong emphasis on the development of soft skills. This includes nurturing essential entrepreneurial and leadership abilities, enabling participants to independently conceive and establish socially conscious digital startups or enterprises that align with the dynamic needs of the rapidly progressing digital marketplace.

Inclusive development

While the programme was open for all Ukrainian women evacuees in the country, the programme placed a special emphasis on supporting the most vulnerable groups of current Ukrainian society who, with their homes destroyed, income sources lost, and reduced opportunities of finding decent employment, had to flee their native land to find refuge in a new place.

Building partnerships

Beyond the objectives outlined above, the programme has firmly established partnerships with local and international organizations, academia, the private sector, and civil society. This emphasis has led to active participation and contributions from various partner organizations, thereby enhancing the effective implementation of the programme's objectives. Moving forward, the programme will continue to harness the synergistic effects of these partnerships. By avoiding duplication of efforts and leveraging each partner's unique strengths and advantages, it aims to maximize outcomes while minimizing costs.

Demographics

The announcement of the programme's application process was met with significant enthusiasm among the Ukrainian women evacuee community in Poland. In total, nearly 1,000 Ukrainian women evacuees submitted applications for the programme. Of these, over 500 applicants were selected to participate in the digital course of their preference.

Significantly, 75 percent of the applicants fell within the age bracket of 30-46 years, indicating a considerable amount of prior professional experience. The distribution of this experience varied across fields, with 30 percent in economics-related professions, 24 percent in finance and accounting, and 18 percent in management and commerce, while the remainder spanned other diverse sectors.

While the programme ensured representation from all voivodeships (regions) across Poland as evident from the below graph, it is noteworthy that the largest concentration of Ukrainian evacuees was in Warsaw and its surrounding areas. Consequently, 27 percent of the applications originated from the Mazovia region.

Figure 1. Distribution of applications from various regions in Poland
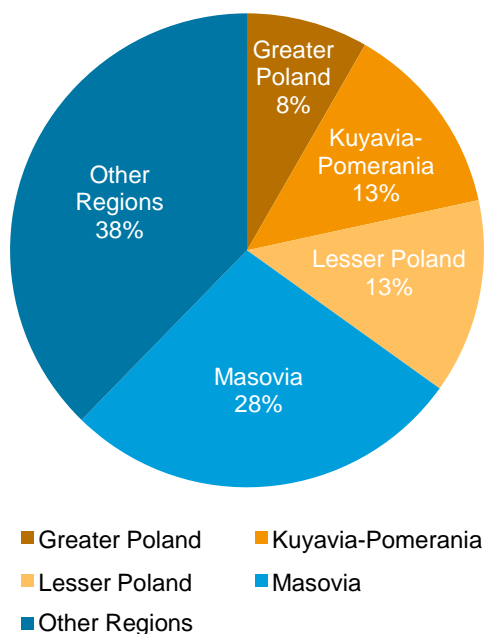
It is also worth noting that the applicants' educational background was quite impressive, with 53 percent holding a master's degree, 25 percent having a Bachelor's degree, and a select few even possessing a PhD. This resulted in a notable 80 percent of applicants holding some form of higher education degree. Nearly the same educational level ratio was also evident in the final phase 3 of the programme, in which 44 of the best graduates were chosen.

Regarding language proficiency, given the close similarity between Ukrainian and Polish, 41 percent of applicants expressed their ability to participate in courses conducted in Polish. Additionally, 27 percent of the applicants were comfortable with instruction in English. For Phase 3, the ratio of preference for instruction in English rose to 50 percent.

Programme Structure and Methodology

The comprehensive training programme was structured with three activities.

- Activity 1 provided a six-week self-paced online course, mainly on UNITAR's Moodle platform. There were four sub-tracks: Data Analytics, Graphic and Web Design, Cybersecurity, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). UNITAR, in partnership with distinguished institutions, gave weekly webinars and Q&A opportunities to instructors. Participants were required to submit weekly assignments as well as their final assignments.

- Activities 2 and 3 were held in an integrated way for 41 top performers, where the Peace and Prosperity hackathon was held as presentation sessions, together with job-matching opportunities. Through a week-long online course, participants were invited to webinars and assignments to enhance technical abilities with relevant soft skills, including effective presentation skills, key success factors in today's digital economy, and practical applications of generative AI.

- The programme culminated in a 2-day workshop where 41 top performers were invited in person in Warsaw, Poland, with virtual live streaming. The event also called for organizations and individuals who are active in the Polish market, providing an opportunity for our top graduates to showcase their newly acquired skills. The graduates' presentations concerned practical issues in their respective IT specializations. The event saw participation from both global and local companies, including those from Poland, Ukraine, and Japan, making it a truly international platform.

Throughout the programme, social media platforms also facilitated the building of networks among participants and instructors and the sharing of programme information. By integrating different learning tools and approaches, the programme paid particular attention to the practical application of their skills by creating a balance of theory and practice. It also emphasized specialization and mastery of one field of digital literacy rather than "giving a little bit of everything" that would leave the graduates without minimal knowledge required in each field to have any practical and applicable value in the job market.

Summary of Outcomes

96 percent of the participants rated the Programme as useful overall and relevant to their work in their affiliated public institutions. While 94 percent of the participants indicated they would use the information gained in this course, the survey also shows that 78 percent considered that the training programme had presented new information.
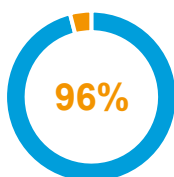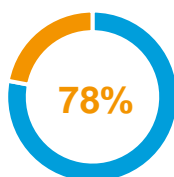
Job Relevance	New Information	Intent Use	Overall Usefulness
96%	78%	94%	96%
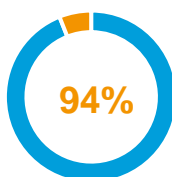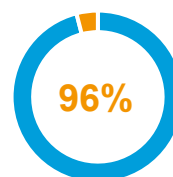
Programme Implementation

In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, millions of evacuees have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Poland has emerged as a primary destination for Ukrainian women evacuees, owing to cultural and linguistic affinities, and it continues to be among the leading countries hosting Ukrainian refugees. While the employment rate of those who have settled in Poland is relatively high,[3] job opportunities often do not align with the evacuees' professional backgrounds and experiences and, in many cases, are low-paying manual labour positions.

To urgently respond to this humanitarian crisis, UNITAR conducted the **Emergency Assistance for Ukrainian Women Refugees in Poland with Digital 4IR Training: Bolstering Livelihoods** programme. The programme's primary purpose was to empower Ukrainian women evacuees in Poland by expanding their economic possibilities and ensuring their financial security through digital reskilling. It offered Ukrainian evacuees the opportunity to acquire new digital skills that either reinforced their previous professional experiences so they could adapt to their new environments or opened ways to explore new career paths.

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[3] UNHCR Poland & Deloitte Polska. (2024, March). Analysis of the impact of refugees from Ukraine on the economy of Poland: March 2024. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/106993.

A programme for Ukrainian women evacuees in Poland received nearly 1,000 applications, with over 500 selected for their preferred digital course. Most applicants (75%) were aged 30-46, indicating substantial professional experience. This experience was distributed across various fields, with the majority in economics (30%), finance and accounting (24%), and management and commerce (18%).

The programme represented all regions of Poland, with the highest concentration of evacuees in Warsaw and the Mazovia region (27% of applications). The applicants' educational background was impressive, with 53% holding a master's degree, 25% a Bachelor's degree, and a few even having a PhD. This resulted in 80% of applicants having a higher education degree. This ratio was also reflected in the final phase of the programme, where the top 44 graduates were chosen.

Identifying and responding to needs

To prepare the programme, UNITAR conducted a needs assessment and gap analysis, through surveying and interviewing evacuees and NGOs working with evacuees. We also reviewed general data provided by the public sector and other organizations. The assessment revealed that:

- Approximately half of those interviewed considered themselves partly financially secure, and another half was completely unsecure.
- For those who answered that they were employed, it was primarily in low-wage, physically strenuous jobs.

The respondents' active pursuit of employment varied due to several factors. These included family situations, psychological traumas, an unforeseeable future torn between the hope of returning to Ukraine and the necessity to adapt to a new environment, as well as skills and language barriers. Additionally, limited employment opportunities posed a significant challenge. Overall, the assessment demonstrated a strong demand for training.

- Over 70 percent of respondents preferred joining training opportunities that could complement their previous experience with relevant digital or entrepreneurial skills.
- Most evacuees had basic or mid-level digital literacy and preferred to be provided with specialized training in certain digital fields.

Applicants to the UNITAR programme were also asked questions about their needs and background. The results again showed the high level of interest in digital skills training. The programme tracks were designed to meet the expressed interest of the course participants and provide long-term capabilities that participants could use to enhance their employment opportunities, as well as bridge the digital divide in a humanitarian way.

Applicants' interests: Highlights

- 48 percent preferred digital graphics and web design courses, of which 79 percent said their motivation was to venture into new fields of work
- 39 percent of applicants showed a preference for data analytics. Interestingly, the responses indicating a desire to strengthen their specialization in this area were twice as many as those for the design course.
- Although the number of applicants who preferred cybersecurity and GIS courses was less than the other two courses, their motivation and project ideas in these fields were concrete enough, as well as with a hope to contribute to better well-being for Ukrainian evacuees in Poland and the reconstruction of Ukraine.

> **"Such a program is simply invaluable, given the difficulties of adaptation in the conditions of an unplanned move to a new country."**
>
> **VIKTORIIA PODVOISKA**

Language of Instruction

Those participating in the programme were diverse in their background, education, experience and language abilities. Given the varied individual preferences of the Ukrainian participants for the language of instruction, we had to show flexibility and adjust our approach to meet the needs of the participants. We initially set the language of instruction in Ukrainian and Russian. However, the participants who registered for our programmes clearly indicated a preference for Ukrainian, English and Polish language instead. Around 41 percent of the applicants indicated their proficiency in Polish, enabling them to participate in courses conducted in this language. Further, English was a comfortable medium of instruction for 27 percent of these applicants. In the programme's third phase, the preference for English instruction increased to 50 percent.

Working through partnerships

UNITAR, with its proven expertise in training programme development, played a pivotal role in connecting Ukrainian, Polish, and Japanese organizations.

Reaching potential applicants

For the call for applications, our civil society partners were instrumental in reaching out to those living in rural areas of Poland as well as those still living in collective centres and dormitories. To reach Ukrainian people across Poland, a special radio programme was run with our Polish NGO partner, Fundacja Studio M6, at the Polish Radio for Ukraine, whose listeners mainly belong to the Ukrainian community in Poland. Additionally, we benefited from our strong relationship with the Ukrainian Embassy in Poland and Ukrainian academic institutions – Ukraine Catholic University and Kyiv-Mohyla Academy to spread the word about the programme through their networks. Special informational campaign support was provided by the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine through its public relations office, which disseminated the call on their official social media channels as well as through Ukrainian online media.

Designing and delivering the course

We partnered with four leading academic institutions and organizations in the region, based in Poland, Ukraine and Japan. Each partner's distinctive strengths and UNITAR's instructional design expertise were combined to jointly deliver four tracks covering the content most in demand among the applicants. The academic partners offered in-demand and practical courses tailored to meet the expectations and needs of the Ukrainian evacuee community.

Data analytics track

For the data analytics track, UNITAR joined hands with Ukraine Catholic University (UCU), a leading institution in Ukraine on data that is science-based in Lviv.

Cybersecurity track

For cybersecurity track, we partnered with Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (KMA), especially with the faculty of computer sciences. As a testament to KMA's genuine commitment to our partnership and the goal of increasing gender representation in the field, KMA's computer science faculty has expressed their willingness to accept those who successfully complete the UNITAR short-term course into their cybersecurity department for further studies.

Graphic and web design track

The Polish Japanese Academy of Information Technology (PJAIT) significantly supported the graphic and web design track. Given the larger number of participants and quantity of feedback necessary for assignments, this track was divided into three groups: web design, advertising and marketing design, and print and publication design. This track was conducted in Polish to meet employment demands, with language support. PJAIT also hosted an in-person workshop at the end of the programme.

> **"Such a program is simply invaluable, given the difficulties of adaptation in the conditions of an unplanned move to a new country."**
>
> **VIKTORIIA PODVOISKA**

GIS track

Eukarya. Inc., a Japanese start-up company with hands-on experience teaching about GIS, delivered the GIS track tailored to the conditions in Ukraine. Considering the imminent reconstruction efforts in Ukraine, geographic mapping skills and software could prove invaluable. The course was conducted in English, with translation support.

The partners gathered in person in Warsaw in October 2023 to kick off the courses. It attracted regional and local organizations and individuals beyond the official partners, as well as media organizations in Japan.

Training Delivery

The programme started with online orientation sessions in October and November 2023 with participants. They met with the instructors and familiarized themselves with the requirements and expectations for each course track. The orientation sessions also covered common introductory topics for all tracks, including expected skills in digital transformation, the gender and digital divide, the legal environment for start-ups in Poland, and lifelong learning opportunities.

The sessions were conducted in partnership with Pasona Group, UN Women, Joint regional platform by UNDP and UNICEF STEM4ALL, Polish NGO Fundacja Studio M6, and Ukrainian digital platform representative Diia.

During and after the orientation sessions, the participants were guided to choose one course track that would best meet their needs.

> **"This program is much more than just training - it's about personal development, support, a sense of community, and the opportunity to show by one's own example that the world around us is beautiful and always provides opportunities to overcome the challenges that people face."**
>
> **NATALIYA KOSTENKO**

Activity 1

Focus on technical skills

Activity 1 was the core of the programme with four online course tracks that began October-November 2023. The tracks lasted 6 weeks, with the GIS track lasting 7 weeks. Each track required participants to dedicate at least 30 hours to course study, including at least 12 hours of webinars, to get tangible results and develop practical skills.

The self-paced learning materials, including text, audio, and video, were available on the UNITAR Moodle platform. Participants were required to fully familiarize themselves with the materials each week before joining the weekly webinars conducted by the instructors.

The styles and topics of live webinars varied, but they covered in general:

- Opportunities for participants to solidify and test their fresh knowledge and skills
- Discussions and cross-learning with peers on the topics
- Detailed and immediate Q&A to deepen understanding

The online content and webinars were complemented by consultation and feedback through the Moodle platform, additional video calls, and social media channels.

Based on the needs assessment and careful preparations with the instructors, Activity 1 was conducted in the Ukrainian language or with Ukrainian language support. The topics and delivery schedules are described in the annex of the report. At the concluding webinar of Activity 1, participants learned about Hiroshima's reconstruction through a video message from an atomic bombing survivor and a lecture by an expert of Hiroshima University. Towards the end of the 6-week course, participants were required to prepare and submit their individual final assignments; to apply all the skills and knowledge they mastered and devise an innovative solution to a real-world problem.

> **"The program was quite thorough and interesting, giving us the chance to learn things usually studied in university for a few years. It was a real challenge for me. The course helped me rethink how I learn about IT and decide where I want to improve and grow in the future."**
>
> **VIKTORIIA TYMOSHENKO**

Activity 2

Part 1: Focus on soft skills

At the end of Activity 1, the 50 best-performing participants were selected to continue on to the next activities of the programme. Activity 2 was devised to complement the technical skills acquired through Activity 1 by focusing on developing practical and soft skills. Through the materials and webinars, participants deepened their skills in applying generative AI, pitching and networking, and surviving in the modern-day digital economy. The discussions were contextualized to bring in a Ukrainian background and examples. The participants were also tasked to prepare their pitches, which they would present at the in-person workshop in Activity 3. Their work from the final Activity 1 assignment constituted the main content of the presentations. See the **Annexes** for more about the topics covered.

Part 2 and 3: Employment Forum

The last part of the training programme aimed to connect the 50 top performers with the business community and international organizations through a 2-day hybrid workshop called the Employment Forum. The forum was construed as a pitching and networking opportunity where participants could showcase to the business community in Poland the knowledge and skills they had acquired in the programme. The forum took place on 20-21 February 2024 on the premises of PJAIT in Warsaw. The majority of the forum was livestreamed so that the participants who took part only in Activity 1 could also join, as well as partners and media outside of Poland. Global and regional companies actively participated in the forum, with the support of Pasona Inc., the Association of Business Service Leaders Poland, the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce, and FISE.

Activities 2 and 3 were initially designed to encompass a one-week online course, followed by a one-day in-person workshop for all participants. However, due to the practical challenges of assembling all participants during Activity 3, the focus was shifted towards enhancing opportunities for the most dedicated and committed learners. This group of learners constituted the pool from which participants were selected for the subsequent activities.

After final adjustments, 41 successful programme participants pitched their projects, identifying a specific issue/gap in their previous fields of experience and applying their newly acquired digital skills for a full or partial solution.

Private and public sector participants who came to listen and possibly employ the programme graduates represented a diverse spectrum of businesses and organizations, including:

- Embassy of Japan in Poland
- Embassy of Ukraine in Poland
- Diia e-government platform
- Embassy of Switzerland in Poland
- Pasona Inc.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- Eukarya (online participation)
- Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce
- Association of Business Service Leaders
- Goldman Sachs Poland
- Hitachi Poland/Global Logic
- Visa Inc., Poland

- CARITAS Internationalis
- NIPPON EXPRESS
- Schneider Group Sp.Z. o.o.
- Stereo By Mono
- Proxet
- ff Venture Capital
- Horus Energia
- Ashoka: Innovators for the Public
- Gruppa Progress
- Nexus Legal and Business Solutions
- StudentsSpeak
- Ukraine House
- The Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives (FISE)
- Talenti

Figure 2. Relevant SDGs covered in the programme
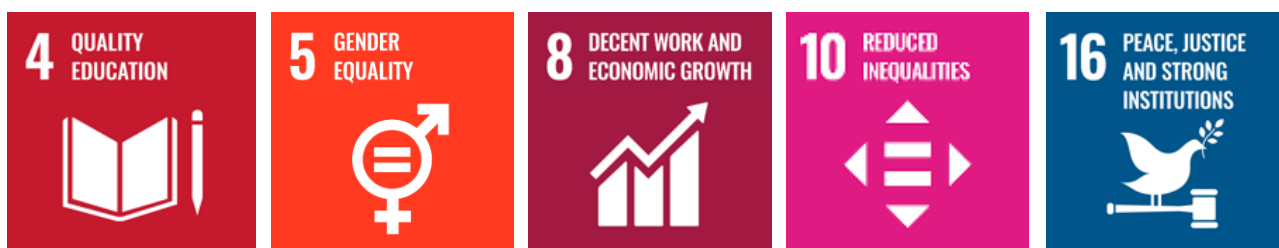
Outcomes

The outcomes of the Programme were measured at two stages: after the initial 6-week online course (Activity 1) and the workshop (Activity 3), using a post-training self-assessment on UNITAR's standard programme evaluation indicators (new information, intent to use, overall usefulness).

1. UNITAR's standard programme evaluation indicators (new information, intent to use, overall usefulness)
2. The extent to which participants met learning objectives
3. Effectiveness of the methodologies
4. Knowledge changes from before to after the Programme

The participants, in general, responded that after the programme their skills had improved in the areas where training was provided. Standard UNITAR programme evaluation indicators examined to determine this were around the themes of: "job relevance," "new information," "intent use" and "overall usefulness".

> **"The program helped me add very valuable skills. I hope for a good result in finding a job that will be useful to society, because GIS is both construction and safety of cities and population."**
>
> **IRINA MARKINA**

Activity 1

After Activity 1, participants were asked to assess "intent use" and "overall usefulness".

"Intent use" evaluates to what extent the participants intend to use their newly acquired knowledge in the future. Participants rated the statement, "It is likely that I will use the information acquired." 86 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

> **"Through this initiative, they not only gained proficiency in statistics, Excel, SQL, and Power BI but also reinforced their skills by analyzing and visualizing real-world data. These acquired tools will empower the graduates to advance in their professional careers."**
>
> **MS. ALINA KORNIICHUK**
> **Data Analytics Course Coordinator**
> **Ukrainian Catholic University**

"Overall usefulness" evaluates to what extent the participants see the Programme as useful. Participants were asked to rate the statement, "Overall, the Programme was useful." The survey shows that 94 percent of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

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Activity 2 and 3

A similar survey was conducted after **Activity 3**, which also covered Activity 2. The survey results were very positive, with only the "new information" indicator slightly lower than the other two. The results for **"Overall usefulness"** were rather high, with 94 percent agreeing with the statement that the programme was useful overall. An even higher 97 percent agreed with the **"Intent to use"** statement.

For **"new information"**, which evaluates to what extent the Programme imparted new knowledge to the participants, 13 percent of the participants disagreed with the statement "the information presented in Activity 2 and 3 of the programme was new to me", which is a slightly higher level of disagreement in relation to other indicators.

The responses to "new information", "intent use", and "overall usefulness" exceeded the minimum target of 70 percent positive feedback, showing that the programme has met its intended objectives and has provided the participants with theoretical, foundational and practical knowledge and skills that they can use in their fields of work.

> **"Learning design tools and gaining knowledge in the field of design requires effort, commitment and often determination. All the participants I had the pleasure of working with demonstrated all these features, and beyond that. I am convinced that the participants will be able to use the acquired skills further: in their future professional practice or as support in their current work."**
>
> **MS. NATALIA ŁAJSZCZAK**
> **Print and Publication course instructor**
> **Polish- Japanese Academy of Information Technology**

Lessons Learned

The Programme was the first that the Division for Prosperity ran in Poland to address the perceived need among Ukrainian women evacuees to acquire digital skills to improve their employment potential. The Ukrainian women participants showed remarkable enthusiasm and willingness to master their chosen fields within the limited time. Opportunities and challenges observed in the Programme will serve as an invaluable guide for the potential scale-up of the programme.

Opportunities

Partnerships with various institutions, companies and organizations

UNITAR established mutually complementary partnerships with Polish and Ukrainian academic institutions. Cooperating with Polish and Ukraine-associated NGOs made reaching potential participants in different parts of the country possible. The final workshop brought us into contact with Polish and Ukrainian business associations and companies, which will prove valuable in the future for dynamically adapting the curriculum and materials to match the real needs of the labour market. UNITAR established itself as a reliable partner of choice for implementing similar projects.

Diverse line-up of courses and emphasis on specialization

Participants in the programme appreciated having the choice of several digital areas. Rich in content and depth, each track went beyond the surface and gave the participants work-ready digital skills they could immediately put in practice. The learning materials can be further developed in future programme iterations for a rapidly and dynamically evolving IT sector.

Combining technical and soft skills

Participant feedback was very positive about the course content in general and especially about the practical applications of the learning. All course instructors provided weekly assignments and used the webinar sessions to encourage students to practice together during group breakouts.

Participants in Activities 2 and 3 were positive about the focus on presenting and pitching skills. For many, it was the first time they presented or pitched before a large audience of businesses, NGOs, and international organizations. They appreciated the opportunity to hone their presentation skills with instructors who had rich experience in this field.

Combining self-paced e-learning and live webinars

The online modality allowed more Ukrainian learners from different regions of Poland to participate in the Programme. Holding the webinar sessions mainly during weekends was also welcomed, as it allowed those working to take part unhindered. Participants also had the flexibility to finish the lessons at their own pace, which allowed them to fit the course into their busy schedules.

To mitigate the lack of in-person interaction among participants, webinars were scheduled after each section of the self-paced lessons so that participants could discuss and reflect on what they learned and have a platform to express their views and ask questions. In the webinars, instructors could address the questions from participants that were posted throughout the week on the online platform.

Final assignment

The final assignment proved to be the most challenging and, at the same time, the most rewarding part of the Programme. It oriented the participants to approach the task holistically, using all the knowledge and skills they gained to look at a problem from several angles. The final assignment helped them bridge the gap between the discrete pieces of their learning and apply them to realistic issues they face in their fields.

Benefits of networking

Last but not least, participants who made it to Activities 2 and 3 appreciated the in-person engagement at the Employment Forum, where they could present their pitches and socialize with diverse companies and organizations. All participants had a chance to consult substantially with the companies in the forum and make connections for potential future employment. Administering a follow-up survey 6 months later can reveal how far this approach worked in connecting the participants with potential companies.

Challenges

Although the Programme was largely successful, several issues were identified that, if addressed, could raise the effectiveness of such programmes even further.

Balance between course intensity participants' environments

Approximately 530 participants were accepted for the Programme, with 111 participating successfully completing it. The Programme's intensity, with a large number of assignments in a limited time, may have been a barrier, as reflected in the many requests we received for deadline extensions. The challenging and changing environments for Ukrainian women evacuees were serious: many of the participants were the sole carers for their children or older people; many worked irregular and mainly physically demanding jobs. While the effectiveness of the training depends on the coverage of material and hands-on engagement by the learners, the high pace may be a serious impediment. Thus, future programmes may look into a more flexible timeline and spread of content as well as explore ways to support families with children.

Conclusion

The digital reskilling programme for Ukrainian evacuees in Poland, led by the UNITAR Division for Prosperity, was a pioneering initiative that has proven a valuable contribution to improving the livelihood potential of Ukrainian women evacuees in Poland. The programme was met with enthusiasm from the participants, who demonstrated a strong willingness to acquire and master new digital skills within a limited timeframe. The programme's success will serve as a valuable guide for potential scale-up and future iterations.

The programme provided a diverse lineup of courses, emphasizing specialization and combining technical and soft skills. The programme also facilitated networking, allowing participants to connect with potential employers. The programme, in general, can be viewed as an initial first step towards improving the employment potential of Ukrainian women evacuees in Poland. Despite some challenges, the programme was largely successful, with positive participant feedback and a high completion rate. The lessons learned from this initiative will be invaluable in refining the programme's design and implementation in the future, ensuring it continues to effectively meet the needs of its target demographic. The programme underscores the potential of digital reskilling as a powerful tool for empowering displaced individuals, bolstering their livelihoods, and facilitating their integration into their new environments.

Annexes

Annex 1: Programme Agenda

Data Analytics Track

- **Statistics:** understanding the basis of probability theory. Descriptive statistics; output statistics
- **Excel for data analysis:** skills in working with spreadsheets. Ability to clean and transform data. Ability to analyse and visualize data
- **SQL:** understanding the operation of databases, understanding basic concepts, data types, query structure, logical query construction data grouping, data cleaning using functions
- **Power BI:** the ability to model data; visualization skills and creation of information panels

Table 1. Study period schedule: Data Analytics Track

WEEK	TOPIC	COMPLETED BY
Week 1 & 2	Statistics. Probability Theory. Descriptive Stat.	30 Oct – 5 Nov 2023
Week 3	Excel for Data Analysis	6 – 12 Nov 2023
Week 4 & 5	SQL	13 – 26 Nov 2023
Week 6	Power BI	27 Nov – 3 Dec 2023

Weekly webinars for the Data Analytics course were held each Saturday during Phase 1. Compensatory or additional webinars were held as requested and as agreed between participants and the lecturer.

Cybersecurity Track

- Basic understanding and skills working with Python
- Understanding and working with SQL in the framework of Cybersecurity field
- Understanding AJAX as a group of technologies that are used to develop web applications
- Cross Site Scripting (XSS) as a type of security vulnerability
- SQL Injection as a code-based vulnerability and its detection
- Understanding and detection of Logical Vulnerabilities

Table 2. Study period schedule: Cybersecurity Track

WEEK	TOPIC	COMPLETED BY
Week 1	Basic work with Python	6 – 12 Nov 2023
Week 2	SQL from cybersecurity perspective	13 –19 Nov 2023
Week 3	AJAX and web application development	20 – 26 Nov 2023
Week 4	Cross Site scripting	27 Nov – 3 Dec 2023
Week 5	SQL injection and its detection	4 – 10 Dec 2023

Weekly webinars for Cybersecurity course were held each Sunday during Phase 1 period with compensatory or additional webinars held as requested agreed between participants and the lecturer.

GIS Track

- Comprehensive exploration of the capabilities and potential of Re:Earth, a cutting-edge, open-source WebGIS platform
- Introduction to QGIS. Downloading spatial data and converting spatial data coordinate
- Integrating and Modifying Spatial Data
- Spatial data analysis using vector data related to human activities
- Raster data Analysis: practice topography data analysis using raster data
- Introduction of Leaflet. How to develop an online map with simple JavaScript programming

Table 3. Study period schedule: GIS Track

WEEK	TOPIC	COMPLETED BY
Week 1	Opening orientation	6 – 12 Nov 2023
Week 2	Introduction to Re:Earth	13 – 19 Nov 2023
Week 3	Introduction to QGIS	20 – 26 Nov 2023
Week 4	Working with Spatial Data	27 Nov – 3 Dec 2023
Week 5	Spatial Data analysis	4–10 Dec 2023
Week 6	Raster data analysis	11 – 17 Dec 2023
Week 7	Introduction to Leaflet	3 – 4 Jan 2024

Weekly webinars for the Cybersecurity course were held each Sunday during the Phase 1 period, with compensatory or additional webinars held as requested and agreed between participants and the lecturer.

Graphic and Web Design Track

Advertising and Marketing Design

- Graphic design of logo – from sketch to computer
- Specifying the group of recipients of the Personal Brand (working with Illustrator and Canva)
- From brand strategy to planning marketing activities
- How to create consistent visual materials to use in online marketing strategy
- Basics of advertising and statistics on Instagram

Print and Publication Design

- Basic design principles and presentation of tools: working with InDesign
- Designing simple and effective text structures. Layout structure and basic terminology
- Text hierarchy and typography in the design
- Using photos, illustrations, and/or icons in the project. Additionally: basics of working with photos
- How to prepare the project for printing
- Various project formats: PDF Print, interactive PDF. Adding interactive elements to the project

Web Design

- Introduction to WordPress and site planning
- WordPress: graphic themes and how to modify and customize them
- Creating website content using WordPress
- Plugins for WordPress: overview of the most frequently used and recommended plugins
- instructions for installing and configuring basic plugins
- Website design and layout 6. Website management, SEO, and launch
- Weekly webinars for the Graphic and Web Design courses were held each Sunday (one webinar on Advertising and Marketing Design) and Monday (two webinars on Print and Publication Design and Web Design) during Activity 1, with compensatory or additional webinars held as requested, and agreed between participants and the lecturer.

Table 4. Study schedule period for Graphic and Web design courses

WEEK	COMPLETED BY
Week 1	13–19 Nov 2023
Week 2	20-26 Nov 2023
Week 3	27 Nov–3 Dec 2023
Week 4	4 – 11 Dec 2023
Week 5	11–17 Dec 2023
Week 6	8–14 Jan 2024
Week 7	14–21 Jan 2024

Annex 2: Strategic Alignment

Table 5. Strategic Alignment: (1) Generate change agents

Indicator	Measure	Data
Participation	Number of people participated	530
Intensity of Training	Number of hours engaged (e.g., 120 hours per each course track). Type of training (blended, self-paced with weekly webinars)	Phase 1: 6 weeks (GIS: 7 weeks) of self-paced online lessons per each course track (Moodle learning platform: 6 weeks, 6 webinars: 12 hours, Consultation hours: varied for each course track from 4 to 12 hours, to constant communication online by instructors with participants, Final assignment: 3 weeks preparation) Phase 2: 1 week of self-paced online lessons with webinars (4 webinars: 8 hours) Phase 3: preparation for pitching presentation for employment forum

Table 6. Strategic Alignment: (2) Engage in coalition building

Indicator	Measure	Data
Stage of country development	How many participants are from industrialized vs. developing countries? How many from LDCs/SIDS?	All participants from Ukraine
Urban vs Rural	How many from the capital vs. others	Approximately 87% of participants came from other cities and regions than capital city Warsaw

Table 7. Strategic Alignment: (3) Build Partnership

Indicator	Measure	Data
Number of partnerships	How many partnerships?	Unofficial collaboration with more than 10 partners Official memorandum of Understanding signed with 6
Quality of partnership	Global, regional, or local organizations? To enhance substance or financial contribution	All national Substance and in-kind contribution

Table 8. Strategic Alignment: (4) Boost relevance

Indicator	Measure	Data
Feedback from participants	Use relevant quotes from participants?	See report

Table 9. Strategic Alignment: (5) Enhance contextualization

Indicator	Measure	Data
Number and quality of coaches/mentors	How many coaches/mentors were engaged? How many coaches/mentors were local or regional vs external?	13 coaches/mentors 6 from Ukraine, 3 from Poland, 2 from USA, 2 from Japan

Table 10. Strategic Alignment: (6) Promote gender equality

Indicator	Measure	Data
Number of female participants	How many and percentage?	100% were female
Number of participants who completed the modules	How many and percentage?	111 completed, 21%
Gender marking 0 – Outputs/Projects that are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) 1 – Outputs/Projects that will contribute in some way to gender equality but not significantly 2 – Outputs/Projects that have gender equality as a significant objective 3 – Outputs/Projects that have gender equality as principal objective	Give a rating from 0 to 3 using the following criteria.	3

Table 11. Strategic Alignment: (6) Promote gender equality

Indicator	Measure	Data
Diversity of modes of delivery	Short description of what innovative modes were introduced	GIS course had two instructors with different perspectives from academia and private sector. Examples from two areas of applicability of GIS were used to give wider perspective
Adoption of innovative adult-learning methodologies	Short description of what innovative adult-learning methodologies were introduced	Moodle learning platform available on computer and smartphone. zoom for webinars and group work presentation
Quality of partnerships with local stakeholders	Short description	Participants shared their experiences in their local contexts on the professional and personal level in integrating gender sensitivity and responsiveness. The participating countries have provided a comprehensive support for liaison and coordination to make sure that the project objectives and framework is being implemented in a timely and efficient manner, while attending to the contextual challenges.
Quality of the action plans	Short description of final outputs produced by the participants if any such as action plans	Final assignments completed by participants as a major part of course passing to deal with realistic issues in their chosen fields. These were later presented in Activity 3

Table 12. Strategic Alignment: (9) Stimulate sustainable development

Indicator	Measure	Data
Number of participants who successfully completed the SDG modules	Same as left	No SDG modules provided.

Table 13. Strategic Alignment: (10) Cultivate financial sustainability

Indicator	Measure	Data
Funding size	Same as left	Moderate (230,000 USD)