

Educational Trajectories and Career Paths.

Research Findings for the “Start: Career” Programme

August 2025

Methodology



Research methodology [1/2]

The research is based on an approach that combines qualitative analysis drawing on **(1) individual interviews and focus group discussions** with students of vocational education institutions and participants of the “Start: Career” training sessions, and **(2) consultations with staff of vocational education institutions**. The collected data were processed using the method of inductive content analysis: meaningful units were identified, summarised, and grouped into themes without a pre-defined analytical framework. This approach made it possible to reconstruct the key perceptions, needs, and barriers of participants in the educational process, as well as to distinguish common patterns and differences between the target groups.¹

Individual interviews and focus group discussions



Data collection method: Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with young people aged 15–35 who were either (1) students or graduates of vocational education institutions, or (2) participants of the *Start: Career* training sessions. Each discussion lasted 15–68 minutes. A unified interview protocol was used to ensure consistency.

Topics covered: Employment opportunities and expectations, career development vision, learning experience, and perceptions of the role of non-formal and vocational education.

Data collection period: July – August 2025

Consultations with vocational education staff



Data collection method: Online discussions with staff from 39 vocational education institutions in Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Odesa regions. A total of 48 specialists took part, including teachers, methodologists, vocational training masters, deputy heads for educational work, directors, and admissions office staff.

Topics covered: Assessment of young people's educational needs, participation in educational programmes, barriers to implementing educational initiatives, and interaction between educational institutions and external partners.

Data collection period: June – August 2025

Research methodology [2/2]

Survey structure

Slides
8-15

Career development and economic situation

Assessment of formal and informal employment, barriers to entering the labour market, and expectations regarding financial stability and career progression.

Slides
16-20

Educational trajectory and skills

Experience of formal education, confidence in professional and basic skills, plans for continuing education, and attitude towards the learning process.

Slides
21-23

Social environment and support

The role of family, friends, teachers, and the environment in choosing an educational or career path, the presence of role models, and the influence of support or pressure.

Slides
24-31

Non-formal and professional education

Previous experience in non-formal educational programmes, assessment of their effectiveness and interest, priority topics, motivational factors, as well as barriers and factors influencing course completion.



Sampling of respondents

- **Educational institutions.** Some respondents were recruited through information shared by school administrations, teachers, and student group mentors.
- **Social media and professional groups.** Invitations to participate were widely circulated via Telegram and Facebook channels focused on education, professional development, and career opportunities. This approach allowed the survey to reach interested individuals beyond specific educational institutions.
- **Personal invitations.** Direct invitations to potential participants encouraged more motivated responses. In particular, participants of previous stages of the “Start: Career” programme received personal invitations.
- **Participant recommendations.** Some respondents invited other participants from their own social circles.
- **Non-thematic local chats.** Information about the survey was circulated in local online communities not directly related to education, which helped to engage a more diverse and varied audience.
- **Representatives of territorial communities.** Invitations were disseminated through communication channels of the communities (both public and private).

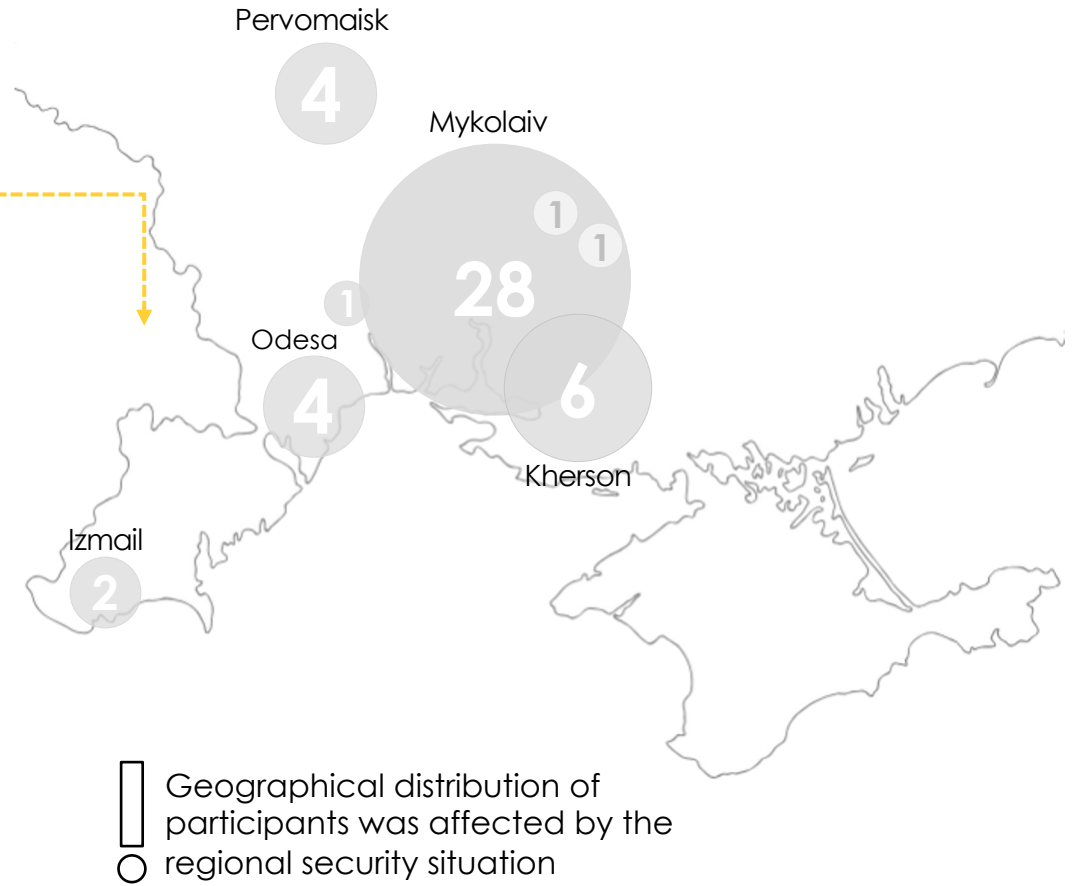
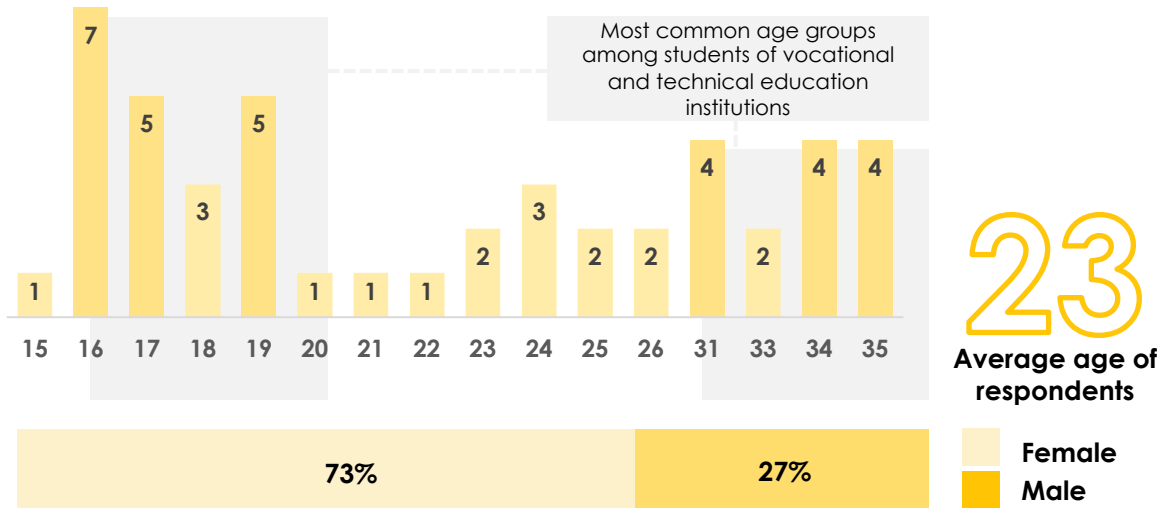
Respondent sample

13 in-depth interviews and 5 focus group discussions were conducted, with a total of 47 participants from Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Odesa regions.

Online discussions with **48 representatives** of vocational and technical education institutions (teachers, methodologists, vocational training instructors, administration, and admissions staff) from **39 institutions**.

40 respondents from **22 vocational and technical education institutions**.

7 participants from previous stages of the “Start: Career” project.

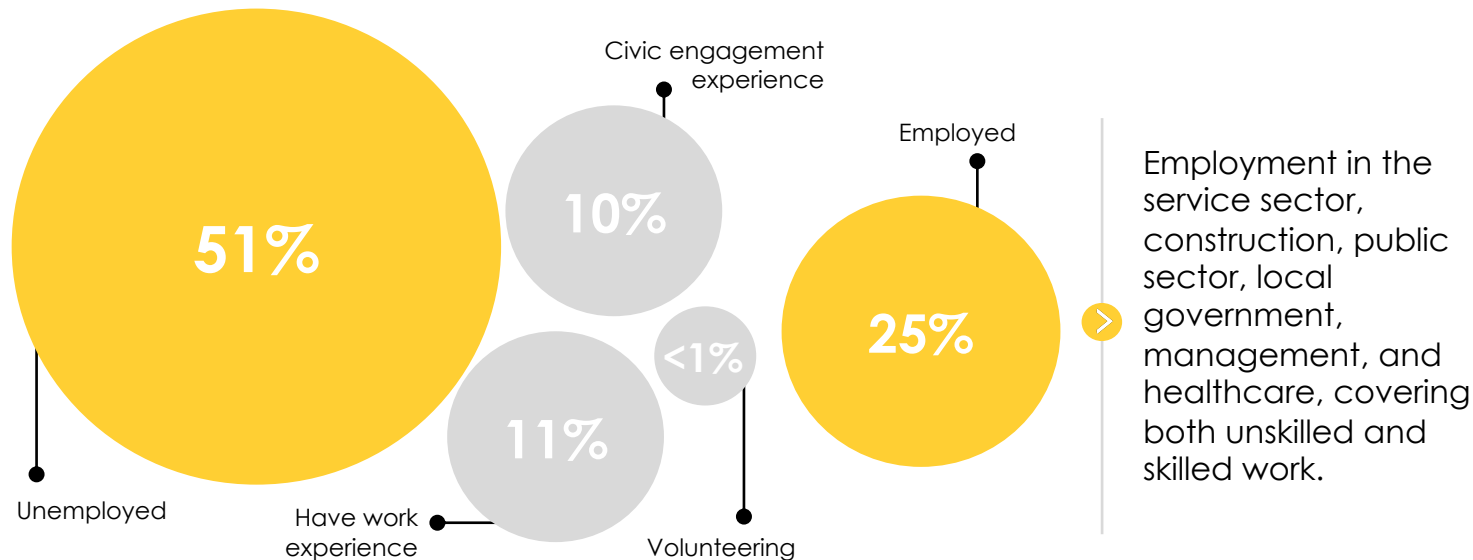


Career development & economic situation



Low employment levels among respondents under 21 are accompanied by relatively high civic engagement

Current employment experience [Are you currently employed? If so, in what role? If you have previous work experience, please also share details about it.]



Employment status group, primarily relevant for respondents aged 15–20 years.

The employment indicator primarily covers respondents aged 21 and older

“No, I am not currently employed, but I have previous experience. At the age of 12, I became the youngest volunteer in Mykolaiv.”

Female, 15 years old, Mykolaiv

“In fact, I am not working at the moment because, at 16, there are very few job opportunities. I've looked but had no success.”

Female, 16 years old, Mykolaiv

“I have been working in local government for two years now. However, this is actually my second job, before that I worked in another place, in the civil service.”

Female, 23 years old, Mykolaiv

A basic level of economic security and household stability is achieved, while there remains a need for increased income and financial opportunities

Current economic situation

[Are all your basic needs and those of your family currently being met? This includes access to sufficient food, housing, and so on.]

“ Well, at the moment, yes. My income comes from payments for internally displaced persons, since we moved from Kherson to Mykolaiv. This covers me and the children, plus what my husband contributes.”

Female, 35 years old, Mykolaiv

“ [...] Basic needs – yes. Of course, we always want something more, something better.”

Female, 23 years old, Mykolaiv

“ We live in our own home in Kherson, so yes, all our needs are more or less met.”

Female, 26 years old, Kherson

100%

None of the participants reported situations threatening basic well-being, such as lack of housing, inability to afford food, or unmet essential household needs.

Most respondents do not report having financial confidence or a stable and secure income, which would give them the opportunity to make long-term plans or invest in their own development.

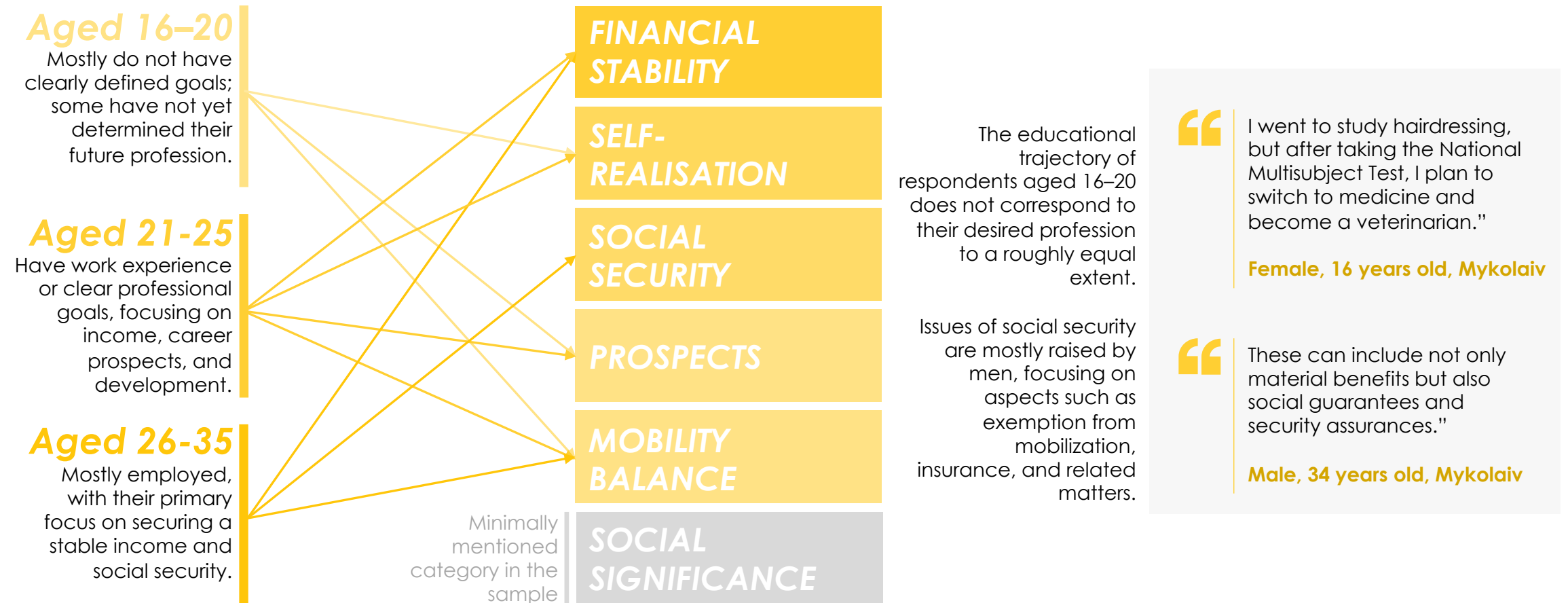
The desire for a higher income appears consistently in responses, particularly among older participants aged 25 and above, who are already responsible for their family's needs.

Younger respondents (aged 15–17) generally do not provide detailed information about their household's financial situation, offering only a general positive assessment.

Thus, the overall level of economic security can be described as **sufficient to maintain household stability.**

Age groups show a clear progression from a focus on **finding a vocation** to a focus on **financial** and **social security**

Economic goals and desired job [What are your economic goals? Please tell us what kind of job you would most like to have.]



Salary forms the **basis for job choice**, but the decisive factors are **personal, professional, and organizational conditions**

Factors influencing job choice [What factors are decisive for you when choosing a job?]



“

First of all, it's the team. Because if the work environment and colleagues are not good, no salary will help you at all."

Female, 19 years old, Mykolaiv

“

For me, a major need is improving my qualifications. It may not come up very often, but growth in any profession I work in is important. I can also say that a good team matters."

Female, 35 years old, Mykolaiv

“

Opportunities for personal development are my first and main priority. Salary has now become relevant for me. If I work for someone, I am very particular about the environment and team I am in."

Female, 35 years old, Kherson

Respondents aged 16–18 find it relatively more difficult to describe the factors influencing their job choice.

The majority of career paths available to young people belong to service-oriented sectors

Available employment sectors [In your opinion, which employment sectors are the most accessible for young people in your region?]



Most respondents indicate that employment in the service sector is the most accessible.

“As a shop assistant. As a barista too. Working in a café. Making coffee. These cigarette kiosks that are open.”

Woman, 19 years old, Kherson

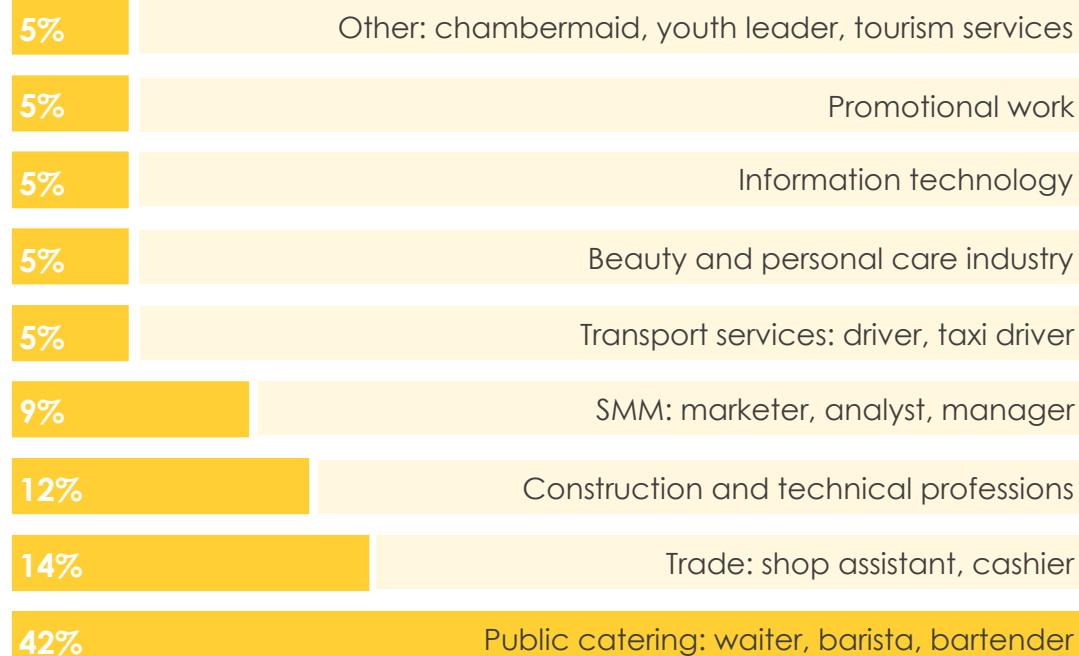
“The service sector is quite developed. And it's very easy for young people to take up this kind of job and get hired.”

Woman, 35 years old, Kherson

“Sales assistant, then waiter, bartender, probably also some chambermaids in hotels. Such low-level positions.”

Woman, 19 years old, Mykolaiv

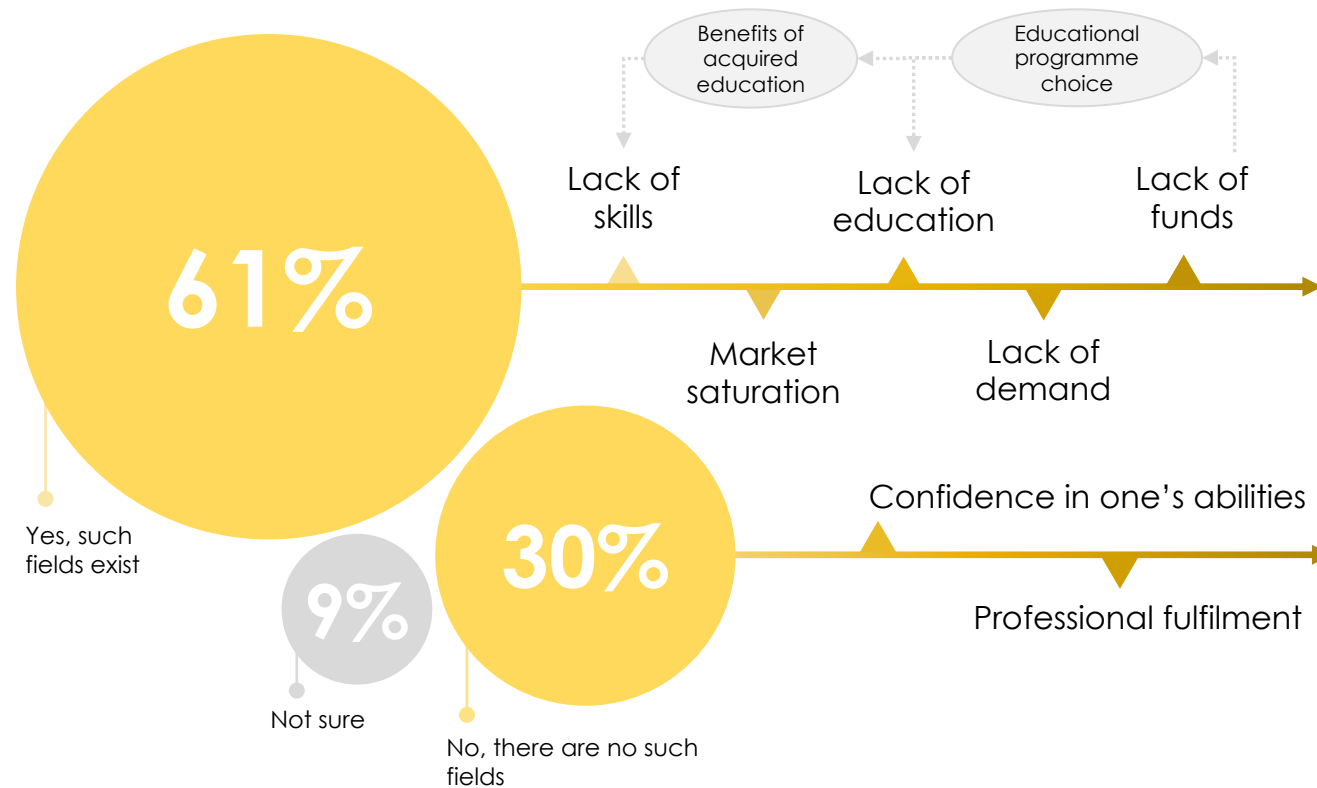
Some young people are not familiar with the labour market and do not have information about available career opportunities.



The responses reflect the persistence of gender-segregated perceptions of the labour market, where certain sectors are seen as “typically male” or “typically female.”

The reasons for **unattainable career goals** include both **personal factors**, such as **skills, education, and confidence**, and **external ones**, such as **labour market imbalances**

Unattainable career opportunities [Are there professional fields you would like to work in but consider difficult or unattainable? If so, please share the reasons why.]



“ I don't know. For example, I would really like to work in IT, but I don't have the experience or the skills.”

Female, 23 years old, Mykolaiv

“ I would like to continue developing as a researcher, but at the moment I cannot work remotely as I did before due to certain payment restrictions.”

Female, 35 years old, Kherson

“ I don't know, probably there isn't a field where I would want to work that would be unattainable. I believe that if you know your goal and pursue it, you can achieve anything, in principle.”

Female, 19 years old, Mykolaiv

The most common **barriers** to youth employment are **lack of experience**, **age restrictions**, and a limited number of job opportunities

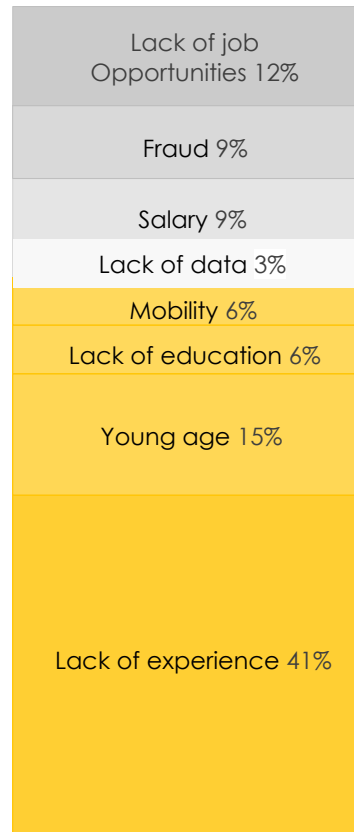
Barriers to job search [What are the main barriers young people face when looking for work in your region? Or which barriers have you personally encountered?]

Employment challenges are further exacerbated by the widespread prevalence of **informal work**, instances of employer **fraud**, and **intense competition** for available jobs, partly due to internal displacement of people within the region.

The lack of systematic **communication channels** between employers and young people, combined with limited visibility of legal vacancies, creates an **information vacuum** that exacerbates other barriers to employment.

Labour market
characteristics
(32%)

Personal
characteristics
(68%)



“

Basically, finding a job in Kherson right now is extremely difficult. There are constant shellings, something is always being hit. If you just look at the news, a café burned down, another building was hit.”

Female, 26 years old, Kherson

“

The requirements are very high; some experience is needed. But where can you gain that experience if no one hires without it?”

Female, 31 years old, Mykolaiv

“

It's most likely due to my age and the lack of formal education.”

Female, 19 years old, Kherson

Educational trajectory & skills

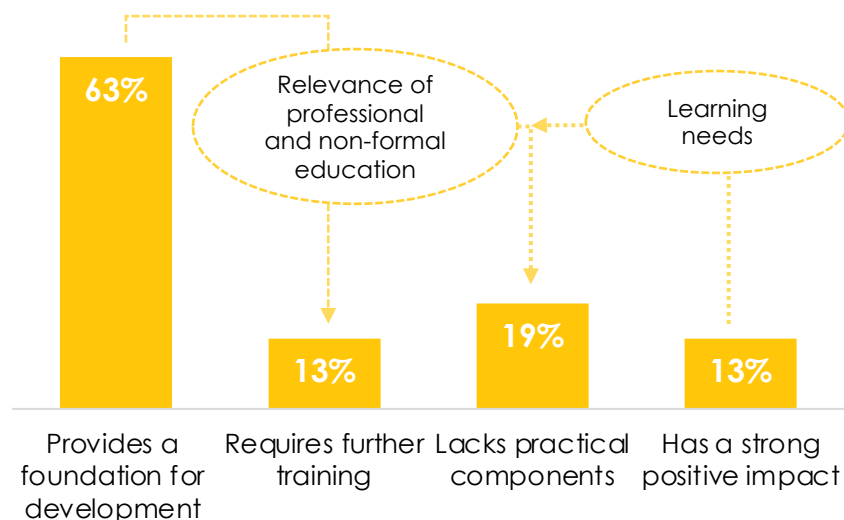


Knowledge and skills acquired in vocational education institutions **only partially meet the requirements** of the labour market

Current education, assessment of knowledge and skills acquired during studies [Are you currently undertaking any education? Could you tell us more about it (for instance, whether it is within the formal education system or in a non-formal learning setting)? How do you evaluate the impact of the knowledge and skills gained during your current educational programme on your professional future?]

100%

Among the respondents, there was not a single individual who reported receiving education in non-formal education institutions on a regular or continuous basis.



Some respondents **no longer identify with their chosen educational specialty** and plan to change their field of work or study, or to re-enrol in a different educational institution.

“

To be honest, I think there is nothing better than self-education. Yes, university provides a start, a foundation, but after that it's all about self-development and trying to grow on your own.”

Female, 18 years old, Mykolaiv

“

I also wanted to add that, well, practical experience is necessary. College or vocational school gives a foundation, but you gain more knowledge when working and someone guides you; you learn more through practice.”

Female, 26 years old, Kherson

“

I am studying to become a makeup artist, but now I realise that... these skills will not be universally useful for me in the future... they will not be enough to find other types of work or adapt to different career paths.”

Female, 31 years old, Mykolaiv

Over 40% of the skills mentioned by respondents relate to communication and interaction with people, indicating a predominance of **socially oriented competencies**

Key skills for successful employment

[Which skills do you consider most essential for successful employment?]

“

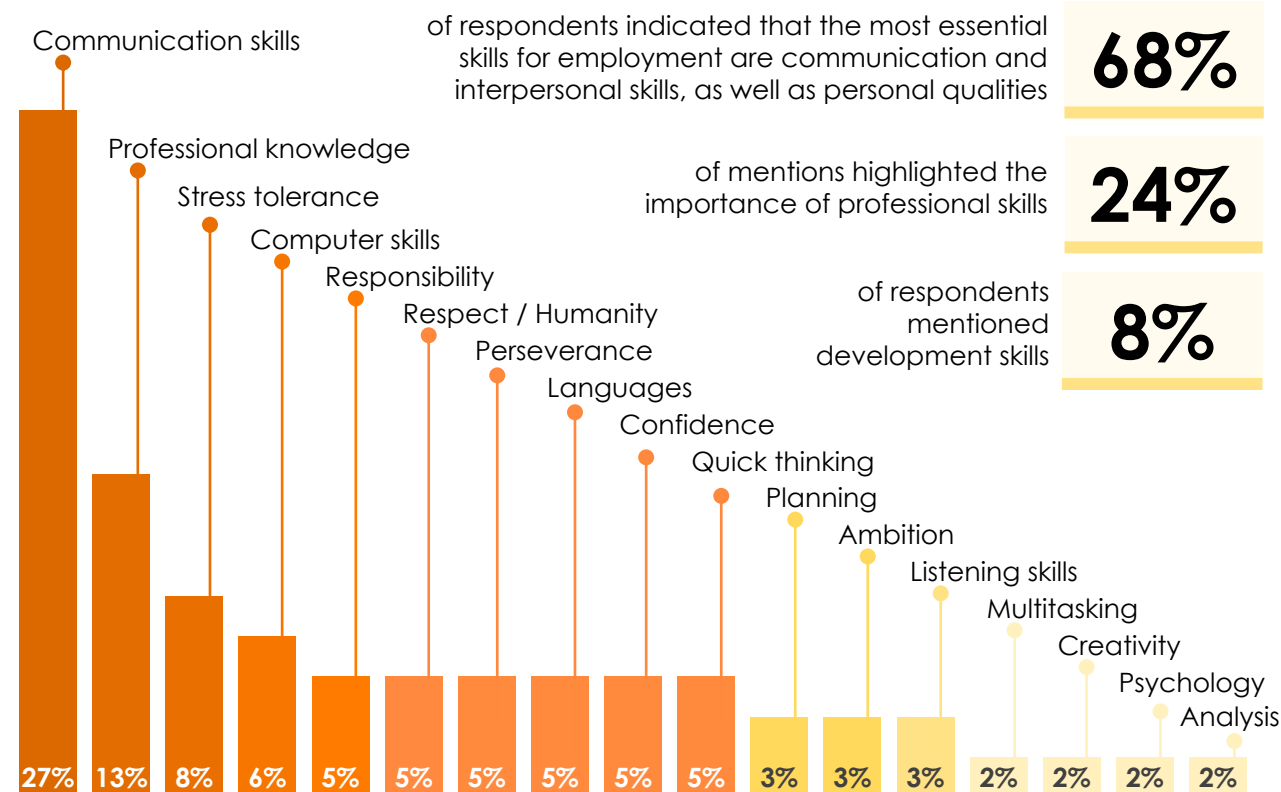
Personally, I would highlight perseverance as the most important trait, because if you understand that you need to work to make a living, you pull yourself together and get on with it. As for professional skills, that will depend directly on the profession and the specific job you are doing.”

Female, 26 years old, Kherson

“

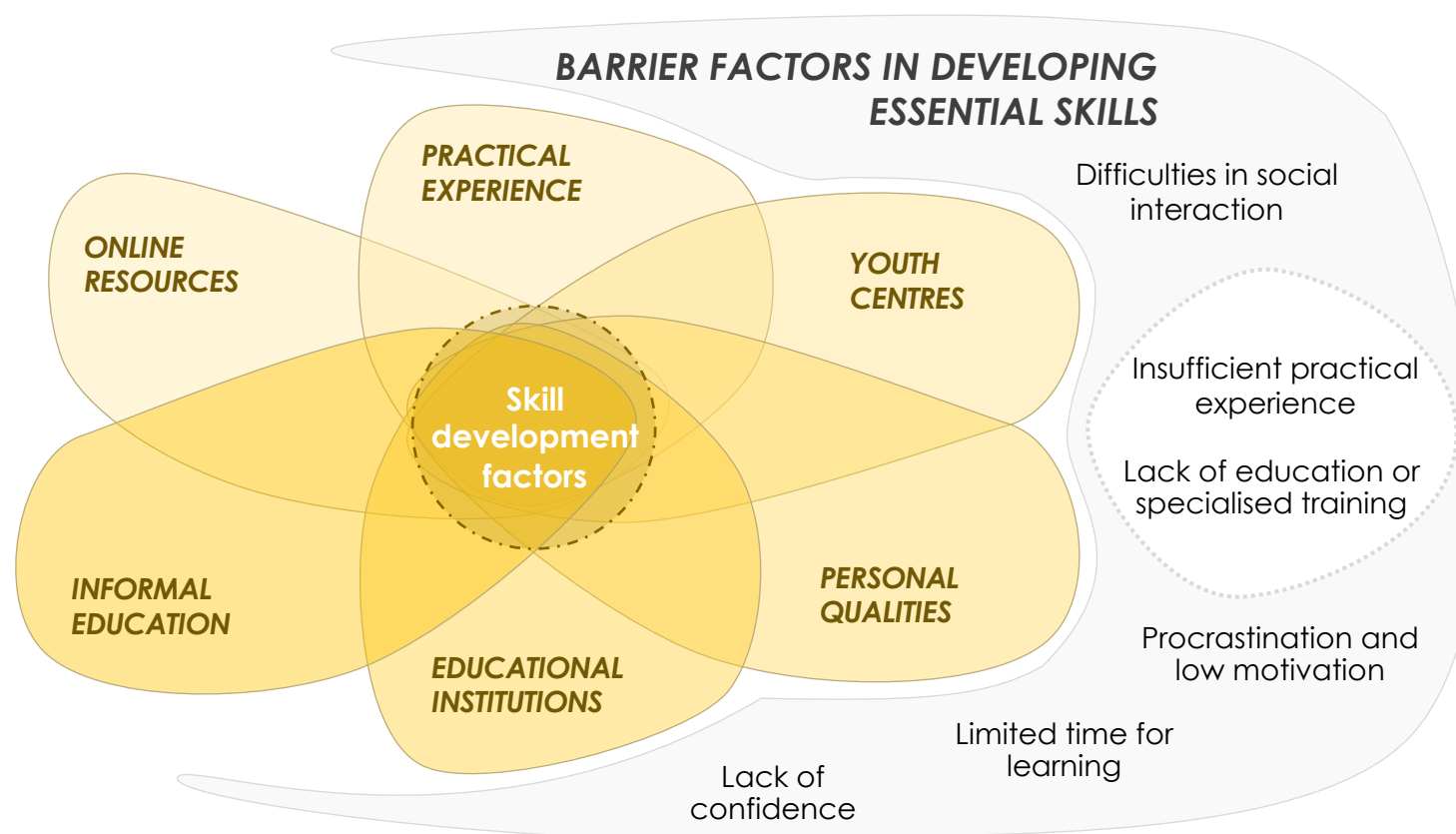
Being able to behave appropriately in society, build connections with colleagues and those who provide work. Also, being able to adapt and change your professional orientation if necessary. Being capable of multitasking.”

Female, 18 years old, Mykolaiv



Participants who consider their skill level insufficient primarily link this to **a lack of practical experience and social interaction**

Skill level required for employment [Do you consider yourself to have a sufficient level of these skills? What, in your opinion, has helped you develop them, or, on the contrary, hindered their development?]



67%

Respondents indicated that they possess a sufficient level of skills important for employment.

Corresponds to the general demand for joining new educational initiatives that include a practical component.

“

Well, of course, I lack knowledge because I haven't worked yet, and I can't put it to the test.”

Female, 17 years old, Kherson

“

I believe my skills are insufficient because I have only been working in my field for a few years. I need to gain more skills and experience, as there is still room for growth.”

Male, 24 years old, Izmail

The strengths most frequently mentioned are **communication skills, the ability to learn quickly, and concentration**

Strengths and sense of confidence

[Tell us about your strengths. What are you good at? Can you describe areas in which you feel confident?]

“

I feel confident in matters related to my main professional activity. I am very good at understanding people and helping them. That is also my personal mission.”

Female, 35 years old, Kherson

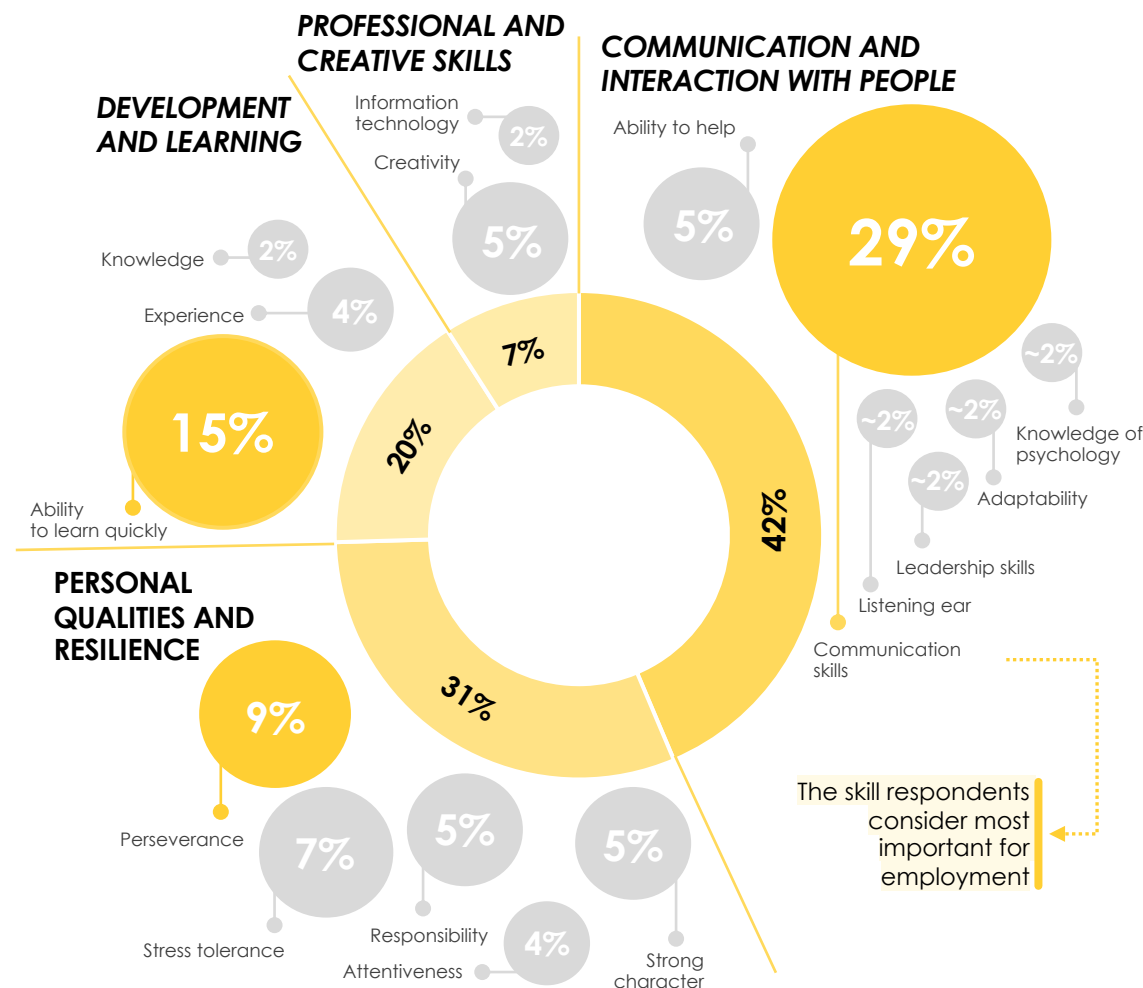
“

I think it's probably attentiveness. I am able to focus and concentrate at certain moments... Being able to communicate well with other people is very important nowadays.”

Female, 16 years old, Mykolaiv



Most respondents are aware of their strengths. However, they speak about them with limited confidence.

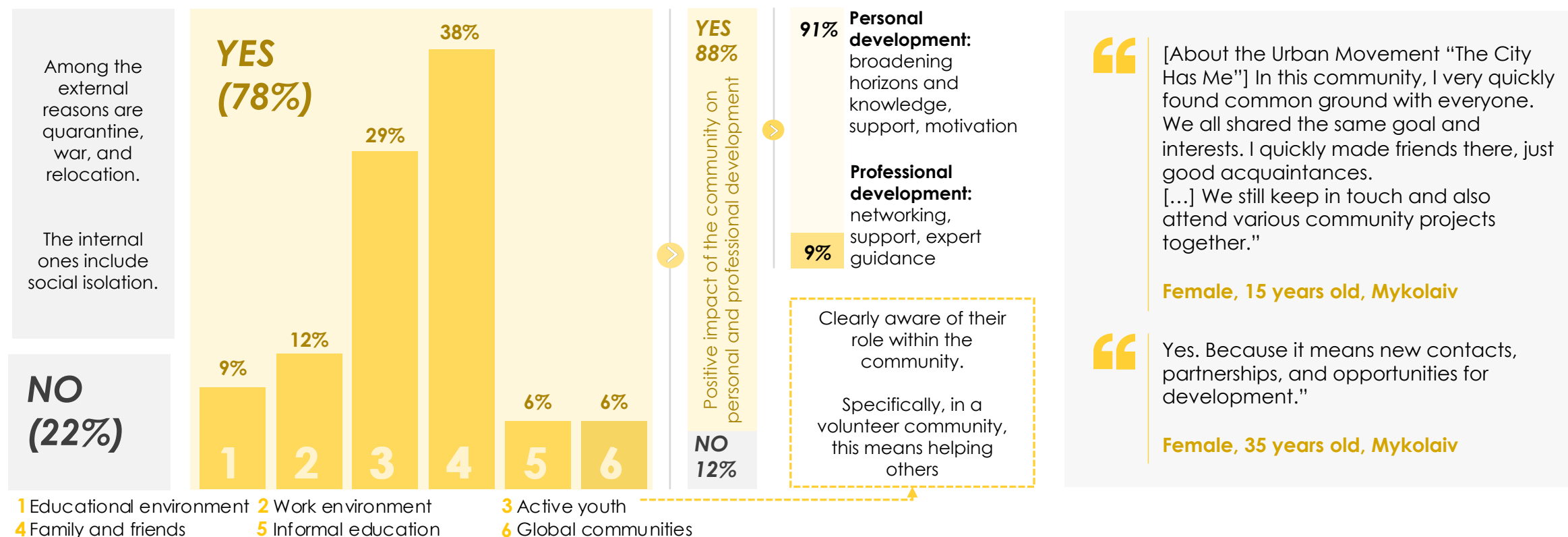


Social environment & Development



Most participants (78%) feel part of the **community**, which positively influences their **personal** (91%) and professional (9%) development

Sense of belonging to a community, its characteristics and role [Do you feel part of a community? In what way? What kind of community is it and what is your role within it? Do you feel that participation in such a community contributes to your personal or professional development?]



Most respondents acknowledge the **importance of a professional environment**. Its actual presence is mainly characteristic of older participants

The role of a professionally oriented environment in career development [Do you consider having a professionally oriented environment an important factor for career growth?]



I found my job through my community."

Female, 26 years old, Kherson



Every day we learn something new, either at a educational institution or on our own. When you read something and share it with others, you give something, and they share information with you – you also learn something new every day."

Female, 17 years old, Mykolaiv



Well, generally yes, because if you start working, you will already know all the nuances of that job, as people will explain to you how to do things correctly..."

Female, 19 years old, Mykolaiv

YES (91%)

NO (9%)

LACK THIS TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT (55%)

HAVE THIS ENVIRONMENT (45%)

The presence of such an environment is frequently reported by **older respondents**, for whom it is primarily formed at the **workplace** through colleagues and professional contacts. **Younger respondents**, on the other hand, sometimes point to **support from family members, teachers**, or their immediate **social circle** as sources of guidance. At the same time, other vocational education peers (e.g., classmates) are rarely seen as a resource or source of professional support.

The perspective of respondents who assign **minimal importance** to a professional environment is explained by the belief that a career trajectory is shaped solely by **personal effort and experience**, independent of external resources or professional support.

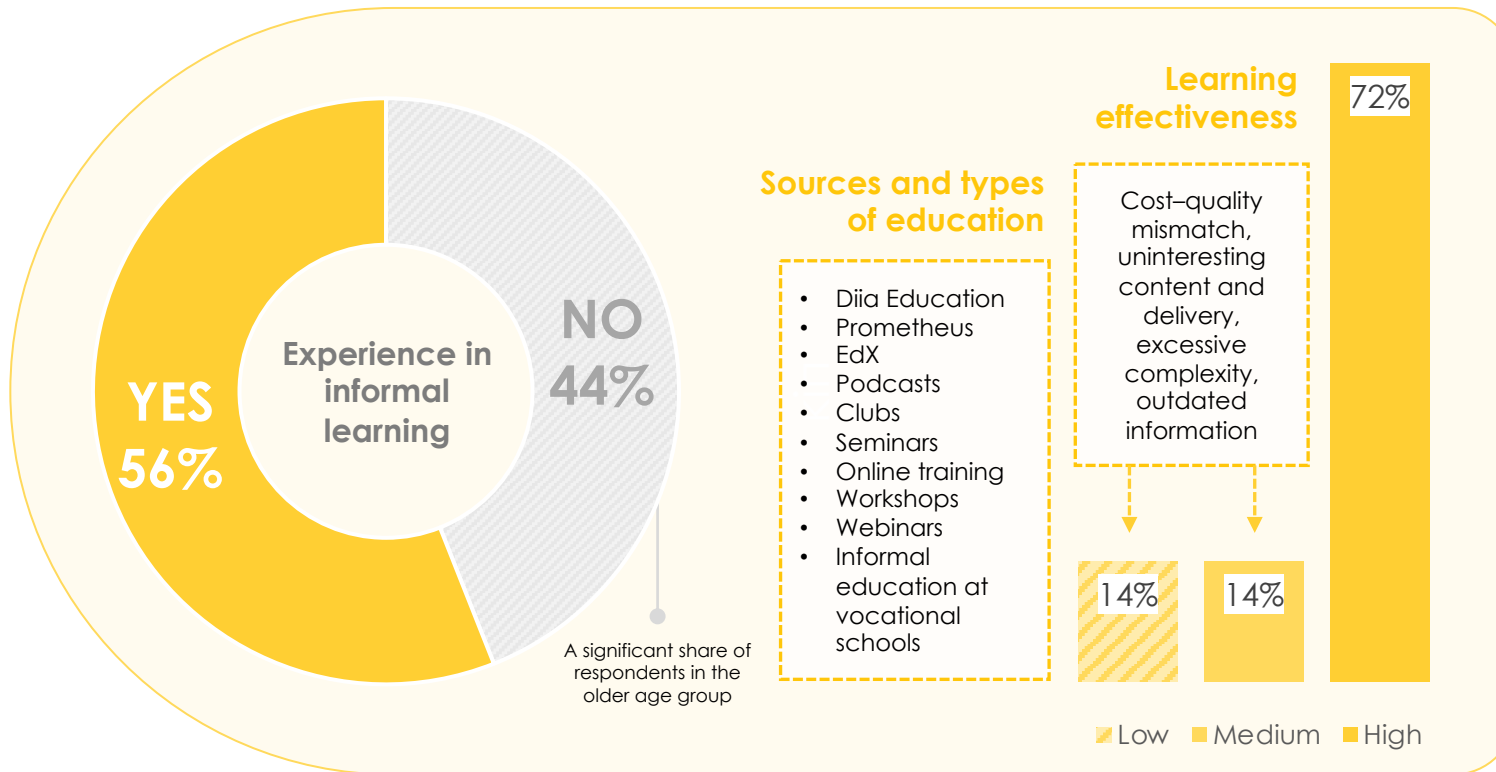
Overall, the results indicate that despite widespread recognition of the importance of a professional environment, most young people **lack practical tools to develop it**. This increases the risk of students feeling disconnected from potential career opportunities and makes it harder to build horizontal networks, the importance of which is confirmed by respondents in the relatively older age group.

Informal & Professional Education



Negative experiences in informal learning are associated with outdated material, complex delivery, and high costs

Experience with informal learning [Have you had experience with informal learning? If so, how effective was it for you?]



“

As I already said, these were both regular seminars and training sessions. As for effectiveness, it was as high as possible.”

Female, 26 years old, Kherson

“

I believe that my most valuable experience in informal learning so far was the *NeTraining*, because it allowed me to discover a lot of truly interesting things that I hadn't known before.”

Female, 15 years old, Mykolaiv

“

I haven't tried this type of learning yet, but I'm currently looking into it and really want to try next year by attending a tattoo and piercing school and taking their courses.”

Female, 19 years old, Mykolaiv

Respondents' interests reflect a balance between developing digital, managerial, and applied professional skills

Interest in additional professional training [Would you be interested in undertaking additional professional training? If so, please share which training topics are most relevant to you today.]

Targeted request for career guidance education

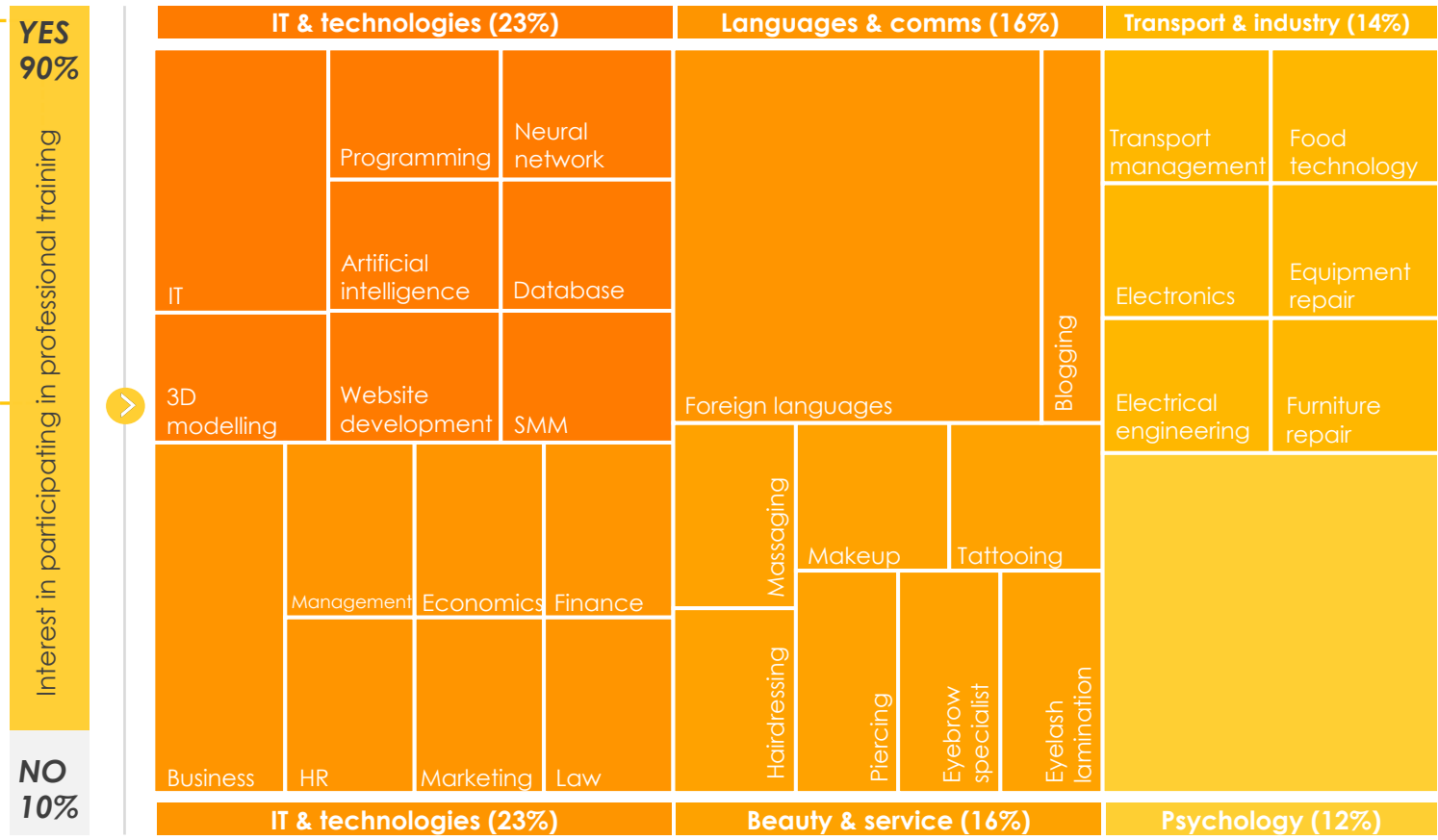
“ I can't say that I would be very interested, because I haven't decided what I want to connect my future with, [but education] that could possibly help me figure out what I am interested in and what I am not would be interesting.”

Female, 15 years old, Mykolaiv

“ Well, I would be interested in, for example, hairdressing, makeup, or blogging. Since I'm studying to become a hairdresser, having skills in blogging would be very helpful for attracting clients promoting my work.”

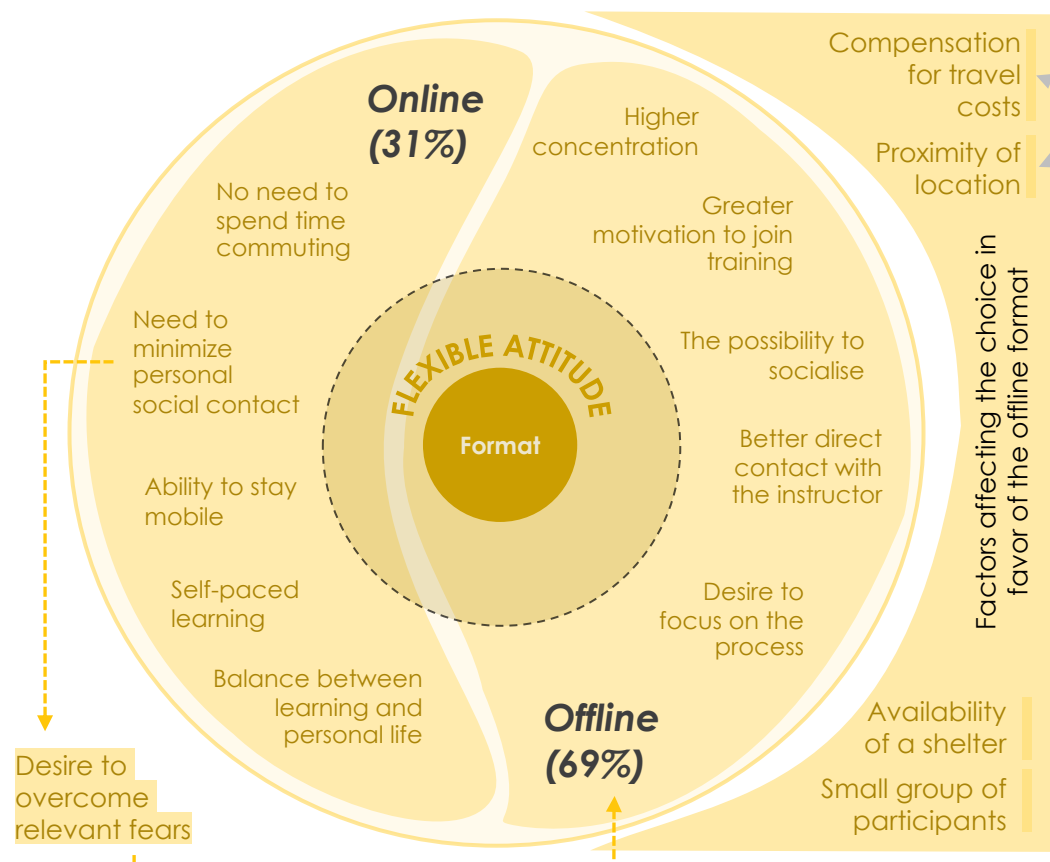
Female, 16 years old, Mykolaiv

The chosen areas of training mostly do not align with the field of formal education



Respondents prefer **offline learning** due to better concentration, motivation, social interaction, and closer contact with the speaker

Preferred learning format [Which learning format would be most convenient for you?]



“

Offline learning gives more motivation to get out of bed, get ready, and actually go to class. Online learning just isn't for me at all. I spent four years studying remotely at school, and it didn't bring any real results. There was no motivation to get up or prepare for learning."

Female, 16 years old, Mykolaiv

“

Offline learning with real experience in a physical location, for example, a studio or an office with a functioning company, to gain practical experience rather than just online through video calls."

Female, 19 years old, Mykolaiv

A significant factor influencing the choice of learning format is the **safety aspect**: for a portion of participants, it is important that the event takes place **directly in a shelter** or another protected space. This requirement is particularly relevant for residents of Kherson region, but is also mentioned by respondents from Mykolaiv region.

Motivation for learning is mainly focused on the practical benefits of knowledge, personal interest, and its impact on employment opportunities

Motivation to join professional training

[What would most motivate you to participate in such training?]

“

Most motivating? Well, probably the teachers and, how should I put it, like-minded people – a whole new circle of contacts.”

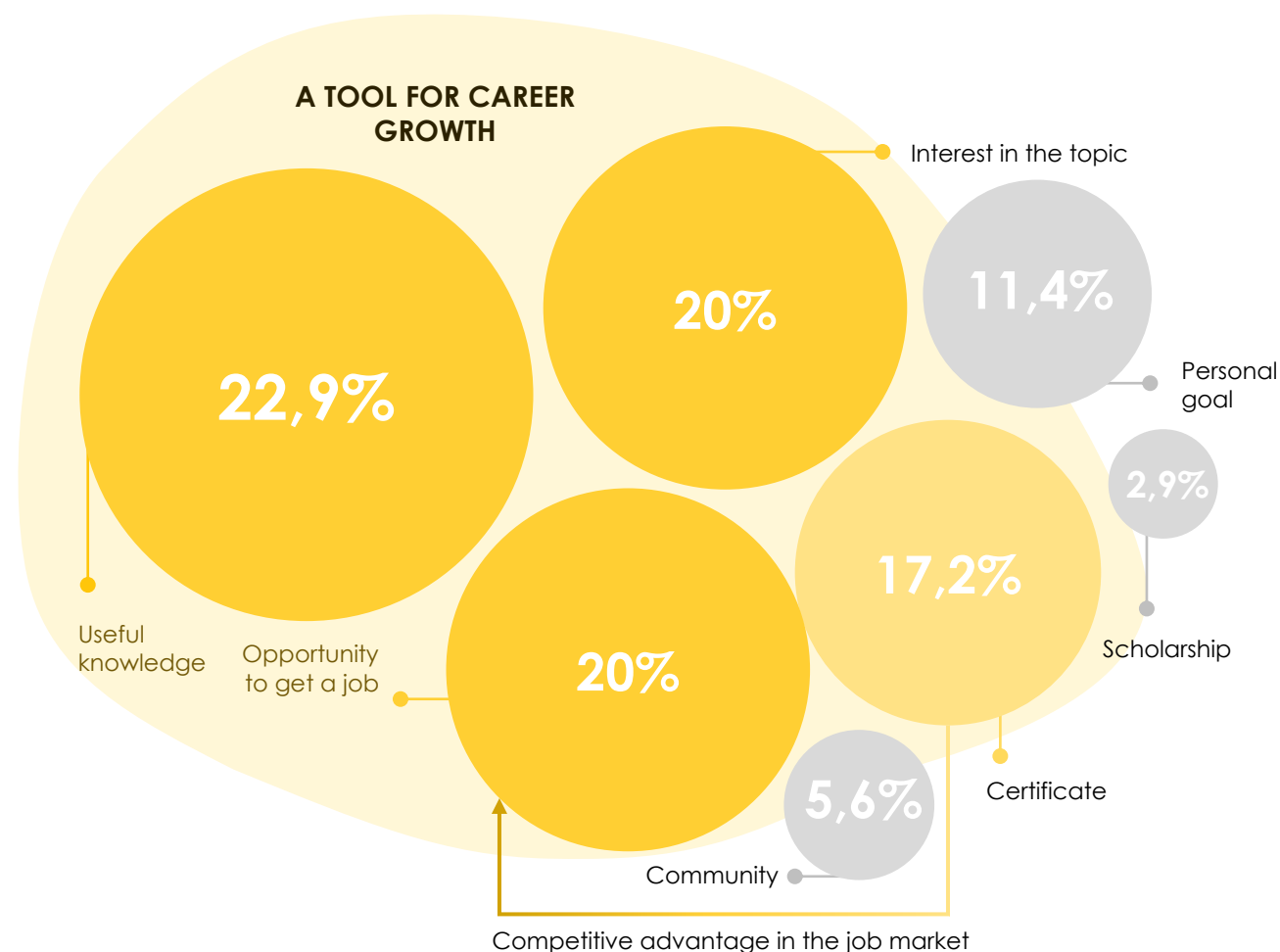
Female, 22 years old, Odesa

“

I think it's probably attention. I can concentrate better at certain moments [...] Being able to communicate well with others is extremely important these days.”

Female, 16 years old, Mykolaiv

Intrinsic motivation prevails – participants focus on their own goals and skills development, while external incentives (community, scholarship) play a secondary role. Overall, training is primarily seen as an **investment in professional growth** rather than merely a leisure activity.

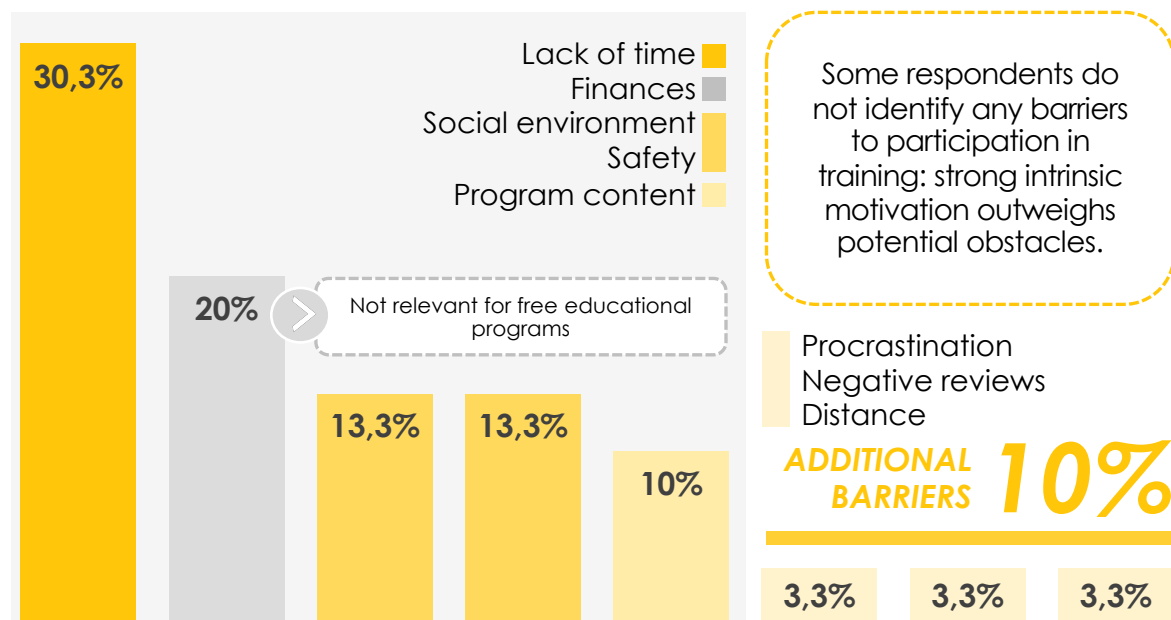


The main **barriers to participation are resource constraints (time and finances)**, while social and safety factors form a secondary level

Barriers to joining professional training [Please share which barriers could prevent you from participating in an educational course that interests you.]

Barriers to joining are not universal: for some participants, intrinsic motivation outweighs external obstacles.

KEY BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION



“Hardly any. Well, maybe only if the workload is really, really heavy, although if there's a possibility to do exercises remotely and work through the material, then it probably wouldn't even be a problem.”

Female, 26 years old, Kherson

“I was really worried that I wouldn't be accepted. I don't know why – I've never experienced this before – but for some reason, this fear sometimes appears. I was afraid that everyone would know at least something in this field, in urban studies, and I would know nothing. I was just a complete beginner.”

Female, 15 years old, Mykolaiv

“The group. Even when your teacher doesn't treat you well, there's no understanding.”

Female, 19 years old, Kherson

The content of the training program is a key driver of motivation, but practical incentives, such as receiving a certificate, also have a significant impact

Motivation to complete training [What could motivate you to finish a course?]

“

If I find it interesting, feel comfortable, and the tasks are engaging and contribute to my development, then I think I will complete it all the way to the end.”

Female, 19 years old, Mykolaiv

“

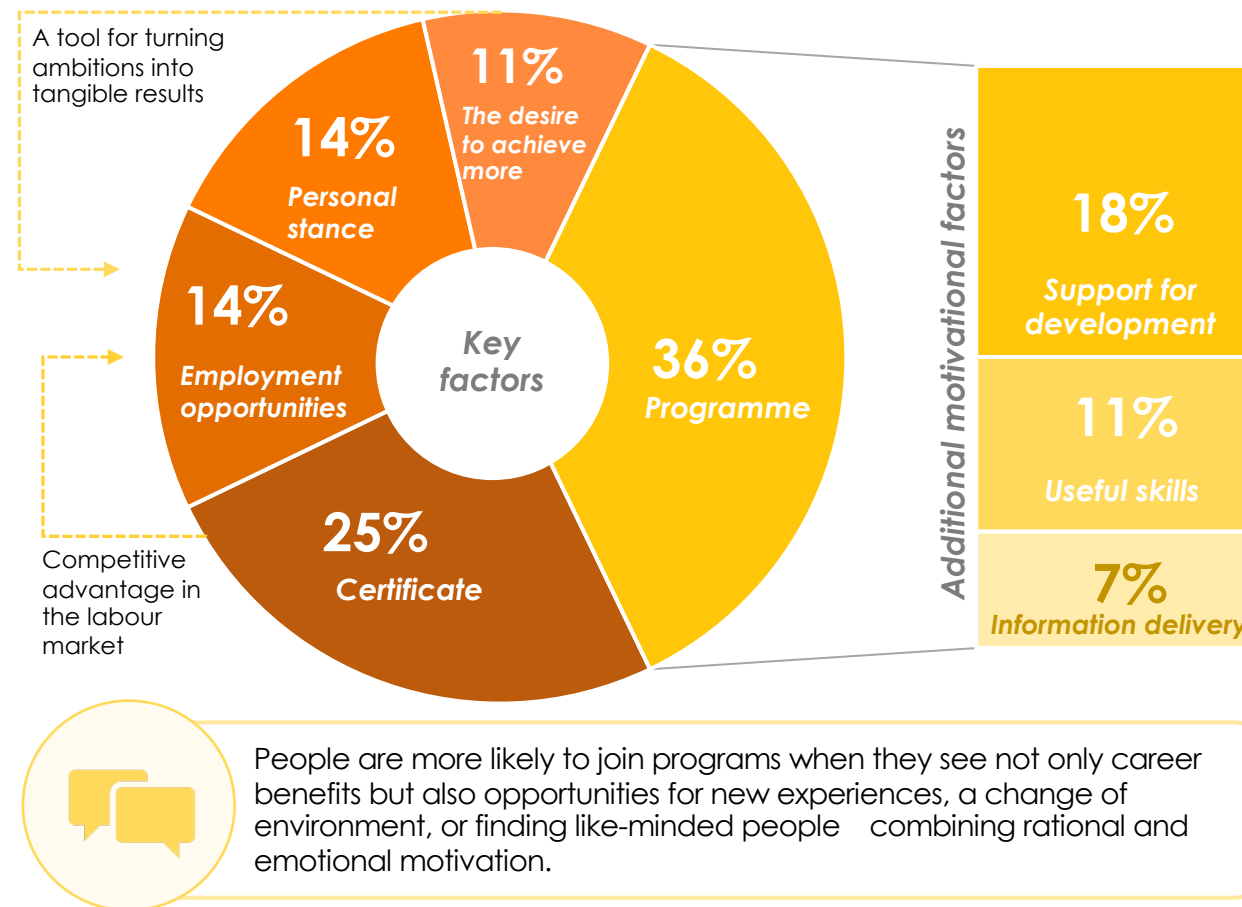
My motivation comes from myself. I need this, so I work at it. I'm gaining skills. In other words, the key motivation overall is the awareness of the usefulness of such a course.”

Female, 26 years old, Kherson

“

I think that if you know for certain that you will use a particular skill in the future, that it will be genuinely useful to you, and that it can give you a real advantage over competitors or other job candidates, then that would be extremely valuable.”

Female, 23 years old, Odesa



Demand for **social media marketing** far outpaces structural changes in the course curriculum itself

Suggestions for increasing the accessibility of professional training [What could be done to make professional training more accessible and welcoming for young people in your community?]

3%	Free courses
3%	Lower cost
3%	Availability of shelters
3%	Smaller group size
3%	Asynchronous learning
6%	Organising a trial session
6%	Inviting alumni
6%	Employment opportunity
6%	Inviting practitioners
6%	Specialisations aligned with the market
6%	Individual approach
9%	Gamified approach
39%	Social media advertising

Young people generally **have little awareness** of available educational courses. Recommendations often focus on **reducing social anxiety**.

Key factors influencing their choice include social media advertising, gamified elements, personalised learning, specialisations aligned with current market needs, involvement of practitioners and alumni in the program, opportunities for future employment, as well as trial sessions that lower the entry barrier.

“Well, most likely – sharing more information, because people can't always find it. [...] There's little information about experiential or professional courses. They either don't exist or there's very little information available about them.”

Male, 17 years old, Mykolaiv

“First, it's necessary to figure out which specialisations are needed and in what areas.”

Male, 21 years old, Kherson

“An individualised approach sparks curiosity. People are watching more TikTok these days. Posting there would attract more participants.”

Female, 19 years old, Kherson

Recommendations



It is recommended to build the course on a practice-oriented logic [1/2]

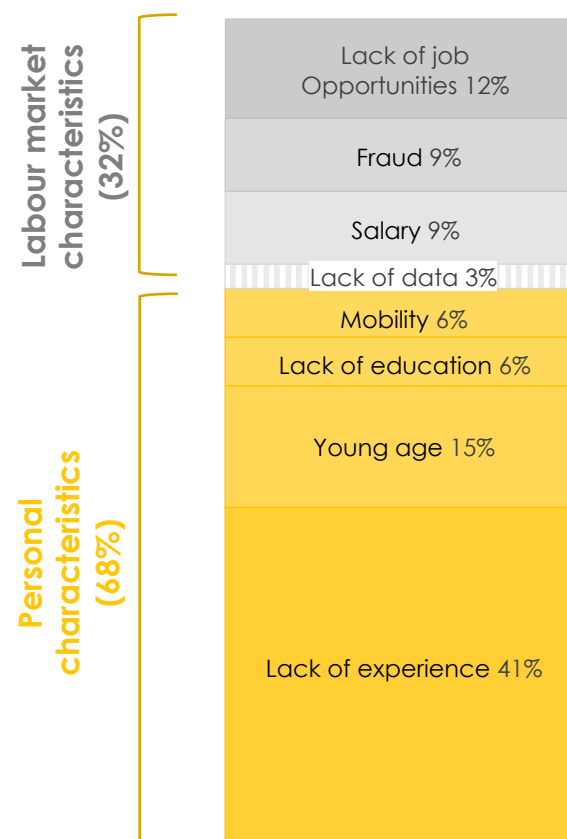
The programme content should closely reflect real professional situations and tasks that participants may encounter in work or volunteer projects. To achieve this, it should include exercises that simulate decision-making processes, resource assessment, conflict resolution, and project implementation. This approach helps to offset participants' limited experience, allows them to practically test and consolidate their knowledge, and fosters a sense of competence and confidence in their ability to carry out specific tasks.

51%

Had no work experience and did not declare any civic engagement

44%

Had no prior experience with informal learning opportunities



“

"My specialty is electromechanical crane operator, but in practice we have zero experience. How they expect to make us specialists, honestly, I don't know. If I'm training on cranes and haven't been allowed to operate one even once, then, excuse me, what kind of worker am I supposed to be?"

Female, 31 years old, Mykolaiv

It is advisable to include work with case studies and mini-projects as a mandatory part of the training [2/2]

The case study method and mini-projects promote deep learning by allowing participants to directly apply their knowledge. They provide the opportunity to create real products or solutions, assess their outcomes, and analyse successes and mistakes. This approach enhances motivation and personal engagement, while also helping to identify strengths and areas for development. Real-life cases further illustrate examples of professional practice, easing the transition from theory to practice.

“

I think it's important to present up-to-date information rather than outdated material, because in most professions we end up learning from books written in the early 2000s. Technologies are constantly evolving, and everyone is more interested in what we actually use today, rather than just history or things that were relevant in the past.”

Female, 23 years old, Odesa

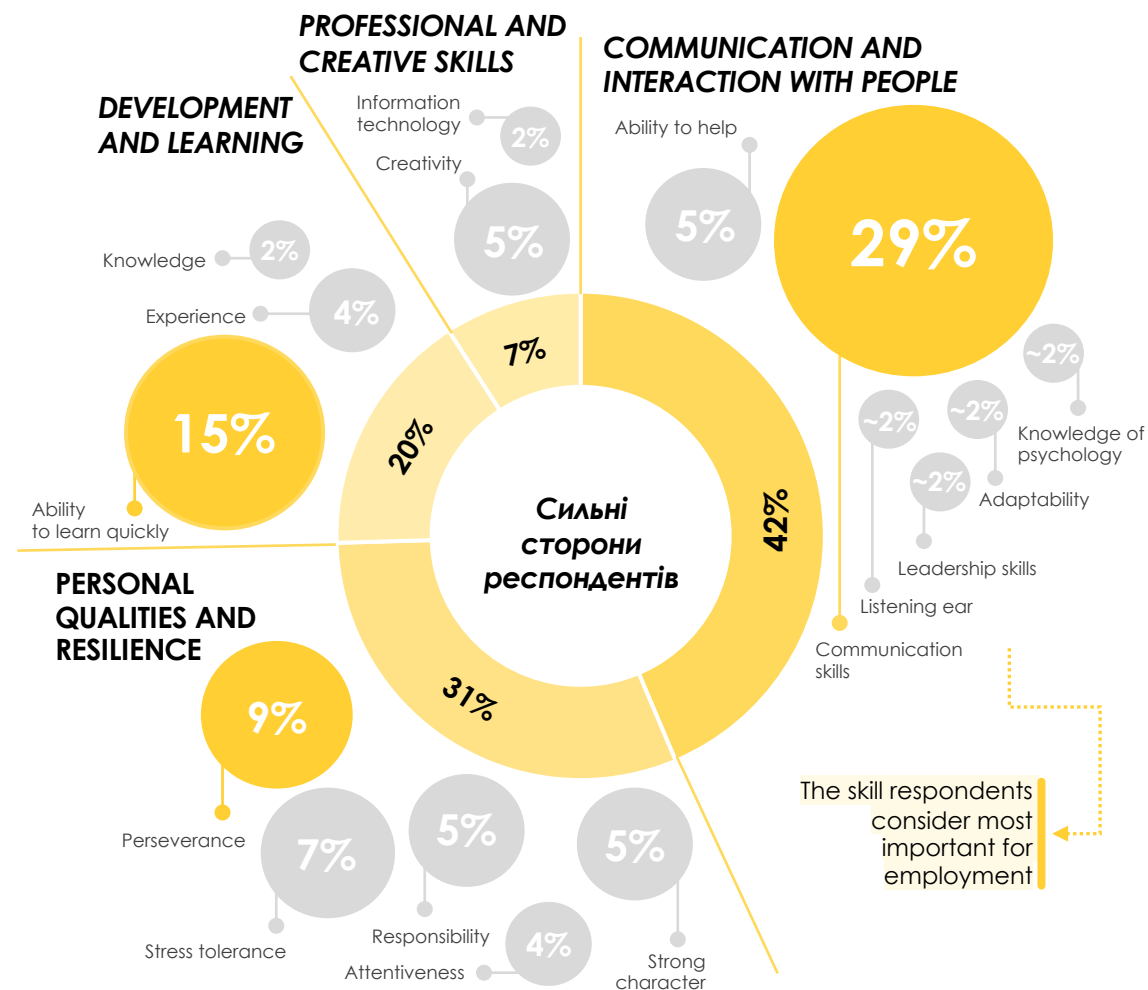
“

I would like the training to focus more on practical skills, mainly looking at work-related tasks and examples. Both positive and negative cases should be explored.”

Female, 15 years old, Mykolaiv

It is recommended to include specific elements aimed at developing confidence and communication skills

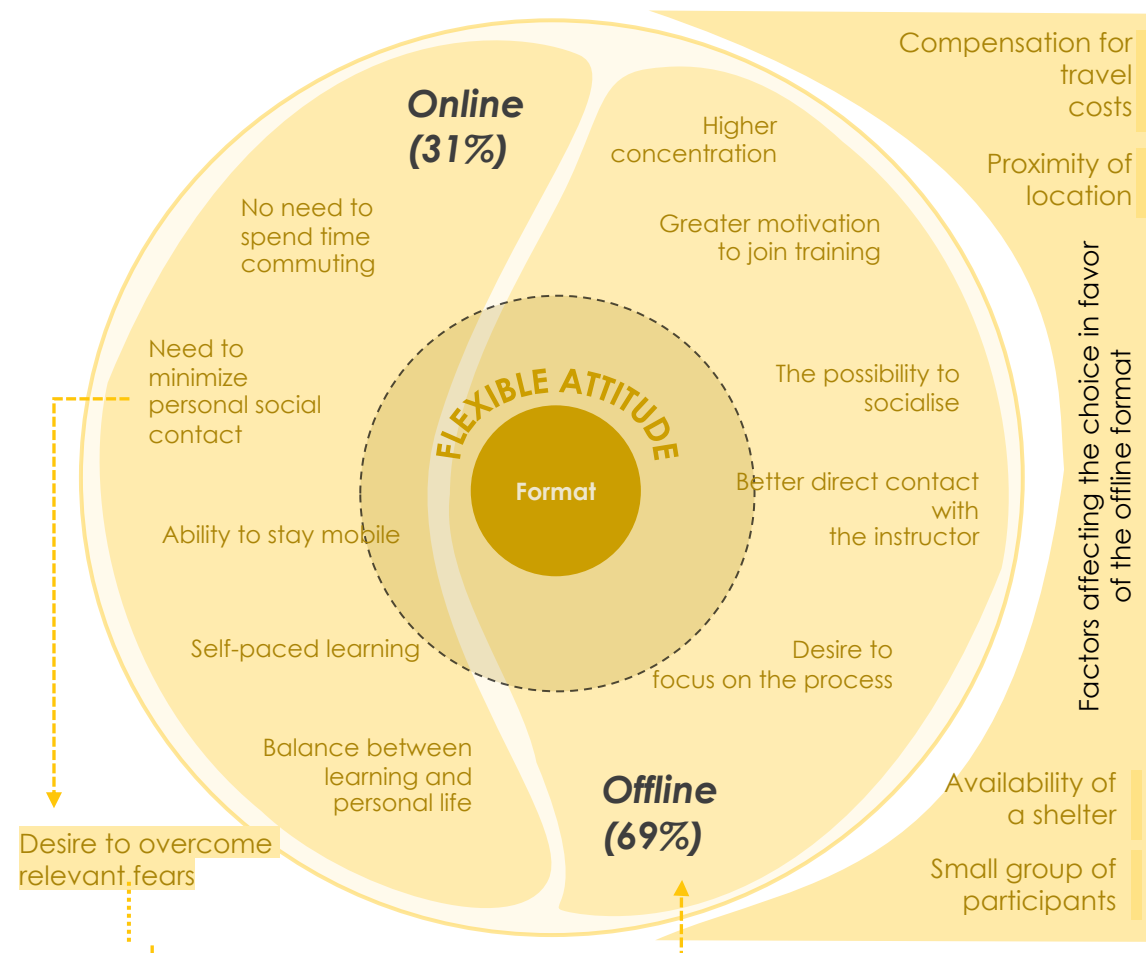
Skills of effective interaction and public speaking are critical for a successful career. It is recommended to include exercises such as group discussions, pair work, presentations, and business situation simulations. Such practices allow participants to gradually overcome social interaction barriers, practice argumentation of their own ideas, and boost self-confidence in a professional environment.



Although communication is identified as the most important skill for employment, only 29% of participants report having strong proficiency in it.

Combine the online format with elements of in-person or synchronous discussion

A hybrid model blends remote learning of the material with short synchronous sessions for discussions, group exercises, and mentoring. This ensures social interaction, maintains participant motivation, and reduces the risk of isolation. In-person or synchronous sessions also enhance learning effectiveness through live feedback and demonstration of skills in action.



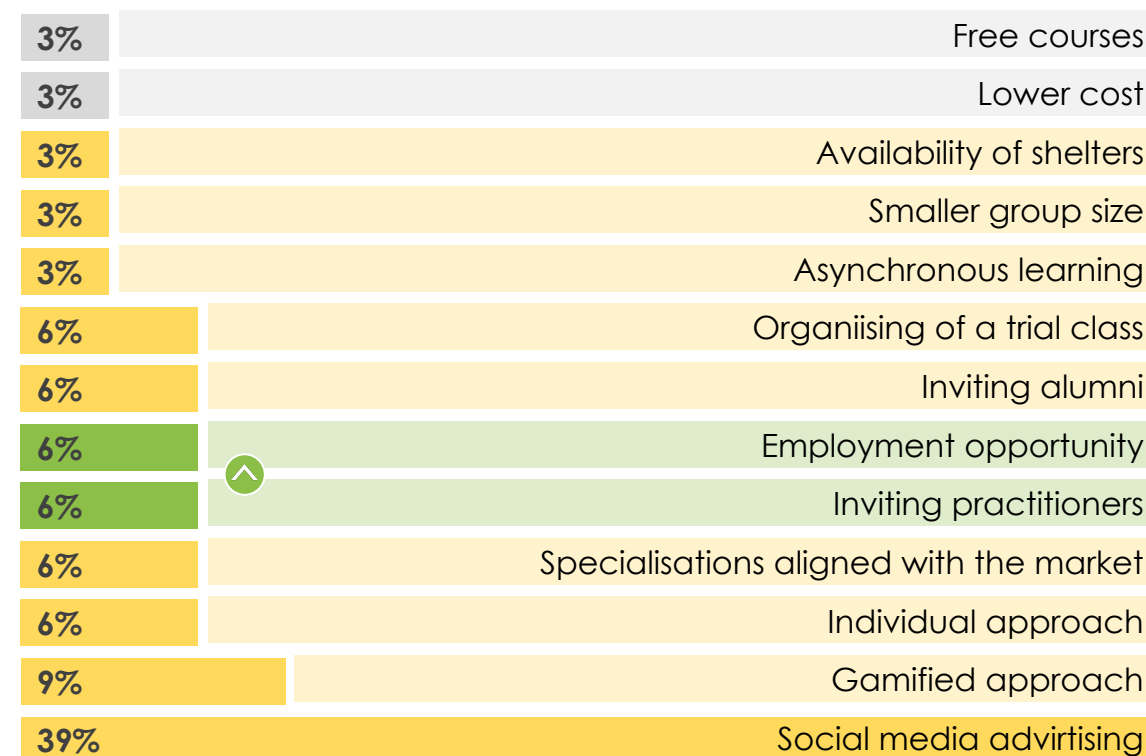
“

Well, for example, some people want to be part of a group and be there in person, while those who are afraid of social settings can participate online.”

Female, 19 years old, Mykolaiv

It is advisable to involve mentors with relevant experience

The participation of experienced professionals provides personalised feedback, concrete examples of skill application, and practical demonstration of professional standards. Mentoring helps to level out initial differences in participants' experience and knowledge, reduces uncertainty, and builds a comprehensive understanding of the work process. Mentors can also support the development of career contacts and the creation of a professional network. Additionally, involving practitioners enhances participants' trust in the educational course itself.

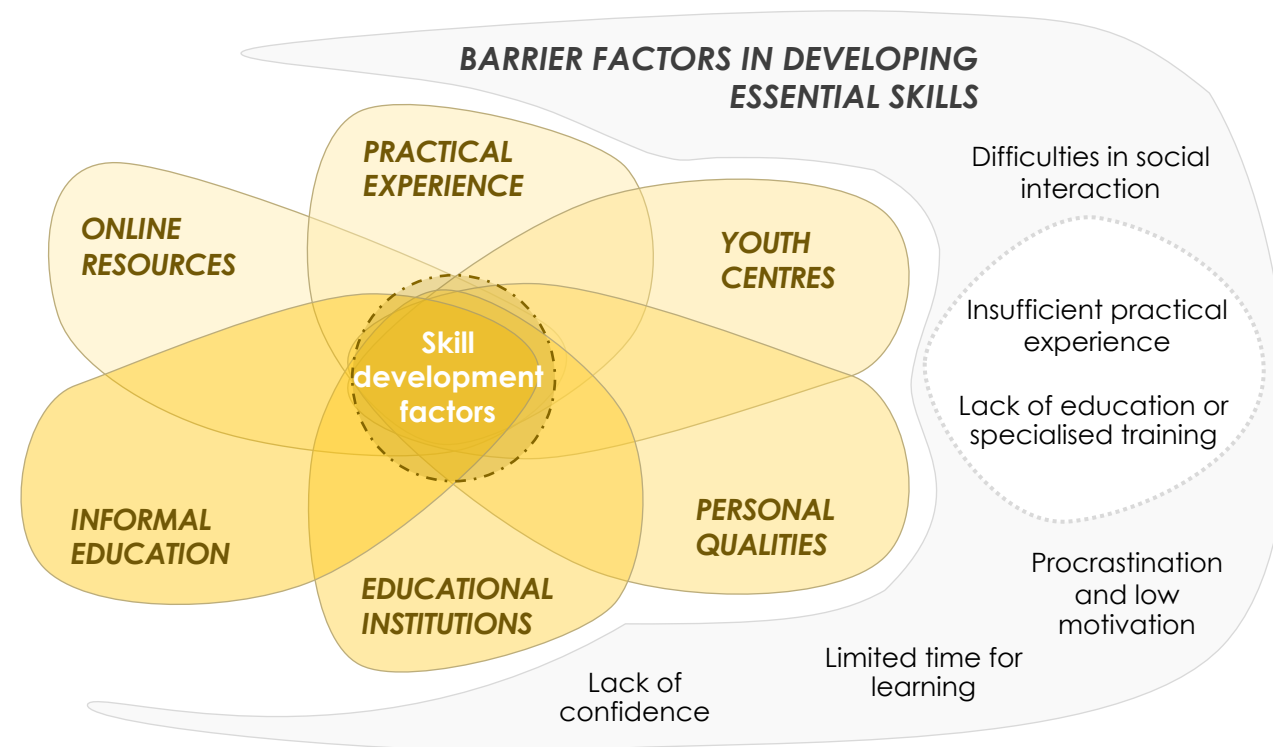


More specialists should be involved, and people who have already achieved something in this field."

Female, 16 years old, Mykolaiv

Include a component on self-organisation and overcoming procrastination

Time management, task planning, and goal-setting skills are critical for effective learning and future career activities. Including a dedicated module on time management techniques and overcoming procrastination will help participants recognise their weaknesses, develop discipline, and increase productivity in the learning process.



Barriers? Well, not enough time. The internet—just a quick look, and suddenly I'm gone [...] And maybe procrastination, or how the brain avoids work."

Female, 35 years old, Mykolaiv

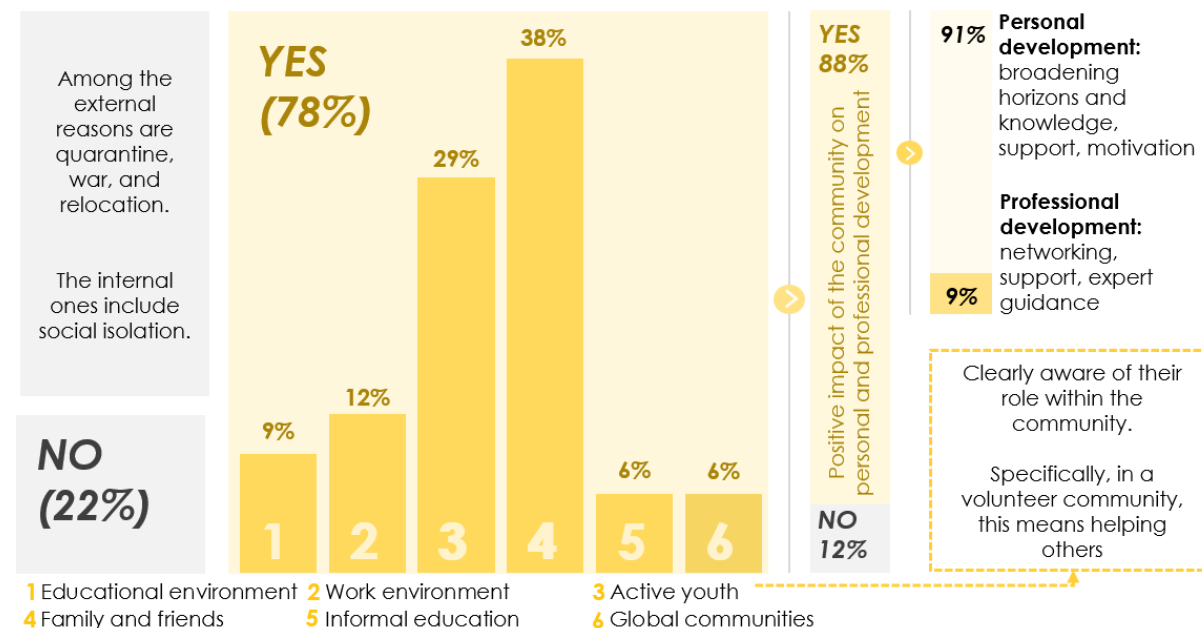
Use small-group work or themed team tasks

Small-group formats encourage active experience sharing, mutual support, and the development of collective problem-solving skills. They allow participants who have little prior practice to safely engage in team interaction, develop communication and organisational skills, and receive feedback from peers.

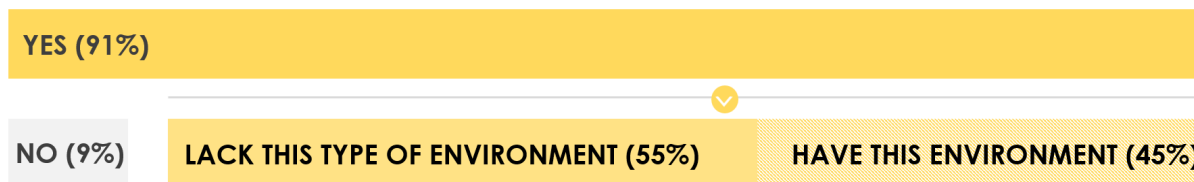
Additionally, consistent group work can lay the foundation for building a professionally oriented community among participants.

Small groups also reduce discomfort associated with social interactions.

THE PRESENCE OF A COMMUNITY AND ITS ROLE



THE PRESENCE OF A PROFESSIONALLY ORIENTED ENVIRONMENT

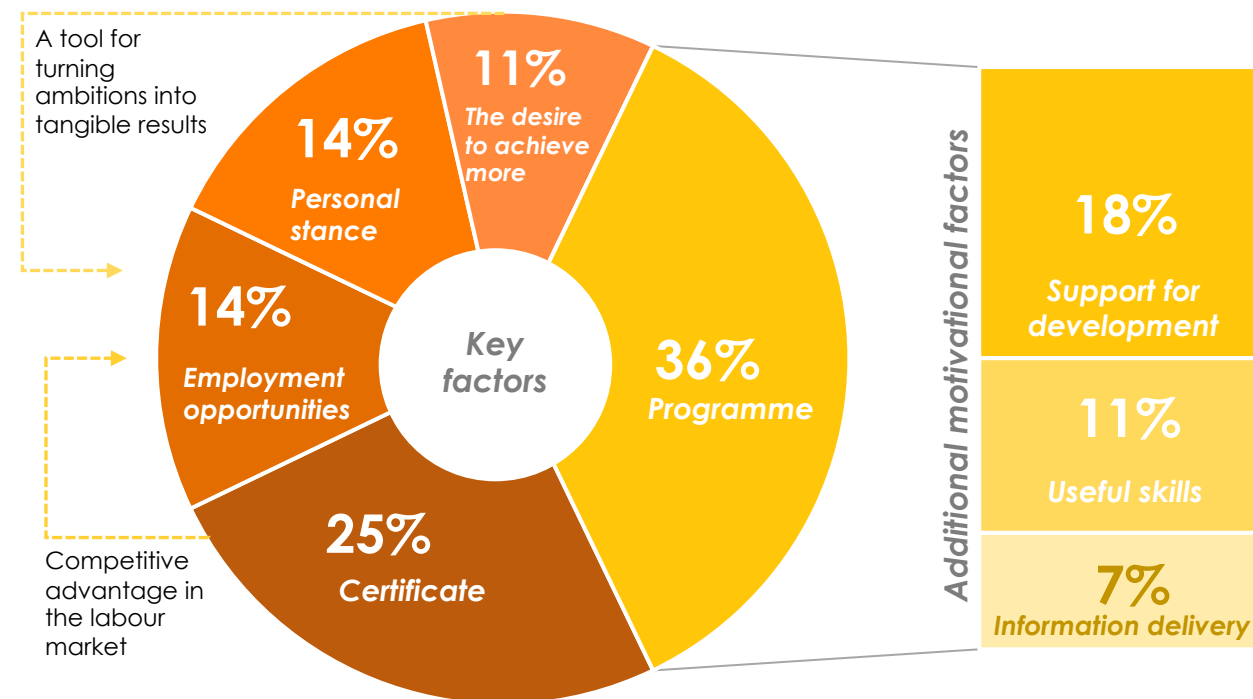


For me, having a large number of people in a group is discouraging. Even if the information is useful, you won't receive as much individual attention as you would if you were studying one-on-one with the teacher."

Female, 18 years old, Mykolaiv

Provide opportunities for practical involvement after the course in partner organisations and/or offer course completion certificates and employer recommendations

Targeted engagement of participants in real projects after training allows them to consolidate their acquired knowledge in practice, build professional experience, and increase confidence in their competencies. Additionally, this aligns with young people's intrinsic motivation and creates a platform for further career growth.



[...] You receive a diploma or certificate, complete a project, gain experience that you can showcase, and then continue to develop. You can start earning money in this profession and do something interesting."

Female, 20 years old, Izmail

Organise active promotion and dissemination of information about the course

To maximise engagement of the target audience, it is important to run a systematic marketing campaign using social media, specialised online platforms, and partner organisations. In addition to information about the course content and format, it is worth emphasising its practical value, mentorship opportunities, the application of skills in real projects, and prospects for future employment or volunteer involvement. Systematic communication before and during the course helps shape expectations and increases readiness to participate.

39%

According to the survey, 39% of respondents believe that educational courses require active promotion. This is explained by the fact that a significant portion of participants are unaware of the availability of free professional education in the regions where the study was conducted, which limits their engagement and opportunities for professional development.

“

I think, at the very least, they should be promoted more, because as soon as I joined this community, I started learning about most of the projects – Ukrainian projects and those in our regions. Many of my friends and acquaintances, who don't understand much about this civic activity, don't even know about them.”

Female, 15 years old, Mykolaiv

“

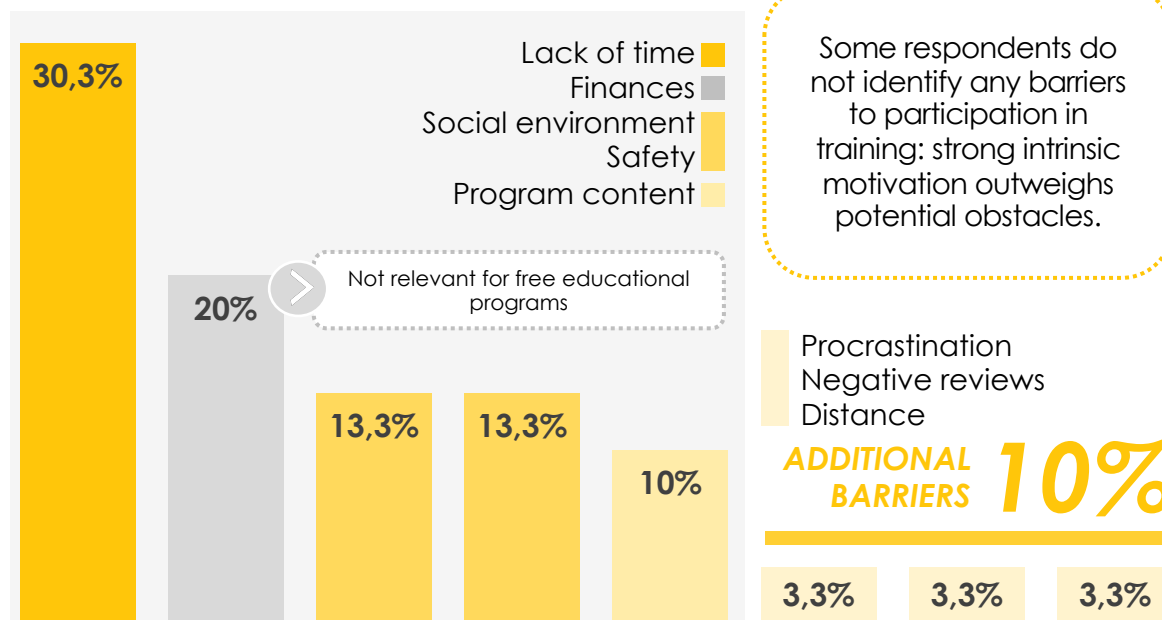
Probably more information on this topic. More through the media, various social networks. Because even if something is organised, you don't always hear about it, you know.”

Female, 26 years old, Mykolaiv

Conduct training in safe and well-equipped locations with shelters

In conditions of increased risk due to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it is crucial to ensure the physical safety of participants. The course should be held in premises that have shelters or provide quick access to protected areas. This organisational measure not only meets safety standards but also increases participants' trust and sense of security, positively affecting their focus and motivation to learn.

KEY BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

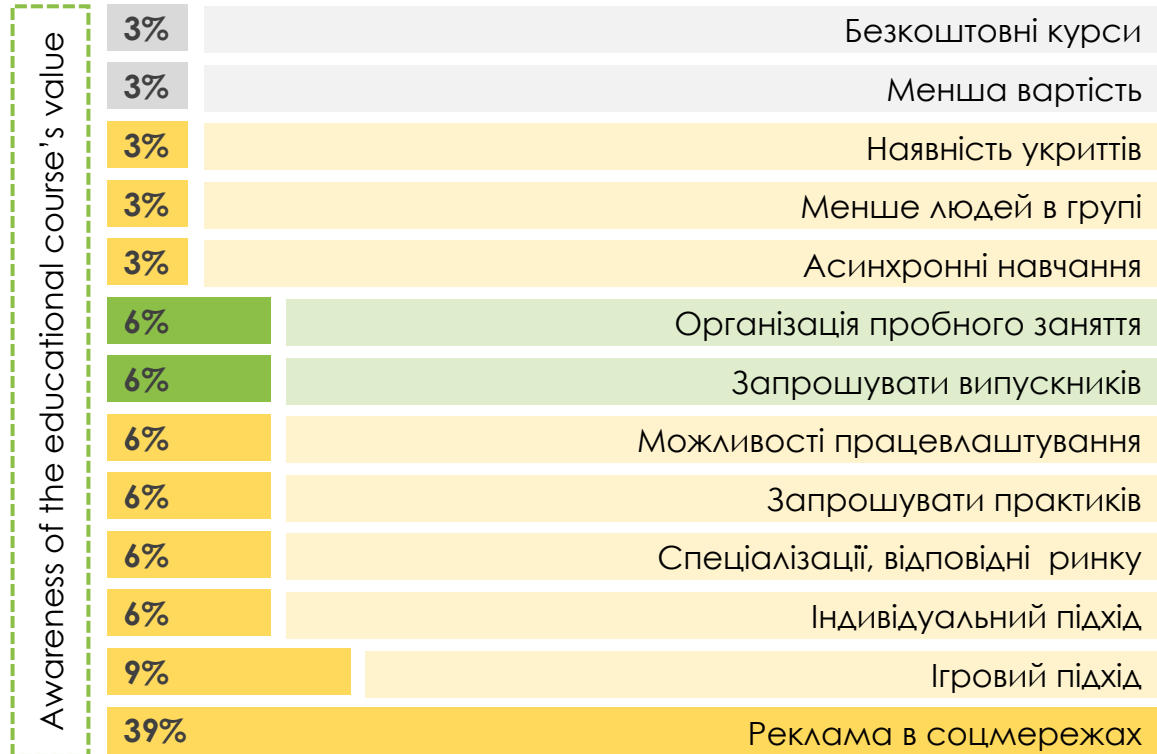


Some respondents do not identify any barriers to participation in training: strong intrinsic motivation outweighs potential obstacles.

Although a relatively small number of participants directly raised safety issues during discussions, further clarifications and comments indicate that they are aware of the critical importance of this aspect. They recognise that ensuring safety is essential and should be carefully considered when planning and organising training activities.

Publish alumni feedback and provide a mini-version of the course online before the training begins

A demonstration lesson, a short online version of the course, or exposure to alumni reviews allows potential participants to assess the format, understand the level of difficulty, and appreciate the programme's practical value. This increases interest and helps set expectations for outcomes, while minimising the risk of withdrawal due to uncertainty or fear of "not coping."



“

The most important thing is how the speakers themselves present the material. It's useful to have a preview, so you can see how they explain things and decide whether you like their style and find their explanations clear and accessible."

Female, 19 years old, Mykolaiv

Regularly communicate all benefits and potential outcomes of participation throughout the course

It is important to consistently remind participants during the training about the practical results of the course, potential career prospects, and opportunities for internships or volunteer projects. This strategy increases engagement and motivation, helps participants recognise the value of each module, and encourages active involvement at every stage of the learning process.

“

Sometimes, for example, you receive an email reminder that clearly outlines the benefits you will gain from the course. This kind of motivation helps you see, in a tangible way, what you are getting. Often, you're just studying, reflecting on your own thoughts, and forget what initially motivated you. Many people experience this — they get motivated by something, but then it slips from their mind. Later, when they are reminded, they can pick up and continue taking action. This is especially useful when a person knows that they have the opportunity to learn and develop skills in a particular specialty.”

Female, 35 years old, Kherson

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