



**Global Economic Development:  
Context of Russian-Ukrainian War**

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**UKRAINIAN VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT  
UNDER CONDITIONS OF ARMED  
RUSSIAN AGGRESSION:  
OPPORTUNITIES, NATIONAL  
AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES  
FOR UKRAINE'S POST-WAR RECOVERY**

**Abstract**

The authors reveal a vision of the development of the Ukrainian volunteer movement under conditions of armed Russian aggression. The research focus is on identifying the main trends of institutionalization and the dynamics of the development of Ukrainian volunteerism based on the use of modern digital, network, information and communication technologies. Two «waves» of activation of the Ukrainian volunteer movement related to the active phase of the armed conflict in Donbas (2014-2016) and the full-scale invasion that began on February 24, 2022 are analyzed. Two areas for providing volunteer aid to key target groups have been

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identified and substantiated, namely the Ukrainian military and the Armed Forces of Ukraine strengthen the country's defense capabilities, and citizens affected by the armed aggression. Such a structure is used as an end-to-end analytical scheme in the study of various aspects of Ukrainian volunteering under conditions of both surges in the armed conflict (2014-2016 and 2022). The authors determine the specifics of the processes of institutionalization and platformization of Ukrainian volunteering, as well as the main integrated digital platforms of international volunteering to help Ukraine. New global and local challenges, problems and opportunities for the development of the Ukrainian volunteer movement to preserve the country's human potential and strengthen the national, economic, social, and food security of the state are also revealed. The role, significance, opportunities, main tools and functionality of using the potential of information, communication, digital, network technologies in volunteering are shown. It is substantiated that the powerful potential of Ukrainian volunteerism, together with international volunteerism and charity aimed at helping Ukraine, is the basis for the country's post-war recovery. It also contributes to the formation and strengthening of the culture of peace and security at the interstate level, stimulates the formation of a renewed system of European collective security and international cooperation.

### **Key words:**

volunteer movement; institutionalization of volunteering; modern informational, communication and digital technologies; armed aggression.

**JEL:** H54, H56, H57, H80, I38, L31, L86.

4 figures, 21 references.

### **Introduction**

Ukraine is undergoing an existential test with the war unleashed by Russia. In this war, our state daily experiences unprecedented human losses, large-scale financial and economic losses, significant destruction of the industrial and infrastructural potential which was developed over many years.

Russia's full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine is not only a fundamental threat to the existence of the Ukrainian state, it is a real challenge to the global system of collective security, generating threats of a global scale, primarily in the security and humanitarian spheres. The full-scale Russian invasion on the territory of Ukraine is not a local, but a global problem that affects the life of the international, primarily European, community and becomes the most serious challenge to European stability and security. Therefore, a worthy rebuff to armed aggression and counteracting its consequences requires the mobilization of available resources at all levels – from local to global.

The world community, having supported Ukraine in repelling armed aggression, demonstrates high cohesion and readiness to consolidate assistance in rebuilding the affected Ukrainian economy. The creation of a joint long-term instrument for infrastructure reconstruction, institutional modernization, and economic transformation has already been virtually guaranteed to Ukraine by its allies, primarily the USA and the EU. In Ukraine, the development and strategy of post-war reconstruction has been announced, which will contribute to the progress of Ukraine as a candidate country for EU membership, and will create the basis for receiving resource and organizational support from the inclusion of Ukraine in pan-European programs, regional and cross-border cooperation. A national action plan for post-war reconstruction of the country is already being developed (the National Council for Post-War Reconstruction of Ukraine was already established in April 2022 by the Decree of the President of Ukraine).

One of the most powerful manifestations of the mobilization of internal social resources of civil society are self-organizing processes aimed at solving the most acute problems that arose in connection with armed aggression and post-war reconstruction. A vivid manifestation of such self-organization was the flare of volunteer activity of Ukrainians, which reveals the powerful force of civil society as a subject of social transformations in Ukraine. Previous experience has shown that volunteering is a flexible and effective internal mechanism of social self-organization of citizens of Ukraine, which mobilizes and directs resources to preserve the lives and health of citizens, to solve acute problems of socio-economic and security areas in critical situations, in *force majeure* circumstances.

The volunteer movement in Ukraine has its own history of initiation and development, but it fits into the general context of global trends of volunteering. The first flare of volunteer activity that covered the entire country started at the end of 2013, and unfolded with particular force in 2014-2016 in connection with the armed conflict in Donbas. This is the first wave of the explosive growth of the volunteer movement. After that, a certain lull lasted for several years. At that time, the localization of volunteer aid was determined by the urgent need to save the lives of people in the occupied territories, support the Ukrainian military (volunteer battalions, the Armed Forces of Ukraine), and help displaced people from the armed conflict zone. The mobilization of civil society resources in Ukraine was implemented precisely through volunteering in connection with the external

threat of the loss of the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state. Such a factor is not typical for the activation of the volunteer movement in other countries of the world. This is Ukrainian specificity.

Since February 24, 2022, the full-scale invasion has caused the second wave of an explosive flare of the volunteer movement in Ukraine, which unfolded immediately *en masse* with full force and power. The experience of public self-organization acquired during 2014-2016 has become extremely useful. As a matter of fact, Ukraine faced the same challenges, but on an incomparably greater scale and severity, and with a much greater destructive power of the enemy. Large-scale armed aggression has become a challenge not only for Ukraine, but also for the entire world community.

### **Problem Statement and Literature Review**

The emergence and development of new forms of interaction and communication of its participants, based on the use of modern information, communication and network technologies, became a special important aspect that requires a substantive study of the volunteer movement in Ukraine. The study of these issues, the search for ways of further development and the involvement of volunteering resources (especially using a modern technological base) is an important task for scientists, practitioners, public figures, and representatives of the volunteer movement. In the strategic context, we are talking about revealing the internal reserves of Ukrainian society through volunteering under conditions of limited resources and armed aggression, taking into account the needs of further post-war recovery of Ukraine.

Research activity on the study of the nature of Ukrainian volunteering in conditions of armed aggression is closely related to periods of intensification of military confrontation. Thus, the first large-scale wave of research coincided with the first wave of activation of the volunteer movement (2014-2016) under conditions of the first active phase of the armed conflict in Donbas in 2014-2016. In particular, among the studies of the first wave, it is worth noting the research of the Institute of Social and Political Psychology (Sliusarevskyi, 2015), the works of D. Horielov and O. Kornievskyi (2015), O. Balakirieva, T. Bondar and D. Dmytruk (2015) and many others. Volunteering, as a rule, was considered by most authors as a manifestation of the activation of social resources of civil society (Pankova et al., 2016a), which has a powerful internal resource potential (Pankova et al., 2016b). Research was also conducted on the risks and conditions of volunteering (Vedeneev & Turchak, 2018).

The volunteer movement in Ukraine did not stop during the COVID-19 pandemic; on the contrary, it was replenished with new forms of work, as online

volunteering was spreading widely (Zatsnova, 2020). Civic involvement and the Ukrainian volunteer movement continued to develop in the period between the two waves of aggression. The results of the measurement of the World Giving Index testify to powerful positive changes in the development of civil society in Ukraine, in particular volunteerism and charity (Charities Aid Foundation, 2021). From 2017 to 2021, Ukraine rose from 81st to 20th place in the World Charity Index. All three indicators (cash donations, helping strangers and volunteering) improved, and the combined index was 43% (compared to 29% in 2018). These are the data of the new World Philanthropy Index presented by CAF and Gallup's World View World Poll. The ranking reflects the state of private philanthropy in 2021, when the COVID-19 pandemic raged around the world. The study was conducted in 114 countries, which is about 90% of the adult population of the planet Earth. There is no doubt that armed Russian aggression further stimulated the development of the Ukrainian volunteer and charity movement.

The second wave of activation of volunteerism, associated with the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, again brought the study of this phenomenon into focus, given the scale and real role played by volunteerism in resisting armed aggression and overcoming its consequences. Thus, the thoughts and moods of Ukrainians, their volunteering and charitable involvement, social well-being in the conditions of war are systematically measured by the sociological group «Rating» (Sociological group «Rating», 2022). Specialists of the National Institute of Strategic Studies are studying the economic principles of promoting community cohesion in the current period (Khymynets et al., 2022). The Ukrainian scientific community, together with representatives of state authorities, are actively conducting expert discussions on the development of the Post-War Recovery Strategy for Ukraine (National Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022).

**The research problem** lies in the formation of a holistic vision of the key development trends, the role and significance of Ukrainian volunteering as a powerful internal resource of civil society – as an active subject that opposes armed Russian aggression and overcomes its destructive consequences. The basis of the formation of a holistic vision regarding the promising directions of the development of volunteering in Ukraine is a comparison of two waves of the surge in volunteering (active phases: 2014-2016 and 2022), which will allow us to identify the key trends in the development of volunteering and the most significant factors affecting it, in particular – to identify qualitative changes in the organization of volunteer activity and, on this basis, to substantiate promising directions for its further development.

**The aim of the study** is to analyze volunteer activity in Ukraine during two waves of armed conflict (2014-2016, 2022), to identify key trends (in particular, the impact of digitalization) in the context of national and global challenges, and opportunities for post-war recovery.

## Research Results

*The main target groups and areas of volunteering in Ukraine in the conditions of armed aggression in 2014-2022*

Determining the structure of the main directions of volunteering and target groups allows us to reveal the content, dynamics and specifics of volunteering in Ukraine during the first (2014-2016) and second (after February 24, 2022) waves of armed Russian aggression. Today, the focus of Ukrainian volunteering primarily concerns two main target groups of citizens: Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), defenders, servicemen – volunteer aid to the Armed Forces of Ukraine both in the zone of active hostilities and in the rear; and citizens (civilian population) who suffered in one way or another as a result of armed aggression.

The comprehensive structure of volunteer activities in Ukraine regarding the strengthening of the country's defense capabilities, providing aid to the Armed Forces of Ukraine (both in the zone of active hostilities and in the rear) is presented in figure 1.

However, volunteer aid under the conditions of a full-scale invasion is widely provided not only to military personnel, but also to citizens of Ukraine. Among Ukrainian citizens affected by armed aggression, three key subgroups can be distinguished (Fig. 2), each having its own characteristics, problems and needs. First subgroup includes internally displaced persons and their families who moved from temporarily occupied territories and front-line zones. The second refers to residents of front-lines and temporarily occupied territories who have not left their place of residence (as a separate addressee from this group, the relevant territorial communities as a whole can be considered – in some places, volunteers also help at the community level, providing, for example, medicine to local hospitals. The third subgroup considers the population of the de-occupied territories, who need help in restoring their own living conditions – primarily housing, infrastructure, access to the most necessary things like gas, water, electricity, transport, medical services, etc.

By analogy, the comprehensive structure of areas of volunteer activity in Ukraine regarding the provision of volunteer aid to citizens who suffered in one way or another due to full-scale armed aggression is presented in figure 2.

The proposed comprehensive structure of the directions of volunteer activity regarding the provision of aid to various target groups can serve as an end-to-end analytical scheme in the study of various aspects of Ukrainian volunteering under the conditions of two waves of armed conflict (2014-2016 and 2022) and further reasoning of priorities aimed at the development of volunteering and the involvement of its potential in overcoming the consequences of armed aggression and further post-war recovery of Ukraine.

Figure 1

**Comprehensive structure of areas of volunteer activity related to strengthening the country's defense capabilities, providing aid to the Armed Forces of Ukraine**

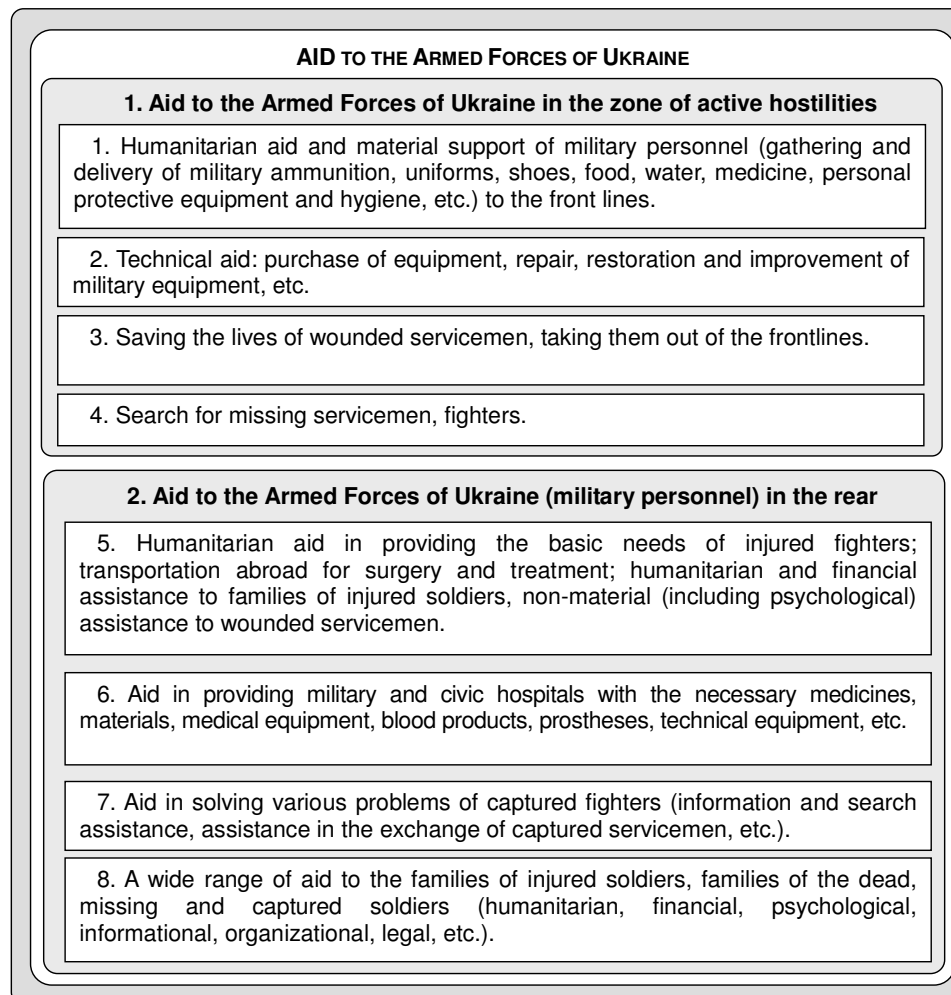
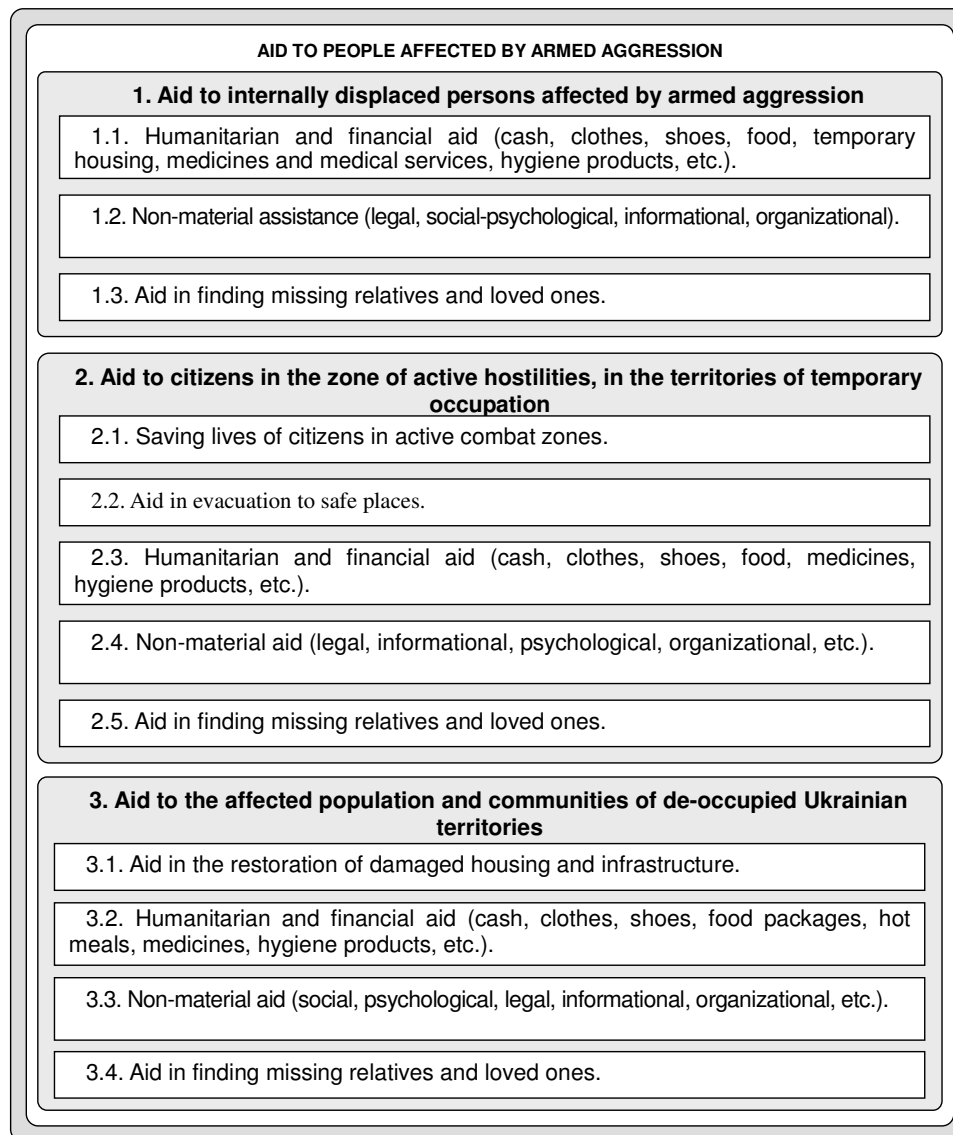


Figure 2

**Comprehensive structure of areas of providing volunteer aid to the citizens and population of Ukraine who suffered due to the full-scale armed aggression**





The analysis should be focused on the dynamics of the development of volunteering in comparison of its first and second waves from the point of view of two key aspects: changes in the content and scope of volunteer activities (processes, trends and factors of institutionalization, changes in target groups, ways of aid, specific aspects of aid on which volunteers focus, etc.); and features and main directions of using the possibilities of digital, information and communication technologies in the implementation of volunteer activities under conditions of armed aggression.

At the same time, it should be noted that these two aspects are inextricably linked with each other, and the directions and forms of institutionalization and transformation of the volunteer movement are closely correlated with the transformations taking place in the field of modern digital, information and communication technologies, the development of which directly affects the organizational, informational and communicative component of volunteer activity in Ukraine.

We should also note that the rapid spread and use of modern digital, information, communication and network technologies, the implementation of platform ideology in the field of volunteering in Ukraine is not a consequence of a *force majeure* situation associated with the start of an undeclared full-scale war. This process is due to the internal logic of the comprehensive spread of modern digital technologies in virtually all spheres of social and economic life of society (which accelerated and manifested itself with particular force during the COVID-19 pandemic), including the sphere of volunteerism.

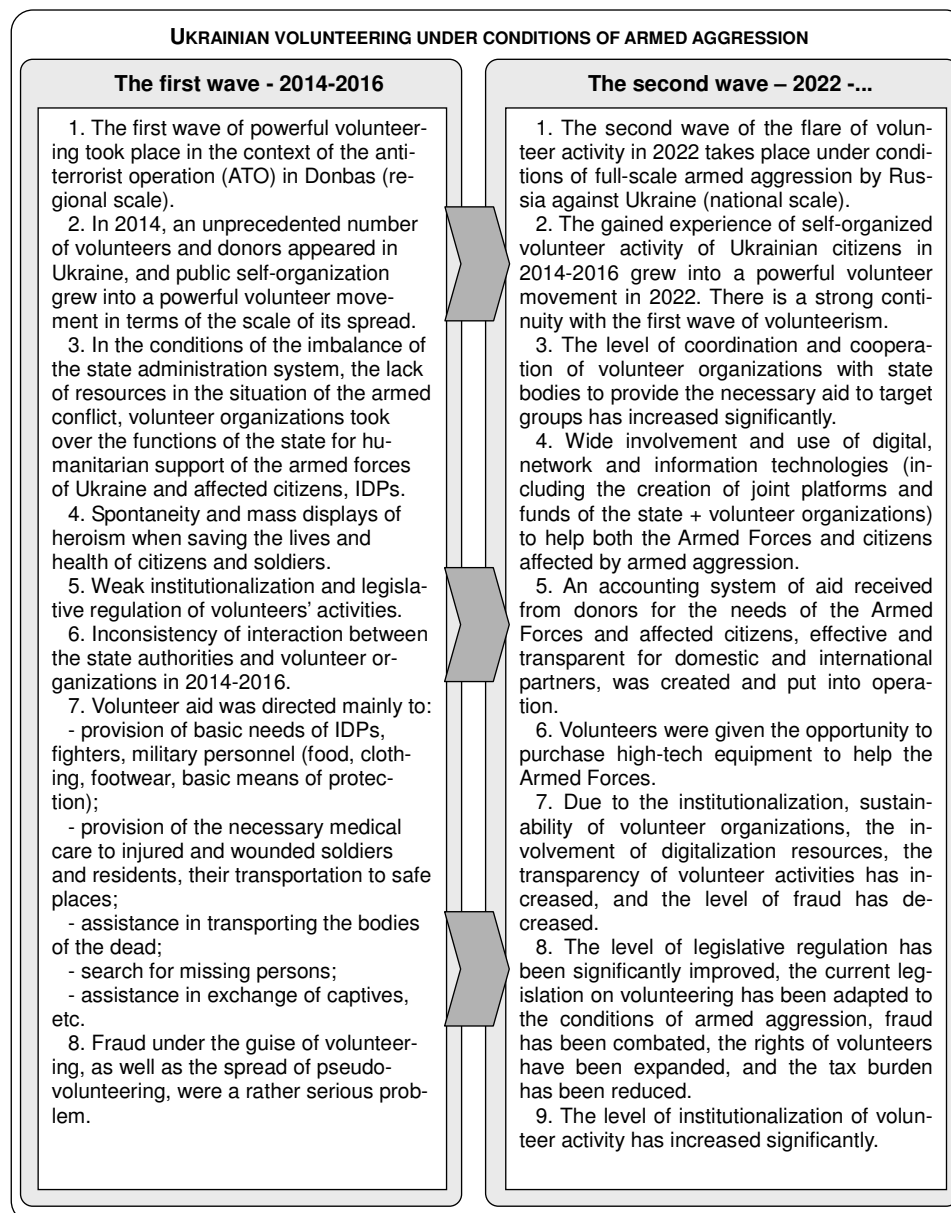
A comparison of the key features of volunteer aid to the main target groups during the first and second waves is shown in figure 3.

As we can see, the processes of development of the volunteer movement in general can be described by the triad of **institutionalization** (as the formation of powerful volunteer organizations that have significant experience, organizational and financial capacity and are characterized by a high level of authority and trust), **platformization** (as a process of combining various aspects and components of the implementation of volunteering activities with the help of Internet information and communication platforms that ensure effective interaction of all participants – volunteers themselves, donors/benefactors, government bodies and aid recipients), and **network-ization** (as a process of gradually transferring a significant part of interaction to the Internet and combining all participants into a certain interconnected and multi-branched system that has a network, not a hierarchical structure).

It is obvious that platformization and network-ization are inextricably linked, on the one hand, with the development of modern information, communication and digital technologies, and on the other hand, with the capabilities and skills of the subjects of volunteer activity to use the potential of these technologies for interaction and implementation of their tasks.

Figure 3

### Generalized comparative analysis of two waves of volunteer activity helping the Armed Forces and citizens affected by armed aggression



In this context, the development of the use of modern information, communication and digital technologies in volunteer activities is of great interest. In a generalized form, the key changes regarding the use of these technologies in the first and second waves of the volunteering flare (both in terms of technologies and content of activities) are shown in figure 4.

As we can see, the use of modern information, communication and digital technologies in volunteer activities has reached a qualitatively new level, and this is one of the key factors that contributed to the powerful institutionalization of the volunteer movement in Ukraine.

In the context of the above-mentioned triad institutionalization – platformization – network-ization of volunteer activity, the analysis allows us to determine the key trends of its development in Ukraine as a manifestation of a certain symbiosis of the processes of the development of volunteerism and the development of modern technologies. These processes take place in parallel and synchronously, both in the field of actual volunteering and in the field of information and communication technologies, when the use of the capacities of these technologies in volunteering contributes to the development and institutionalization of the volunteering movement in Ukraine during the transition from the first to the second wave. Understanding these manifestations creates the necessary research, organizational and management context, which allows us to provide a systematic vision of the development of volunteer activity and is a necessary condition for ensuring the adoption of effective management decisions. The main among these trends are the following.

First, **institutionalization of volunteerism through its platformization** – the creation of Internet platforms, web portals, information and communication platforms, the purpose of which is to combine the resources of volunteers, state authorities, donors, benefactors, as well as directly those who need volunteer assistance, through the creation of a united collective space for all information and communication. There are many examples of platformization of the interaction involved in the implementation of volunteer activities and receiving assistance: the online platform «People for Ukraine»; the online platform «Volunteering in Ukraine»<sup>1</sup> became the leading network volunteer resource, it is an online portal that synthesizes volunteering resources throughout Ukraine and is an information and communication platform for the interaction of volunteers, citizens in need of aid, with non-profit public and charitable organizations (this platform provides opportunities to volunteer in international organizations); the online platform «Work in the rear»<sup>2</sup>, which helps to find volunteers for those who need extra hands and to finding initiatives for those who want to help. There are many such platforms, we mentioned only some main ones.

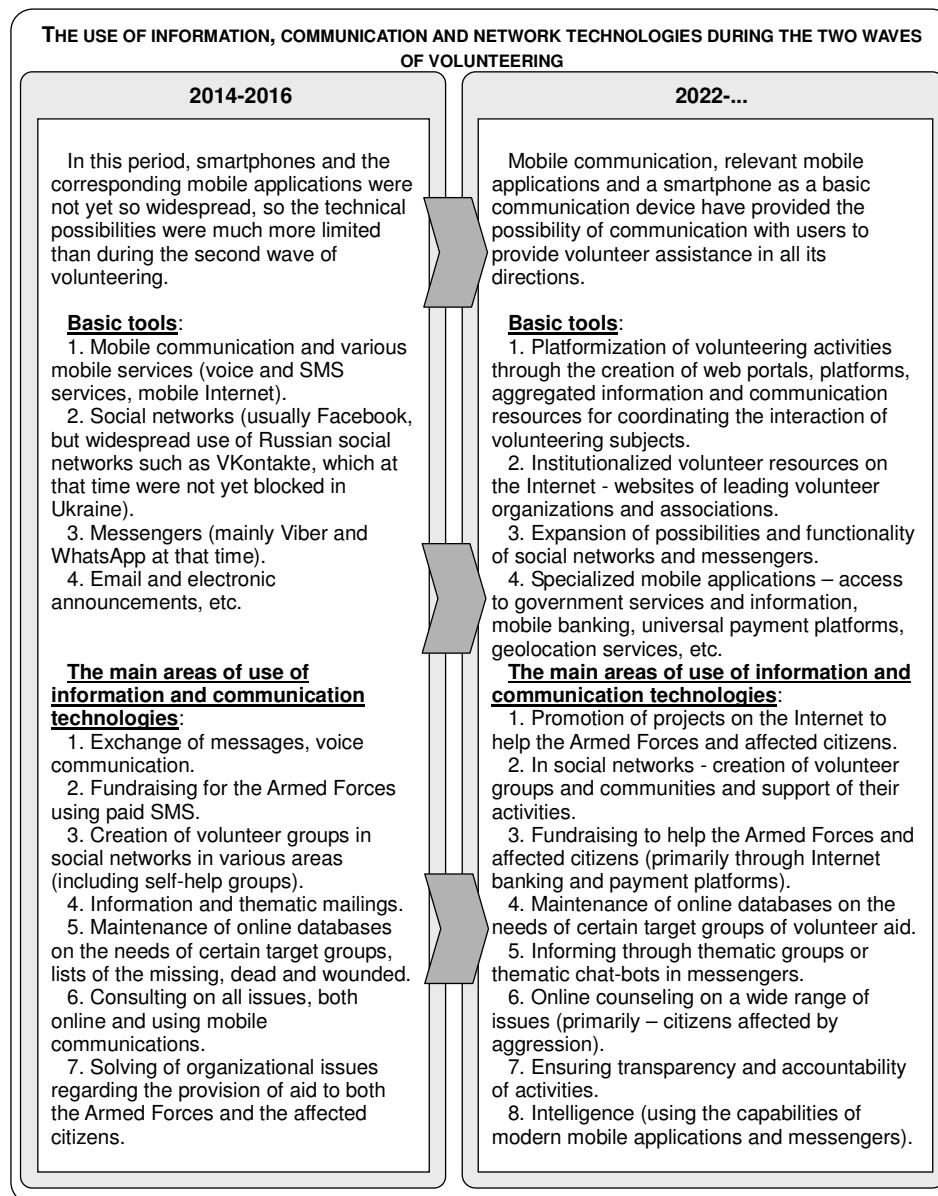
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<sup>1</sup> <https://platforma.volunteer.country/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://v-tylu.work/en/>

Figure 4

**Generalized comparative analysis of key changes regarding the use of information, communication and digital technologies in the first and second waves of volunteering**



Second, **institutionalization and platformization of international volunteering and philanthropy** to help Ukraine in conditions of armed aggression. List of main international information platforms and resources (Career Hub, 2022):

1. **CLEAR Global and Translators without borders** have launched a program to support Ukrainian refugees, within the framework of which they are going to translate written documents regarding the safety and protection of migrants, their access to various services, UN orders and instructions, etc.

2. The **UA Aid Center** portal has collected an online directory of contacts and addresses of more than 350 verified centers and warehouses for helping Ukrainians in 23 countries of the world, 19 verified organizations that raise funds and use them to help the army and the civilian population. The portal also has a list of essential items for military, medics and civilians.

3. Information platforms **Help People Leave Ukraine, Tarjimly** are looking for volunteers who can host Ukrainians in their homes, help them with clothes, food or car transportation. In order to avoid fraud and other criminal acts against Ukrainian refugees, all those who offer help for the first time must confirm their identity.

4. The information platform **Support Ukraine Now** contains information about official fundraising funds, requests for assistance, placement of Ukrainians abroad.

5. The **Shelter for Ukraine** service helps evacuated Ukrainians find temporary housing abroad, and helps volunteers offer their housing for shelter.

6. The information site **Russia invaded Ukraine** contains information about the situation in Ukraine, the course of military operations and instructions on how to help and support Ukraine in the confrontation with the Russian aggressor.

7. The **Ukraine Helpers** online hub is aimed at accumulating the most urgent needs of Ukrainians during the war (necessary things requested by official organizations; addresses of warehouses for receiving humanitarian aid in various countries of the world; a list of charitable funds and organizations in Ukraine and abroad; a list of housing, etc.); people from all over the world can help.

8. The line of humanitarian mail from **Nova Poshta Global** works for volunteer organizations and people from all over the world who want to help Ukraine. It is enough for volunteers to send or bring things to one of the warehouses in their country.

9. The international humanitarian headquarters at the Lviv customs office **DopomohtyUALviv** directs its work to help the Ukrainian army.

10. **MacPaw Development Foundation** is a non-profit organization dedicated to obtaining and distributing food, medical supplies, hygiene products and other humanitarian aid to those in need.

Third, **institutionalization of volunteering** due to the emergence of powerful **institutionalized volunteer internet resources, portals** (websites of leading volunteer organizations and associations – Wings of the Phoenix, Return Alive, SOS Army, Donbas SOS, Serhiy Prytula Charitable Fund, People's Project and others). A key feature of these resources and related volunteer organizations is the extremely high authority and level of trust that resulted from their productive activities, starting with the first wave in 2014-2016. They have what is called *institutional trust* in sociology, the presence of which significantly increases the efficiency, scale and speed of interaction. In crisis situations, it is trust that is extremely important for the effective unification of the efforts of the subjects of interaction and the solution of the most acute problems.

Fourth, **institutionalization of volunteering** through the expansion of the spectrum of volunteer activity, the emergence of specific areas, **the basis and necessary condition of which is the maximum use of modern information, communication, network and digital technologies**. The digital and network environment in itself becomes a field for the emergence and development of online volunteerism, for the implementation of many areas of volunteer activity – primarily in countermeasures in information warfare, providing information on the actions of the enemy, searching for missing persons, intelligence activities, etc. For example, specialized Telegram channels (Internet Viys'ka Ukrayiny, IT Army of Ukraine), social networks, Internet pages of volunteer organizations, where operative and up-to-date information about the war, about the needs of military personnel and forced migrants is posted. The Volunteer Information Front<sup>3</sup> media platform was created and operates in Ukraine to support volunteer organizations and coordinate their activities to provide assistance to the armed forces.

Fifth, the key technical and technological trend in the use of information, communication, digital and network technologies by volunteers is **transferring a significant share of interaction to the sphere of using mobile devices (first of all – smartphones)** through the introduction of mobile versions of websites, social networks and various mobile applications. This was facilitated by the mass spread of smartphones as the main and, at the same time, complex individualized tools of communication, with the corresponding development of mobile Internet, media, geolocation, etc. At the same time, the basis of this trend is the increase in the speed and availability of mobile Internet. In accordance with this technical and technological trend, volunteering receives powerful support in the network not only through specialized platforms, but also, for example, through the implementation of relevant mobile applications (Hromadskyi Prostir, 2022), distribution of reminders and instructions on the involvement of citizens in volun-

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/vif.krop/>

teer activities (Mirer, 2022). Issues related to the development of interaction between volunteers and local authorities are also considered (Dubyna-Lytvynenko, 2022).

Therefore, under conditions of full-scale armed aggression, modern network, digital, information and communication technologies ensure strategic and tactical communications and, in many cases remain, almost the only means of maintaining interaction, cohesion and coordination of joint efforts of partners, communities, and organizations to ensure fruitful cooperation for providing help. Without these technologies, a large number of activities, projects, initiatives to help the army and the people would simply be impossible. The predominance of young people among those who are involved in one or another form of volunteering indicates, firstly, the presence of significant potential for the further development of volunteering in Ukraine, and secondly, the prospects of using the latest network technologies in volunteering activities, with the use of which young people are well acquainted. So, in Ukraine, there is a powerful social base for the further development of volunteering, which is focused on using the possibilities of modern digital, network, information and communication technologies.

## **Conclusions**

The volunteer movement in Ukraine, which became more active in the conditions of armed aggression, became a manifestation of the powerful internal resource of civil society, the cohesion of active, conscious citizens, volunteer organizations and associations in Ukraine and abroad. It has already formed a new culture aimed at spreading the values of peace and security, responsibility, and humanism.

The volunteering experience gained by Ukrainian society, during both the first and the second wave, is extremely valuable from the point of view of both mobilizing internal resources of civil society to solve current tasks and overcoming challenges, and in a strategic perspective – as an important social tool for the post-war recovery of Ukraine, as a powerful force for the development of civil society in Ukraine and, accordingly, the formation of Ukraine as a modern European state.

The results of the conducted research testify to the large-scale and constantly growing use of the potential of modern information, communication, digital and network technologies in the organization of volunteering in Ukraine, with a pronounced tendency to its institutionalization through the processes of platformization and network-ization of volunteering activities.

The key trends in the development of Ukrainian volunteering at this stage include a significant increase in the level of institutionalization of the volunteer

movement, formation of powerful volunteer organizations with a high level of authority and trust. Situational and pseudo-volunteer structures have been largely weeded out. The range and scale of aid, the organizational and financial capacity of volunteer organizations have significantly increased (and continue to increase). The degree of use of modern information and communication and network technologies has significantly increased, the platformization of volunteer activities has become the communicative and technological basis of interaction both within the volunteer community itself and in the circle of interaction with target groups and donors. This contributes to the unification of the efforts of all partners (including state authorities), ensures a significant increase in the number of users of volunteer Internet resources.

The specified key trends largely allow us to determine the effective directions of the state policy regarding the development of the volunteer movement in Ukraine in the context of national and global challenges, resistance to armed aggression and the possibilities of Ukraine's post-war recovery.

The Ukrainian experience of volunteering has shown its role and significance in strengthening the national, economic, social, and food security of the state; in preserving the country's human potential, strengthening the country's defense capabilities and overcoming the devastating consequences of war.

The powerful potential of Ukrainian volunteerism, together with international volunteerism and charity aimed at helping Ukraine, serves as the basis for the post-war recovery of the country, contributes to the formation and strengthening of a culture of peace and security at the interstate level, and stimulates the formation of a renewed system of European collective security and international cooperation.

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