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War veterans' retraining: development of educational programmes for economic recovery in Ukraine

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyse the world experience of retraining war veterans in order to restore the economy and consider possible ways of implementing the acquired knowledge and practices in the context of Ukraine. A study was conducted to identify the basic needs and challenges faced by veterans and examine the key aspects of the challenges that war veterans experience when entering the civilian labour market. The authors analyse effective approaches and programmes already applied in various countries, including the United States, in order to overcome these difficulties and promote veterans' integration into society and the economy. These include at the local level, or with the patronage of non-governmental organisations, educational programmes for retraining veterans in Ukraine. The authors offer specific recommendations for the development and implementation of specialised educational programmes for retraining veterans in Ukraine at the state level, mainly based on advanced world practice and existing local experience. Finally, particular attention is paid to the aspects of adaptation and implementation of these programmes in Ukrainian realities at the national level.

KEYWORDS

Career; career development; professional retraining; educational programs for veterans; adaptation

Introduction

In the current conditions of global conflicts and their consequences, the problem of retraining war veterans and their further successful integration into society has become extremely important for all countries, including Ukraine. The problem of social and professional adaptation of war veterans is relevant in modern Ukrainian society. According to the results of the study of the Ukrainian Veteran Fund with the support of the LobbyX and Work.ua platforms, 70% of the surveyed veterans face difficulties in finding employment after returning to

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their usual life (Bohdan 2023). These are difficulties with finding work after returning from the front and psychological barriers that arise after returning. It should be noted that 60% of employers, when they find out that a potential employee is a former soldier, have doubts about hiring veterans, and only 30% of them have special programmes for their adaptation. These findings suggest that, despite the willingness to help veterans, there is a gap between declarative intent and real support. This is an issue that requires immediate solution at the level of the state and society (Kirillova et al. 2023). Owing to the introduction of retraining educational programmes at the state level, aimed at restoring the economy, it is possible to create conditions for the successful reintegration of this important group of citizens.

After a full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, many people who had not previously been related to military service went to defend their land. According to statistics, they experience anxiety and depression, which in turn affects their reintegration and professional adaptation after returning from the front after the end of the war (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2023). Therefore, state institutions should create favourable conditions for people who joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The state should provide them with effective tools to enable the veterans to enter civilian life healthy and psychologically strong, as well as charged with modern tools to be incorporated into their communities and the country's economy (Brechko, Bosovska, and Boiko 2023). For example retraining for specialities that the state will need after Ukraine's victory. After this, Ukrainian society will face the problem of socio-professional adaptation of military personnel, in particular, those who will get disabled and family members of the fallen warriors. In this regard, the veterans will need to learn to live in new conditions, be economically independent or change the occupation altogether (Yuldashev, Khomiachenko, and Yuldashev 2022).

In today's challenges, Ukraine can learn from the experience of other countries, such as the United States where veterans receive meaningful support through social programmes, provided for by legislation (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2023). However, none of the countries has experience in adapting veterans on such a scale that Ukraine will have, given that the number of citizens serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine is more than a million people, while in some large companies the number of mobilised workers is up to ten thousand people. Ukrainian society, business, and education are currently at the turn of epochs and they should be the flagships of change and develop strategies for veterans' adaptation after the war (Eichengreen 2022). After all, the Institute for the Study of War (2024) already claims that Ukraine in all aspects goes through its unique path and develops its own, unique, Ukrainian experience, which will be interesting and useful for analysis by other civilised states. Yet, this requires not only copying someone else's experience, but also adapting it to Ukrainian reality.

The development and implementation of educational programmes in Ukraine for the retraining of full-scale war veterans is aimed at providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge that meet the requirements of the modern labour market. Taking into account the world experience, in particular the American one, it is possible to identify effective strategies and methods that contribute to successful retraining and integration of veterans into civilian life (Barr et al. 2024). Programmes should cover a variety of areas, from engineering and information technology to entrepreneurship and social service. The application of innovative teaching methods, support for psychological adaptation and creation of a supportive environment play an important role in ensuring a successful reorientation of veterans to the civilian labour market.

Accordingly, this article aims to summarise the world experience in retraining war veterans and provide specific recommendations for its use for economic recovery and successful reintegration of veterans in Ukraine. In order to achieve the goal, the following objectives are set:

- to identify the basic needs and challenges faced by war veterans when entering the civilian labour market,
- to explore key aspects of effective veterans' retraining programmes already in place in various countries, including the United States,
- to analyse the existing educational retraining programmes for veterans in Ukraine,
- to develop recommendations for adaptation and implementation of world experience in Ukrainian realities.

During the study, a multidisciplinary approach was adopted to study the aspect of retraining war veterans via educational programmes aimed at the restoration of the Ukrainian economy. The use of qualitative and quantitative research methods made it possible to suggest that the most successful retraining programmes for veterans include complex approaches that embrace training in new professions, psychological support and social integration.

The analysis of data (scientific articles, official reports, documents of state and non-governmental organisations, interviews with experts) pointed to a lack of systemic governmental support, stigmatisation and lack of professional skills for the civilian labour market. The comparative method helped to establish that programmes in different countries have their own characteristics, but general trends include the involvement of veterans in this process and close cooperation with employers. The data was collected in such a way as to avoid bias in the interpretation of results.

The study covers several key aspects aimed at a comprehensive analysis of war veterans' retraining. In particular, it concerns the study of successful

retraining programmes for veterans in the USA, Canada, Israel; the study of the basic needs of war veterans; the review of existing educational programmes and initiatives aimed at retraining veterans.

The study established the local specifics of Ukrainian educational programmes supported by non-governmental organisations and suggested ways to scale them to the state level. Adopting the world experience and taking into account the specifics of the Ukrainian context, the development and implementation of these educational programmes can become an important tool in restoring the economy and promoting the full reintegration of veterans into Ukrainian society.

Thus, the article offers new approaches and tools for organising the process of adaptation of the military who returned from the front to professional life on the basis of change management methodology. The research also takes into account the world experience and facilitates developing ways to implement educational programmes for veterans in Ukraine. Moreover, the study was conducted to determine the needs and challenges faced by veterans. In this regard, employment is one of the main problems that veterans experience. Therefore, this research confirms the relevance of veterans' retraining in their civilian life. The study results in making specific proposals for implementation of educational programmes at the national level. Thus, the article will be useful for managers of educational institutions and professionals involved in the processes of organisational changes necessary for the adaptation of soldiers who demobilised from the front and returned to civilian life.

World experience in veterans' retraining

The problem of veterans' adaptation is acute in all civilised countries that care about their citizens who participated in hostilities. The most successful reintegration programmes for military personnel into civilian life are implemented in Israel, the USA and Canada (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2022; Thompson et al. 2017). As a strategic partner of Ukraine, the United States provide not only support in resisting the armed aggression, but also serve as a mentor in transferring their own experience in implementing the strategy for retraining war veterans in Ukraine and their reintegration into social life. The United States have considerable experience in participating in wars, and, accordingly, in overcoming the consequences of these wars: economic, state-building, demographic, including the impact of war on soldiers (Stevenson et al. 2023). As of 2022, 16.5 million U.S. citizens are veterans, constituting 6.4% of the total adult American population (Schaeffer 2023). The support of war veterans by the U.S. government, in particular, by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, can be illustrated by the following examples:

- Transition Assistance Programme, according to which veterans and their families are provided with tools, information, and resources for transition from military to civilian life. The Programme involves a veteran passing a short course, where he/she receives the necessary information about transition, benefits, his/her opportunities in the new status, etc. (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2022).
- Support programmes in building a civilian career and job search, which provide a veteran with support in transiting skills from his/her military service into civilian life. Such programmes develop advanced training courses for veterans, which he/she can optionally obtain a new profession after studying at the university or attending courses (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2023).
- Veterans Retraining Assistance Programme (VRAP), which provides financial support for veterans to gain new professional skills or graduate with a university degree. In the United States, veterans returning from war, receive support not only from the state, but also from the private sector because in the United States hiring a veteran is not just a noble gesture, but also a profitable business decision. Thus, employers obtain tax benefits for hiring veterans, which stimulates them to more actively attract veterans to work, so both businesses and veterens benefit (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2021).

Having analysed the U.S. experience in protecting and supporting veterans, it is possible to propose that ways to restore physical and mental health, search for career opportunities in civilian life, educational retraining, combating the challenges of transition, social security, prevention of undesirable consequences and other spheres of support for veterans and their families will not lose their relevance for Ukrainian realities for decades. Accordingly, adapting their experience to the Ukrainian context is feasible (Whitley and Saucier 2023).

Furthermore, Canada also possesses a significant scope of experience in retraining war veterans. The Veterans Education and Training Benefit programme was developed to provides veterans with the opportunity to receive financial support for training and job search (Government of Canada 2018). Israel pays great attention to the veterans of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) concerning the development of their professional skills after the end of service. The Israeli Ministry of Defense cooperates with various institutions, including higher education institutions and employment organisations, to provide veterans with access to training and finding new occupations. One of the approaches is to provide veterans with opportunities to gain new skills and qualifications via specialised courses and programmes. In addition, the Government of Israel and various non-profit organisations actively support initiatives to provide employment for

veterans and create conditions for their entrepreneurial success (Segev and Schiff 2019).

Having analysed the world examples and approaches to retraining war veterans in the context of educational programmes development, we suggest that successful programmes should include a wide range of educational programmes and cover a variety of industries and professions. Moreover, the financial support of veterans' training during the transition period when they are looking for a new job is essential. Besides, when creating such educational programmes, it is critical to take into account psychological aspects and thus provide psychological support to facilitate veterans' transition to a new professional environment. In addition, the state should collaborate with businesses and employers to identify real labour market needs and develop programmes that meet those needs.

Thus, the general principle of retraining is creation of an integrated support system that considers all aspects of veterans' retraining and contributes to their successful inclusion in the post-war economy (Perkins et al. 2023). Consequently, Ukraine should ponder over the possibility of implementing such programmes. They will not only help veterans to adapt faster to civilian life, but will also benefit the state since veterans are highly qualified professionals who can make a significant contribution to the development of the country's economy (O'Driscoll 2018).

Ukrainian context in veterans' affairs

The transition from military service to civilian life is a complex and multifaceted process for many war veterans. In particular, access to the civilian labour market is accompanied by numerous challenges that require special attention from society and the state. Upon completion of their military service, veterans are faced with the need to adapt to new realities, find their place in civilian life and provide for themselves and their families. This process includes personal and professional aspects, often accompanied by psychological, social and economic difficulties.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and other psychological problems can complicate social adaptation and employment. In addition, the discrepancies between military skills and the needs of the civilian labour market can worsen their psychological state. Thus despite the fact that not all war veterans began their careers as military (many of them were mobilised into the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during a full-scale invasion), prolonged absence from the labour market and the lack of adaptation to current working conditions in civilian sectors can complicate the process of employment and make the veterans more vulnerable.

The veterans' needs in the transition to the civilian labour market are diverse. For example, they include the acquisition of new professional skills,

psychological support, social integration and financial stability. At the same time, there are significant challenges that complicate this transition. Veterans often face difficulties in finding jobs that match their abilities and experience, as well as discrimination and stigmatisation. Many war veterans may face social isolation as they experience misunderstanding from former colleagues and comrades with whom they led civilian lives prior to their military service. In addition, they also experience a sense of alienation and isolation in the new work team due to their military experience.

All initiatives, state and non-governmental campaigns on war veterans' protection in Ukraine were actively launched only in 2014, when the Russian Federation annexed the Crimea and began the armed aggression, which later turned into a hybrid war in the East of Ukraine. Until 2014, the term 'war veteran' was applied only to participants in the Second World War and the armed conflict in Afghanistan. Currently, the legislation has more than a hundred normative legal acts that are directly or indirectly aimed at regulating social relations in the field of social and legal protection and adaptation of veterans. In 2014, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 413 'On approval of the Procedure for granting and depriving the status of combatants . . . ' was adopted. This resolution indicates out-of-competition admission to higher educational institutions (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2014). However, there is no legislative act or strategy on veterans' reintegration into public life by reprofiling a participant in hostilities because in 2014 this issue was not yet topical.

Despite the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the Ministry of Veterans was only created in 2018. Moreover, in 2023, the current Minister of Veterans Affairs Yulia Laputina launched the establishment of new foundations of modern veteran policy. This new policy will not be focused on benefits, but on providing veterans with tools that integrate them into the country's economy after returning from the war and give them the role of 'recovery warriors', who will defend the state again if necessary (Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine 2023).

Veterans' employment is necessary for their returning to civilian life. Therefore, it is essential to amend and adapt the Ukrainian legislation on social protection of veterans in order to show gratitude on the part of the state and society. Accordingly, conditions for proper rest and restoration of physical and mental health and tools for establishing relationships with family and society should be enshrined in laws. In addition, the state should create opportunities for a veteran to choose what and when he/she would like to do in the post-war period (Kulikov et al. 2022). Hence, in Ukraine, it is crucial to establish the practice of supporting veterans on their educational and career path because they often experience difficulties in returning to their previous job, finding a new occupation or profession afterwards.

According to representatives of Ukrainian companies, whose employees demobilised from the Armed Forces of Ukraine for various reasons and returned to work, veterans returned completely different people. These changes are manifested in all aspects of life: at work, in the family, in the community. Many veterans also lack motivation to return to work. Moreover, young veterans do not need social guarantees, but development in their professional life. According to a study conducted by the Ukrainian Veterans Fund (2024), 77.5% of veterans surveyed indicated future problems with finding a job after returning from the front. This is twice as high as the average unemployment rate in the country. These figures are alarming because veterans are people who have extensive experience, military discipline and many other qualities that can be useful in the workplace (Kirillova et al. 2023).

However, many employers are apparently not ready to give veterans a chance. In particular, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has implemented projects and programmes to support the reintegration of veterans and their families. The purpose of their programmes is to promote professional training, retraining and advanced training of veterans for their effective reintegration into civilian life, as well as active participation in the socio-economic development of communities. Within such programmes, veterans will have the opportunity to participate in training on leadership skills, adaptability, interpersonal communication, negotiation and effective dialogue, teamwork and time management. Apart from that, veterans who want to start their own business have the opportunity to apply for a grant for the purchase of equipment or start-up capital (IOM Ukraine 2023).

Another programme with a wide range of activities regarding veterans' professional future is Project 'Norway-Ukraine. Professional adaptation. Integration into the state system', launched by the Norwegian university NORD and implemented in partnership with educational institutions of Ukraine (International Charitable Foundation "International Foundation for Social Adaptation" 2020). The main goal of the project is professional retraining of veterans for civilian specialities that are in demand in the labour market of Ukraine and assistance to veterans and other target audiences in social adaptation to civilian life. During social adaptation, project participants receive legal and psychological aid. Since the beginning of the project, 39 Ukrainian cities and more than 20 higher educational institutions and 42 other educational institutions of Ukraine have been involved in it. The objectives of the project are development and application of a stable model of social and professional adaptation of military personnel, combatants and their families, which includes the following main components:

- short-term retraining courses in specialities in demand in the labour market;
- psychological assistance;
- legal support;
- assistance in employment and starting a family business.

Furthermore, the public organisation "The Free People Employment Center (2021) is focused on veterans' employment within the project 'Worthy work for the warrior', which contributes to the veterans' social adaptation through employment, training, and retraining. This project provides the following opportunities for war veterans: consultations at all stages of employment (assistance in writing a professional CV, preparation for an interview, career support, etc.); assistance in finding vacancies; training courses from partners, etc.

A number of initiatives were created to teach programming and IT to veterans, for example, IT.BRO, Veteranius, etc. These initiatives were informed by the idea that a career of a programmer can be attractive for veterans because this profession presents prospects of career growth, decent wages, and the opportunity to work remotely. Thus, at Veteranius, every student has the opportunity to work on real projects in teams. This approach helps veterans learn a new profession faster and facilitates professional adaptation and socialisation (Veteranius 2023). Along with IT, programmes aimed at teaching entrepreneurial skills to veterans who want start their business. One of these programmes was developed by Kyiv School of Economics (KSE). By participating in such programmes, veterans learn business models, operational and strategic planning, marketing, finance, sales, and promotion (Kyiv School of Economics 2023).

So, it can be concluded that the main emphasis is on the ways of implementing this experience in Ukraine and restoring the national economy by providing veterans with the necessary skills and knowledge. It is worth noticing that retraining and educational adaptation at the state level was not acute until recently. Accordingly, in Ukraine either non-governmental or international organisations are engaged in the relocation of war veterans on a volunteer basis. Hence, the state shall provide a comprehensive support for war veterans in order to ensure their social protection and self-fulfilment by reprofiling their professional development.

In this regard, it is important to mention that in order to analyse the labour aspect of veterans' resocialization, the Veteran's Path survey was conducted on the basis of the Veteran Hub (2020). This survey demonstrated that 97% of employers were willing to hire veterans. However, the vast majority (65.05%) of employers surveyed still have no experience with veterans, while only 18.1% of them have special programmes for adapting

veterans in the workplace. These results indicate that many companies are not ready to invest efforts and resources in veterans' adaptation, despite their potential. The situation is complicated by the fact that many veterans face stereotypes and prejudices from employers. For example, it is believed that veterans are people with psychological problems that can be unpredictable in the workplace. However, such stereotypes do not correspond to reality and only prevent veterans from finding work.

In addition, within the Veteran's Path survey, an interview on the needs and adaptation of Ukrainian veterans was conducted. It involved ten veterans as part of three focus groups (Veteran Hub 2020). According to the survey results, the following conclusions were made:

- the current generation of Ukrainian veterans is a unique cohort because they create the first national veteran identity;
- in the Ukrainian context, war is a unique element of the life stage of military service and cannot be combined with other elements;
- each path is unique. No two veterans are alike, all veterans will live these actions and moments differently;
- we do not condemn any of the ways, but we will analyse most of them in order to support veterans in moving on their way (Veteran Hub 2020).

Educational programs for veterans' training: international cooperation

Educational programmes to support war veterans can be a key tool in the process of their successful reintegration into society. Currently, the Ministry of Veterans is actively cooperating with the Ukraine-Norway Foundation within the project of social adaptation and retraining of soldiers and their families (International Charitable Foundation "International Foundation for Social Adaptation" 2020). Our veterans have been offered various retraining programmes. The main purpose of the project is the professional integration and reintegration of persons dismissed from military service from among war veterans, persons with special merits to the Motherland, family members of such persons, family members of fallen (dead) war veterans, family members of fallen (dead) defenders of Ukraine to the conditions of civilian life. This is applicable to the IT sphere, agribusiness, and legal programmes that open up the opportunity to work in grant projects and gain skills in project management. In addition, Ukraine signed memorandums with more than 30 universities in different cities that train veterans in special programmes. Moreover, Centers for Veteran Development at specialised higher educational institutions are to be created.

On 24 July 2023, the first Veteran Development Center in Ukraine was opened in Lviv Polytechnic. The Center will conduct training and retraining

of veterans: they will be able to get a new profession, and implement their entrepreneurial initiatives. One of the key projects that will be implemented at the Center is the training of veteran's assistants. In addition, psychological and legal aid will be provided. The training programme for assistant veterans was jointly developed by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science. One of the highest priority activities of Lviv Polytechnic is to assist combatants and their families in professional and social adaptation.

The study of veterans' needs obliges the state to respond quickly. Accordingly, in March 2019, the Veteran Service was created in Lviv Polytechnic, with the active assistance of the IT company SoftServe. It is important to mention that since 2014 the University has been the executor of the Ukraine-Norway project for retraining and social adaptation of military personnel and their families in Ukraine. During the period of 2014–2022, more than 900 soldiers and their families took part in the project under various vocational training programmes. The University has an extensive system of different departments, which allows it to conduct training not only in Lviv, but throughout the Lviv region.

In 2020, Lviv Polytechnic also joined the implementation of the budget programme in terms of professional adaptation of war veterans. As a result, more than 60 people were trained (Mulska et al. 2022). Supporting veterans in the transition to civilian life is an extremely important element of integration. The Center for Veteran Development in Lviv will provide educational services that will not only increase veterans' competitiveness, but also make a significant contribution to the economic development of their communities.

According to the Ukraine-Norway project, it is planned to open 4 pilot projects in four regions. The next pilot project is planned to be implemented in Vinnytsia, given the inexhaustible potential of the city, the capabilities and experience of Vinnytsia National Technical University. The establishment of such centres will allow launching an effective system of support and professional adaptation of war veterans and veterans of military service after the demobilisation and support of their family members. The Ministry of Veterans Affairs plans to create such centres of veteran development in each region of Ukraine.

In accordance with the public memory policy of the Soviet period, until recently, the war veteran was perceived exclusively as a participant in the Second World War or hostilities in the territory of other states. These were older people who needed mainly social guarantees. On the contrary, nowadays the defenders are young people of working age. Therefore, the state needs to make sure that they develop in society as its strength and potential. Veteran policy should not be recognised as a purely social element. This should be a systematic project with large human resources, endowed with

extremely powerful energy. Today, the government coordinates efforts in this sphere because the state's care for war veterans and powerful support for their integration into civilian life is both a guarantee of the rapid restoration of the country and a security issue (Semenets-Orlova et al. 2022).

In addition, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine together with the IT company EPAM Ukraine will launch educational initiatives for veterans and their families. The training will take place at the Centers for Veteran Development, which were created in Dnipro, Vinnytsia, Lviv, and Mykolaiv at the bases of leading universities. Participation in training programmes is free of charge and aims to acquaint Ukrainian veterans and their families with career opportunities in IT, as well as to master one of the modern professions within the transition from military service to civilian life (Weder di Mauro et al. 2022).

War veterans' retraining: prospects, challenges, and opportunities

Educational programmes for retraining war veterans are characterised by a number of challenges, but they also open up significant opportunities for improving the lives of veterans and their successful inclusion in civilian society (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2017; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 1993).

- *Professional orientation and training*. Veterans have different needs and thus require different levels of training. Developing programmes that take into account individual characteristics and needs is a difficult task. Planning the scope of the adaptation programme, formulating the desired results, developing a strategy and tactics of change, preparing and choosing steps to implement it will help the organisation implement this programme faster and more efficiently. In addition, an educational space should be organised in accordance with the veterans' conditions and needs. In particular, it can be a ramp or a flexible schedule.
- *Training in new professional skills that meet the needs of the labour market*. Veterans returning from the war may lose skills to perform their previous work, which they did before mobilisation. They may lose the capacity to perform this work due to medical conditions obtained as the result of the hostilities. However, they may have acquired new skills and competencies that may prove useful. It is observed that veterans often have changes in attitude (worldview) and problems with motivation to return to professional life. Given the rapid development of technology, many professions may become irrelevant. Veterans can get the opportunity to retrain and learn new specialities that will be required in the labour market. Therefore, the development of career

guidance courses and workshops for veterans will help them identify their goals and interests in civilian life.

- *Academic support*. Opportunities for higher education or additional training in universities or technical schools should be provided. Moreover, it is necessary to create scholarship programmes for veterans seeking to continue their education. Since veterans' psychological state can be an obstacle to active participation in training, these programmes should consider these aspects and provide psychological support. In the context of academic support, the aspect of mentoring is interesting. Attracting veterans who have already passed the adaptation path to support the newly demobilised can be effective.
- *Online courses and distance learning*. Online resources and courses should be available for veterans so they can learn at their own time and pace. Thus, the development of platforms for interaction between veterans and teachers online is necessary.
- *Financial support of learning*. The financial support in the form of scholarships, rebates, or grants programmes for veterans can reduce financial constraints.
- *Support in starting business*. Providing educational programmes and counselling for veterans who want to create their own business motivates them and help acquire new experience and skills veterans to achieve their goals. Besides, such an assistance allows veterans to receive new incentives for development. In this regard, access to resources and financial support for entrepreneurial initiatives should be ensured.
- *Courses on soft skills*. Teaching communication, leadership, and other soft skills that can be useful in civilian life and the workplace.
- *Language courses and cultural adaptation*. When reprofiling, veterans should be provided with offers of courses to learn a new language that can be useful for the reintegration of veterans into society.

Therefore, the educational programmes for economic recovery in the context of professional reintegration of war veterans should include the following elements: the development of courses and training in the field of engineering, information technology and other modern industries that are in demand in the labour market; organisation of psychological and social support to facilitate the process of adaptation and interaction of veterans. Moreover, the state should motivate employers to create employment programmes for veterans. In this regard, at the governmental level, an initiative should be developed to support employers so that they understand the unique skills and experience of veterans.

It is also necessary to highlight that the vision of the adaptation programme results, its scope and implementation depend on the characteristics

of the company, industry, strategies, current business and financial situation, the organisational and regional structure, the technologies, corporate culture and traditions, etc. Therefore, the introduction of a welfare component in companies is likely to be easier and more effective in many aspects, since inclusion, well-being and mental health of employees are part of the daily functioning of the organisation.

Companies that have jobs with dangerous and harmful working conditions may argue that they cannot afford to hire veterans due to their medical conditions. In this case, the adaptation of such employees can be aimed at helping them in retraining for a radical career change, establishing their own business, etc. Moreover, an important element of such educational programmes should be the comprehensive development of partnerships with public organisations, non-governmental structures, and enterprises to support veterans.

The implementation of such programmes can greatly contribute to the successful reintegration of veterans into society, providing them with not only educational, but also psychological and social resources. However, it is important to note that the situation on the front line is constantly changing, which can affect the needs and challenges faced by veterans. Therefore, organisations and professionals involved in educational programmes for the adaptation of veterans should adjust and update them taking into account new circumstances and experience gained.

Programmes of educational and professional adaptation should not be limited only to issues of professional training. On the contrary, it should take into account the general well-being of veterans, in particular such an aspect as the mental health of former military personnel. Thus, to ensure the effectiveness of the programme, it is necessary to create mechanisms for its constant monitoring and evaluation. This will allow timely identification of problem areas whilst making adjustments to the programme. It will also help in adapting the programme for different organisations with their unique culture and needs.

Conclusions

The study analysed the international experience of successful programmes implemented in different countries regarding war veterans' retraining. In this regard, the effective strategies for such programmes adopted by international organisations were reviewed.

A review of the theoretical foundations of the development of programmes that work in the field of veteran affairs was carried out. Moreover, the world and local experience of their implementation was analysed. The domestic programmes that work in the sphere of veteran affairs were determined; their specific characteristics were discussed.

As a result of the study, it was found that until 2018, veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war were not a significant focus of the state. Consequently, to close this gap, the main directions of implementation and structural elements of educational programmes at the state level were suggested. Those programmes that were launched by non-governmental organisations should be redesigned from local to national level. The practices of state programmes and non-profit organisations were described, detailing their experience and results for more than 8 years of activity.

Finally, important aspects including psychological adaptation, technical retraining, and entrepreneurship support were examined. The study makes specific proposals for the implementation of educational programmes at the national level. We hope that the article will be useful for policy makers, managers of educational institutions, as well as professionals involved in organisational changes necessary for the adaptation of war veterans who demobilised from the front and returned to civilian life.

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Authors contributions

Authors' contributions are equal.

Availability of data and materials

Data will be available on request.

Consent to participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Consent for publication

All individual participants agreed to be included in the study.

Ethical approval

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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