

## IMPROVING THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL SERVICES PROVISION USING THE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

*Ahadzhanova Svitlana*

*Ph.D., Associate Professor, Sumy National Agrarian University, Ukraine*

*ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0486-3511*

**Introduction.** Improving the organisation of the system of providing social services to different groups of recipients in difficult life circumstances is an important factor influencing the overall development of the social sphere, as the formation of the social work system takes place in stages, depending on socio-economic factors, social policy priorities and practical models of social work established in Ukraine. Another important factor is the need to organise the process of social services for the population at the primary level (in the community), which requires constant work on generalising practical experience and identifying ways to improve it.[2; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8]

Ensuring an increase in the standard of living and quality of life based on the principle of "leaving no one behind" is identified as one of the most important goals among the 17 global sustainable development goals of the Millennium in the National Report "Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine", taking into account the country's development prospects until 2030.

Despite the steps already taken to reform the social protection sector in Ukraine, the need for fundamental changes in the social services system remains unmet, primarily due to the mismatch between the organisation and quality of social services and the new requirements and needs of people, especially in the context of decentralisation of state power. Secondly, a significant increase in the number of people in difficult life circumstances is caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine, massive displacement of citizens from the eastern and northern regions, and the rather unstable economic and political situation in the country.

Administrative and territorial reform and decentralisation also require changes in approaches to the organisation of the social protection system, as the Concept of Reforming Local Self-Government and Territorial Organisation of Power in Ukraine stipulates that services should be provided in accordance with state standards, taking into account territorial accessibility, which means that services should be provided in the community where the person lives and at a high professional level.

In order to develop and implement an integrated model of social protection in the newly created amalgamated communities, it is important to analyse and take into account the promising experience that is already being successfully implemented in local self-government.

Decentralisation under such conditions becomes an effective tool for the development of territorial communities in Ukraine, a means of strengthening community culture, a form of enhancing economic independence, which can ultimately become the basis for improving the social well-being of citizens and the state as a whole. Thus, the task of analysing the prospective directions of reforming the system of social services in the context of decentralisation, taking into account the experience of foreign countries and the peculiarities of the formation and implementation of the state policy of social protection of the population in Ukraine, is relevant for the science of public administration.

The complexity of service provision can be ensured through case management technology, the creation of interdisciplinary teams and coordinated referrals of service recipients. Procedures for information exchange and referral are approved at the community level through interagency cooperation. Under this approach, services are provided in a client-centred manner, taking into account the principle of sequencing of services and using case management technology. It is also desirable to provide services on a one-stop shop basis, but this is not mandatory, if infrastructure is available. An integrated approach to social service provision is optimal for protecting children's rights and preventing child abandonment, so it is logical that integration is a prerequisite.

The experience of European countries in this area is quite diverse, but the common thread is that social services and social development are the responsibility of local governments, involve close

interagency cooperation, are based on the principles of the European Social Charter and are family-oriented. Each community can develop its own mechanisms for such interaction, but the consistency and integration of services are important.

Two main points should be emphasised: the integration and cooperation of all social service providers.

Legal framework for the functioning of the social services system.

The Law of Ukraine "On Social Services" and other legislative acts and laws regulate the system of social services in Ukraine, and they also regulate the specifics of social protection and provision of social services to various categories of citizens. The organisation and content of the provision of various aspects of social services is regulated by subordinate acts of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, orders of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and other central authorities. The definition of the system of social services, its participants and stages, detailing the powers of central and local authorities, local self-government bodies, establishing requirements for the formation of registers of providers and recipients of social services, a classifier of services, defining the stages of organisation, planning and financing of social services are all set out in [1].

Social service provision consists of a set of different actors involved in the delivery of social services at all stages and interacting in accordance with the principles. The social service providers represent the authorities, beneficiaries and authorised social service providers.

As a rule, the functioning of the system is focused on achieving certain goals, objectives and results.

With this in mind, we can define the concept of "social services" as a complex open socio-economic system consisting of a number of state institutions and non-governmental organisations whose activities are aimed at helping individuals and certain social groups that find themselves in a difficult situation that they cannot overcome on their own and need help from others.

The system of social services provides individuals and social groups with such social support that will help to create conditions for independent solution of their life problems, restore lost skills and functions, overcome or minimise negative consequences of the following circumstances that cannot be overcome by the available means.

The subjects, objects and links between them are integral parts of the social service delivery system. According to the Law of Ukraine "On Social Services", the subjects of social service provision can be state, municipal, non-governmental institutions and organisations, as well as individuals. In other words, institutions providing social services are enterprises, organisations, legal entities regardless of ownership and business form, individual entrepreneurs who meet the criteria of institutions providing social services, as well as individuals who provide social services.

Today, the system of social services in Ukraine is in the process of development and improvement. The experience of European countries convincingly shows that there are ways to achieve high results in implementing the reform in a short time.

To be effective, the reform should focus on the following tasks:

- laws should be created to protect the interests and well-being of people in difficult living conditions and help diversify the services offered. Basic social services should be guaranteed free of charge, regardless of the economic situation, by the state and the place of residence;

- It is advisable to introduce a system of social planning at the local level, which involves all members of the local community in finding ways to solve specific social problems that arise at the local level. Such a system could be used to identify and prioritise, find and connect service providers, and effectively allocate budget funds.

- Local authorities should adopt social plans in accordance with the requirements of the central government, and these plans should be developed annually at the stage of determining the amount of financial support for the local community;

- control over the use of funds allocated for the system of free state subsidies should be improved;

- goals, priorities, and areas of funding should be determined based on an analysis of the needs of citizens for social services;

- the state strategy in the area of social services provision should ensure both preservation of the institution of financing social services from the budget and involvement of various non-state actors in the provision of social services financed from the budget of individuals and institutions. Budget funds should be allocated on a competitive basis, and the winner should be contracted to provide services;

- the problem of financial support for social institutions can be solved by including alternative (non-state) sources of incentives, introducing effective incentives for institutions, and using budgetary and own resources. Such an incentive could be a standardised approach to the allocation of funds from the oblast budget, which requires determining the method of calculating the value of a social service.

#### The Main Purposes and Tasks of the Ukrainian Modern Social Services System.

The social services system in Ukraine has undergone significant transformation over the past decades, especially in response to economic challenges, political changes, and, most recently, the full-scale war initiated by Russia in 2022. As Ukraine moves towards European integration, the modernization of its social services is a key priority, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive adequate support. This essay explores the primary purposes and tasks of Ukraine's modern social services system, analyzing its goals, structure, and ongoing digitalization efforts.

#### The Purpose of the Social Services System in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian social services system aims to provide comprehensive support to individuals and groups in need, ensuring social protection, reducing inequality, and enhancing citizens' quality of life. The main purposes include:

##### Ensuring Social Protection and Well-being.

A core objective of Ukraine's social services system is to offer protection and assistance to disadvantaged populations, including pensioners, low-income families, persons with disabilities, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The state provides financial aid, social benefits, and access to essential services, ensuring that no citizen is left without support.

##### Promoting Social Inclusion.

One of the fundamental principles of modern social services in Ukraine is the promotion of social inclusion. This involves integrating marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, orphans, and war-affected individuals, into society through employment programs, education, and specialized care services.

##### Responding to War-induced Social Challenges.

Due to Russia's full-scale invasion, millions of Ukrainians have been displaced and require urgent social assistance. The modern social services system has had to adapt rapidly, providing emergency financial aid, housing support, psychological counseling, and legal assistance to war-affected citizens.

#### Key Tasks of the Ukrainian Social Services System.

To fulfill its purposes, Ukraine's social services system is responsible for implementing various tasks, which include developing support programs, ensuring accessibility, and leveraging digitalization.

##### Provision of Social Assistance and Financial Support.

The Ukrainian government provides various forms of social assistance, including:

- Pensions and social security payments for the elderly and disabled.
- Subsidies for housing and utilities to assist low-income families.
- Unemployment benefits to support those struggling with job loss.
- Financial aid for IDPs and war-affected families to ensure economic stability.

##### Expanding Access to Healthcare and Psychological Support.

Healthcare and psychological support are integral to social services, especially given the current war conditions. Many citizens, particularly veterans and victims of conflict, require long-term mental health support. Ukraine has launched national programs offering:

- E-health services for online medical consultations.
- Mental health helplines and psychological counseling for war survivors.
- Rehabilitation programs for injured soldiers and civilians.

Digitalization of Social Services.

Ukraine is a leader in e-government, and the digitalization of social services is one of its most ambitious projects. The Diia platform allows citizens to apply for benefits, register for financial aid, and access government support remotely. Key digital developments include:

- Online applications for social benefits, reducing bureaucratic barriers.
- Blockchain technology for transparent aid distribution, preventing corruption.
- AI-driven service platforms that offer personalized social support based on citizens' needs.

Support for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The war has displaced millions of Ukrainians, making IDP support one of the system's top priorities. The government provides:

- Temporary housing programs for displaced families.
- Employment initiatives to help IDPs find jobs in host regions.
- Legal aid to assist with property loss claims and documentation issues.

Challenges and Future Directions

Despite the progress in reforming Ukraine's social services system, several challenges remain:

- Cybersecurity threats to digital social services due to ongoing Russian cyberattacks.
- Funding shortages caused by the economic strain of war.
- Bureaucratic inefficiencies in regional service delivery.

To address these challenges, Ukraine is working on:

- Enhancing cybersecurity through partnerships with international tech companies.
- Securing more international aid to sustain social programs.
- Further decentralizing social services to improve local-level efficiency.

Organisation of the social service delivery system at the central and local level.

Sources[1,2,3,4,5] clearly define the responsibilities between local and central government. At the national level, the Ministry of Social Policy develops state policy, hence the legal framework, while at the regional and local levels, measures are taken in accordance with the identification of social service needs, planning and financing, as well as the actual organization that provides social services. The authority to compile and maintain a register of social workers and service recipients, control, supervise and train social workers at all levels is enshrined in [1].

Ukraine has been reforming its social system for two decades. In the context of the financial and economic crisis, the destructive processes in Ukrainian society and the situation in which they are taking place seem paradoxical and absolutely unacceptable:

unfair distribution, extremely low targeting and high dispersion of state social transfers;

the level of coverage of needs and access to social services for recipients is largely unsatisfactory.

Today in Ukraine, creating an effective system of social services and making them accessible to all those who need them is a fundamental task of the state.

In this context, there is a need for a more in-depth study of aspects of the social services system, the results of which have theoretical and practical significance.

Meeting the needs for social services of people in difficult life circumstances is one of the central tasks of social services. The effectiveness of this system directly affects the social and political stability of the state. Given these facts, it is necessary to study all components of this process and conduct a more thorough analysis of the category "social service system".

Social service providers are individuals and legal entities of any type of ownership that meet the criteria established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and will be included in the Register of Social Service Providers in the future. Sectors of social service providers:

- State and municipal (institutions consisting of relevant bodies);
- Non-governmental (enterprises, institutions and organizations, both profitable and non-profit social and charitable organizations, private individuals).

Social services are also provided in institutions that are engaged in other activities (e.g., employment, healthcare, education agencies). Social service providers may establish non-governmental organizations to protect their interests and rights.

Despite the fact that Article 7 of the Law of Ukraine "On Social Services" stipulates that social service providers may engage other enterprises, institutions, organizations, individuals, including volunteers, it is not possible to provide social services to individual entrepreneurs, which significantly limits the market for social services, the range of their actors and competition in this system.

State and municipal social institutions include: territorial centers for social services for pensioners and single disabled persons; centers for social services for youth; employment centers; centers for vocational, medical and social rehabilitation of disabled persons; accommodation for minors; centers for social and psychological rehabilitation of minors; night shelters for the homeless; reporting centers for the homeless; social hotels; centers for social adaptation; and other institutions.

The most important forms of social services are material assistance and social services. People in difficult life situations are provided with material assistance in the form of monetary or in-kind support: food, sanitary and personal hygiene products, clothing, footwear and other basic necessities, fuel, as well as technical rehabilitation and health improvement for those in need, and childcare.

Social services can be divided into:

inpatient - permanent, temporary (for the period specified in the social services agreement) or five days a week social benefits provided in the sense of round-the-clock stay (residence) of the recipient with social service providers; recipients of inpatient social services are provided with a room;

semi-institutional - social services provided to their recipients in the premises of the social service provider at certain times of the day: with conditions for overnight stay (residence) of the recipient with social service providers; with a place for receiving people or staying for a day at certain times of the day;

in the community - social services provided at the recipient's location, including on the street; at home - social services provided to recipients at home.

Taking into account the requirements of the new Law "On Social Services" to create a register of providers and recipients of social services in order to ensure the rights of individuals and families to social services, and to coordinate the system of social services, the Ministry of Social Policy was designated as the owner of the register, and the procedure for maintaining and forming the register was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

In accordance with the order (Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of 20.01.2014 No. 28), local social protection authorities collect, summarise and analyse data on beneficiaries of potential and actual social services in the first quarter of each year, as well as collect data on social service providers.

Information on the need for social services includes data on individual assessments of the social security needs of a person or family, as well as information on social service providers, socio-demographic data, and research.

Analysis of foreign experience in developing a model for organising the system of social services.

According to the analysis of publications [9-11], in the vast majority of European countries, interaction and cooperation of social service organisations of the public and non-governmental sectors is widely used. The effective functioning of such cooperation at the central and local levels of

government can be explained by the equality of the parties and constructivism in relations, institutional capacity, and sufficient resources.

The study of the European experience allows us to conclude that the choice of such roles of local executive authorities in the development of the social services sector as "initiator", "provider", "donor" and "consultant" is effective, as they have different functional characteristics in terms of their mission and purpose. However, it is the 'provider' role of local authorities in the development of social services that demonstrates the highest efficiency and social effectiveness, which determines the ability to prove and effectively perform the social function of the state in close proximity to the direct recipients of social services.

Involvement of NGOs in the implementation of state social projects on a paid basis promotes competition in the social services market; ensures an individual approach to service provision due to the proximity of NGOs to target groups of service recipients. It is important to provide social services to the population on the basis of subsidies to non-governmental organisations, as this form of organisation increases the efficiency of using budgetary funds and allows solving acute social problems of society not only at the expense of the budget, but also resources raised by non-governmental organisations from additional extra-budgetary sources (charity of individuals, volunteering, etc.).

Let's analyse the organisation of the social service delivery system in European countries and the USA. Thus, in France, social services are provided in the following areas: healthcare (maternal and child healthcare, domestic assistance services, institutions for people with disabilities), education (social security in schools: nurses and nannies, social workers and psychologists, social services at universities), justice (social services and institutions for offenders, prisoners and their families), youth and sport (leisure centres, summer camps, etc.), urban planning and municipalities, agricultural cooperatives, and labour and vocational training. For large families, the state programme "Big Family" operates: tax benefits are provided; families receive financial assistance for children under six years of age to hire childcare services. In general, in France, the organisation of the social service system is one of the priority areas of social protection.

The analysis of the organisation of the social protection system in Germany allows us to conclude that measures to help families (individuals), youth, and children are carried out in Germany not only by state, but also by NGOs that work closely with state organisations, based on the principle of subsidiarity, according to which the state performs only those functions that cannot be undertaken by NGOs that do not fall within the competence of local authorities, which gives preference to NGOs over state organisations. In Germany, volunteer organisations that do not have official status are often involved in the provision of social services.

Familiarity with the research on the organisation of the system of social services in the UK allows us to conclude that, first of all, the relevant principles play an important role in regulating the issues of social services for citizens, including the following: full autonomy and decentralisation of social service providers, social integration, development of social services on the ground to meet specific needs, responsibility of local governments for the quality of services provided.

According to experts, in this country, social security services are designed to promote social integration by providing people with support so that they can live more independently in society. A wide range of child protection services, social work, early childhood care and other services provide protection and prevent threats to vulnerable populations. It is important that in this country, it is at the local level that the needs of the population for certain social services, the specifics of their provision and regulation, and control over their quality are determined, which helps to take into account the real needs of society when organising social work.

The National Commission for Social Service Standards assesses the effectiveness of social service providers based on 50 indicators, which are grouped into five sections: objectives; costs and efficiency; effectiveness of service delivery and results; quality of services for users and support

providers; fair access. What is the significance of this assessment? In our opinion, it informs the choice of an organisation that, in the recipient's opinion, is the most professional in the area of need.

The US has several major and more than 70 limited government assistance programmes. The main ones are the guaranteed income programme, the family assistance programme, the food programme, the housing subsidy programme and the medical assistance programme. The difference between the organisation of the US social services system and that of other countries is the involvement of a large number of private (commercial) social organisations, which are funded by charitable contributions, income from individuals, and government allocations for individual programmes. They differ in the nature of their activities, the specifics of their services, and the scope of their activities within the community, region, and country. Among them, social agencies are the main ones.

International experience convincingly shows that the organisation of social service provision is one of the priority areas of state policy.

In our opinion, further improvement of this component of state policy in Ukraine should be linked to the development of efficient, effective mechanisms for the provision of social services, taking into account the specifics of the subjects of their receipt.

The system of organisation of social services in Ukraine requires an in-depth scientific analysis in order to identify new ways and directions for its improvement, and, in our opinion, it is advisable to follow the European trend, when it is the state that promotes the activities of NGOs in this area. It is necessary to clearly define the legal basis for interaction between state and non-state institutions in the field of social services provision, coordination of their activities, and the legal status of civic associations and their representatives engaged in social services provision.

#### Importance of Social Services During Times of Conflict.

During times of conflict, such as war, civil unrest, or natural disasters, the role of social services becomes even more critical. Conflicts disrupt the lives of civilians, destroy infrastructure, and create mass displacement. In these contexts, social services serve as a lifeline, offering the following benefits:

1. **Provision of Emergency Aid:** Conflicts often lead to immediate humanitarian needs such as food, water, healthcare, and shelter. Social services provide essential emergency relief to populations impacted by war, saving lives and preventing further suffering.

2. **Support for Displaced Persons and Refugees:** Conflict usually causes large-scale displacement, both internally and across borders. Social services are essential in providing housing, legal assistance, food, and healthcare to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), helping them regain stability.

3. **Healthcare and Psychological Support:** In conflict zones, physical and mental health needs escalate due to violence, trauma, and lack of medical supplies. Social services play a vital role in providing access to healthcare, including trauma care, vaccinations, and mental health services for those who have experienced violence or loss.

4. **Protection of Vulnerable Populations:** In conflict settings, marginalized groups (e.g., women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities) are at higher risk of exploitation, violence, and abuse. Social services help protect these groups by offering shelters, legal aid, and support systems.

5. **Maintaining Social Order and Stability:** Effective social services help maintain some degree of social order by addressing the immediate needs of affected populations, preventing further escalation of societal breakdown, and fostering trust between the state, civil society, and international partners.

6. **Rebuilding Communities Post-Conflict:** After the immediate crisis subsides, social services contribute to the long-term recovery of communities by providing programs for rebuilding infrastructure, restoring education, and facilitating reintegration of former combatants or displaced persons into society.

7. Promoting Resilience: During conflict, social services can play a key role in helping communities remain resilient by offering financial aid, employment support, and training programs, enabling individuals and families to adapt and recover from the economic and social disruptions caused by war.

In the context of Ukraine, social services during the ongoing war provide essential support to the population, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), families who have lost homes, and people experiencing psychological trauma. The digitalization of these services has become particularly critical, allowing the government and NGOs to reach individuals even in remote or conflict-affected areas.

#### The Role of Digitalization in Social Services.

Digitalization refers to the integration of digital technologies into everyday life, transforming how services are delivered, managed, and accessed. In the context of social services, digitalization involves using digital tools, platforms, and technologies to enhance the efficiency, accessibility, and inclusivity of services provided to the population. This can range from digitizing administrative processes to offering online platforms for people to access healthcare, financial support, education, and other social services.

In times of crisis, such as in war or natural disasters, digitalization becomes even more essential. It allows governments, NGOs, and service providers to continue offering critical services while navigating challenges like limited physical infrastructure, security concerns, and large-scale displacement of people.

Key Aspects of Digitalization in Social Services are the following:

#### 1. Improved Access to Services.

- Online Platforms and Apps: Digitalization allows for the creation of online portals and mobile applications where individuals can access social services, such as healthcare, social assistance, and educational resources. These platforms are particularly useful during crises when physical access to service centers is limited or disrupted. For example, during the war in Ukraine, the Diia app became a critical tool for citizens to access governmental services remotely, such as registration for IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons), applying for social benefits, and receiving financial assistance.

- Remote Healthcare: Telemedicine and online consultations have become vital during times of conflict. They allow citizens in war zones or remote areas to receive medical advice, prescriptions, and follow-up care without needing to visit a healthcare facility. Digital platforms can also be used to offer mental health support via virtual counseling sessions.

#### 2. Efficiency and Speed in Service Delivery

- Automated Systems: Digital technologies enable the automation of many processes within social service delivery. For example, applications for social benefits, pensions, or unemployment assistance can be submitted and processed online, which reduces administrative bottlenecks and speeds up response times.

- Real-Time Updates: Digital platforms can provide real-time updates and information to people, such as where they can access aid, when they can receive benefits, and how to access shelters or other necessary services. This is crucial in a conflict zone, where people are often unsure of where they can find safety or support.

#### 3. Data Management and Integration

- Centralized Databases: Digitalization enables governments and service providers to maintain centralized, secure databases of citizens and service recipients. These databases help track individuals' access to services, manage resources more effectively, and ensure that services are delivered to those most in need.

- Analytics for Better Resource Allocation: With the help of digital tools, governments can analyze data to assess the needs of different regions or populations, ensuring that resources and services are distributed more effectively. For example, in Ukraine, digital systems can help track the movement of displaced persons and ensure they receive the necessary social support and assistance.



#### 4. Increased Transparency and Accountability

- **Public Access to Information:** Digitalization enhances transparency by making information about social services, available resources, and policies accessible to the public. This transparency is especially important in times of crisis, when people need to know where to turn for help and what they are entitled to. Websites and apps can offer clear information on how to apply for aid, the status of applications, and available support.

- **Tracking of Aid Distribution:** Digital tools can track the distribution of humanitarian aid, ensuring that resources are not misappropriated and that they reach the intended beneficiaries. Blockchain technology, for instance, has been used in some conflict zones to track the flow of aid and ensure accountability.

#### 5. Support for Vulnerable Populations

- **Customized Services for Vulnerable Groups:** Digitalization allows for the customization of services to meet the needs of specific vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, children, people with disabilities, and refugees. Digital platforms can include accessibility features (such as text-to-speech, language options, or special assistance for the disabled), ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their situation, can benefit from the services offered.

- **Remote Social Support:** Social workers and counselors can use digital platforms to offer remote assistance, provide psychological support, and maintain contact with those in need. This is especially vital during wartime when individuals may be isolated from traditional support networks.

#### 6. Enhancing Communication and Collaboration

- **Cross-Border Collaboration:** In conflict zones, international organizations, NGOs, and governments often work together to provide aid and services. Digital platforms enable better communication and collaboration between these entities, ensuring a more coordinated and effective response to the crisis.

- **Dissemination of Critical Information:** Digital tools allow governments and NGOs to quickly disseminate critical information, such as evacuation routes, safety protocols, emergency shelters, and available medical services, directly to affected populations via social media, apps, or websites. This improves the ability of people to respond to emergencies and stay informed in real time.

Ukraine has demonstrated the power of digitalization in social service delivery, particularly during the ongoing conflict with Russia. In addition to the Diia app, which allows Ukrainian citizens to access a range of digital government services, other initiatives have emerged, such as:

- **Digital Registration for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** The Ukrainian government has implemented an online registration system for IDPs, enabling them to access social services, humanitarian aid, and government assistance without needing to travel to crowded government offices.

- **Virtual Medical Services:** In areas heavily affected by the war, Ukraine has expanded telemedicine services, offering remote consultations for healthcare needs, mental health support, and referrals to specialists.

- **Online Financial Assistance:** Ukraine has also adopted digital methods for distributing financial assistance, including cash transfers and social benefits, to individuals and families affected by the war. Digital payment systems and mobile money services allow citizens to receive aid even in regions where banking infrastructure has been damaged.

- **Unified Social Information System.** Launched to integrate various databases related to social services, streamlining service provision and reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies.

**E-subsidies & E-benefits.** Citizens can apply for housing subsidies, unemployment benefits, and other social assistance programs online without visiting government offices.

**Pension Fund Digitalization.** The Ukrainian Pension Fund has implemented online services where citizens can check their pension accounts, apply for retirement benefits, and track their work history.

**E-health Integration.** Expansion of digital healthcare services, including e-prescriptions, telemedicine, and integration with social protection systems for vulnerable populations.

**Blockchain for Social Assistance.** Ukraine has been exploring blockchain technology to ensure transparent distribution of humanitarian aid and social benefits, reducing fraud risks.

**War-time Digital Resilience.** How Ukraine has adapted its digital infrastructure for social services during the war, ensuring continued access for displaced and vulnerable populations.

Since the full-scale invasion by Russia in 2022, Ukraine has rapidly adapted its digital infrastructure to ensure that social services remain accessible to displaced and vulnerable populations. The government, in collaboration with international partners and private tech companies, has implemented innovative solutions to maintain service continuity.

Ukraine's Diia platform, initially designed for digital IDs and government services, has evolved into a crucial tool for wartime social support. Key features include:

- **E-aid Programs:** Citizens can apply for financial assistance from the government and international donors (e.g., eDopomoga).
- **Temporary Relocation Assistance:** Displaced persons can register for internally displaced person (IDP) status and receive benefits.
- **War-related Documents:** The app now includes digital versions of military registration and documents for war-affected individuals.

The war has displaced millions of Ukrainians, making physical access to social services difficult. To address this:

- Online registration and benefits application were introduced, removing the need for in-person visits.
- Mobile social service units and hotlines help citizens in occupied and recently liberated areas.
- Decentralized service centers were set up in western Ukraine and abroad to assist displaced persons.

With frequent cyberattacks from Russia, Ukraine has strengthened cybersecurity for digital services by:

- Migrating government data to cloud storage in Europe (to prevent data loss from physical attacks).
- Enhancing encryption and cyber-defense systems in collaboration with Microsoft, Amazon, and other tech firms.
- Partnering with NATO and the EU to improve cyber resilience in critical infrastructure.

Ukraine has partnered with organizations like:

- The UN, EU, and World Bank, which provide funding for digital social services.
- Tech companies like Google, Starlink (SpaceX), and Microsoft, offering cloud solutions, internet access in conflict zones, and cybersecurity.
- Blockchain-based aid distribution to ensure transparent and efficient financial support to those in need.

With millions suffering from war-related trauma, digital health services have expanded:

- E-prescriptions and telemedicine help displaced persons access healthcare.
- Mental health chatbots and online therapy platforms support those affected by war.

Despite these successes, challenges remain, including:

- Internet disruptions in occupied and frontline areas.
- Ensuring digital literacy for elderly and disabled populations.
- Preventing fraud and ensuring aid reaches those in need.

To overcome these, Ukraine is further expanding digital education, strengthening mobile internet infrastructure, and increasing AI-based fraud detection.

**Real Cases of Digital Tools Improving Social Services in Ukraine.**

Ukraine's digital transformation has accelerated during the war, making social services more accessible and efficient. Here are some real-world examples of how digital tools are helping citizens:

Case 1: Financial Aid for War-Affected Citizens. Through Diia, Ukrainians can apply for IDP status and receive monthly state financial aid (2,000–3,000 UAH per person); eDopomoga, a government-backed initiative, provides direct financial assistance from international donors via Diia. Over 1.5 million people have received digital payments through this platform.

Case 2: Housing Compensation for Destroyed Homes. Citizens can apply for compensation for destroyed housing through Diia, avoiding bureaucracy and long waits. As of 2023, thousands of applications have been processed digitally.

Case 3: Ensuring Internet Access for Displaced Persons. Starlink terminals, provided by SpaceX, have been deployed in hospitals, social service centers, and refugee shelters. This ensures continued access to online applications for aid, pensions, and healthcare services, even in frontline areas.

Case 4: Remote Pension Applications for Elderly and Displaced Persons. The ePension system allows elderly citizens to apply for pensions, track payments, and update documents online. This is critical for IDPs who lost access to their local Pension Fund offices due to the war. Over 1 million retirees have used ePension since 2022.

Case 5: On-the-Go Social Services in War-Affected Areas. Ukraine has deployed mobile administrative service centers (ACII) equipped with internet and digital devices. These mobile centers help people in liberated areas register for IDP aid, social benefits, and legal assistance.

Case 6: Transparent Financial Aid Distribution. The Ukrainian government partnered with UNICEF and blockchain company Everstake to distribute humanitarian aid transparently. Aid payments are made via blockchain-based smart contracts, reducing corruption risks and ensuring money reaches recipients instantly.

Case 7: Remote Healthcare Access for War Victims. The eHealth system allows displaced persons to access their medical records and prescriptions online. e-prescriptions help patients receive medicine in any pharmacy in Ukraine without needing paper documents.

Case 8: Telegram Chatbots Helping Citizens Access Services. Several Telegram chatbots, like @eDopomoga\_bot, guide people in applying for aid and benefits. The "Tell Me" chatbot, launched by the Ministry of Social Policy, helps victims of domestic violence find shelters and legal support.

Case 9: Mental Health Support for War-Affected Citizens. Digital mental health platforms like "How Are You?" provide free online therapy sessions for Ukrainians suffering from war trauma.

Ukraine's innovative use of Diia, blockchain, mobile centers, Starlink, ePension, and chatbots has significantly improved social service accessibility during the war. These solutions ensure that millions of Ukrainians, especially displaced and vulnerable groups, continue to receive the help they need.

#### Key Trends in Digitalization of Social Services in Ukraine.

Ukraine's social services sector is undergoing rapid digital transformation, driven by government initiatives, technological advancements, and the necessity of wartime resilience. Here's a look at key trends shaping the digitalization of social services, along with future perspectives.

##### 1. Expansion of the Diia Ecosystem.

###### Current Trend:

- Diia has evolved from a digital document platform into a full-service e-government ecosystem, providing access to financial aid, social benefits, pension services, and even legal support.
- Over 19 million Ukrainians use Diia, making it the primary tool for social service access.

###### Future Perspective:

- Expansion of AI-driven chatbots to assist with applications and reduce bureaucratic delays.
- Development of Diia.City, a legal framework that supports IT startups, encouraging the creation of digital social service tools.

## 2.AI & Big Data for Targeted Social Assistance.

### Current Trend:

- The government is using big data analytics to track displaced persons, pensioners, and low-income families, ensuring aid reaches the right people.
- AI-based fraud detection systems prevent duplicate applications for benefits and improve service efficiency.

### Future Perspective:

- AI-powered personalized social assistance, where digital tools predict citizen needs and offer proactive support.
- Blockchain-based universal social ID to streamline benefit distribution and eliminate paperwork.

## 3.Digital Inclusion for Vulnerable Groups.

### Current Trend:

- Mobile digital service centers provide on-the-ground assistance to people in remote and war-affected areas.
- Special training programs focus on improving digital literacy among elderly and disabled citizens.

### Future Perspective:

- AI-driven voice assistants for visually impaired individuals to access social services.
- Expansion of mobile digital hubs in rural and frontline areas, ensuring no one is left behind.

## 4.E-Health & Telemedicine Integration.

### Current Trend:

- Ukraine's eHealth system enables digital medical records, e-prescriptions, and remote doctor consultations.
- Online mental health platforms support war-affected individuals.

### Future Perspective:

- Full integration of telemedicine with Diia, allowing users to access healthcare services through a single app.
- Expansion of AI-based diagnostics and remote patient monitoring for vulnerable populations.

## 5.Strengthening Cybersecurity & Data Protection

### Current Trend:

- Ukraine has migrated government databases to European cloud services to protect sensitive social service data from cyberattacks.
- Collaboration with global tech firms like Microsoft, Google, and Cloudflare has enhanced cybersecurity.

### Future Perspective:

- Use of decentralized blockchain storage to further secure social service data.
- AI-driven cyber threat detection systems to ensure uninterrupted access to digital services.

## 6.Integration of Blockchain for Aid Distribution

Current Trend: Ukraine has started using blockchain technology to distribute humanitarian aid and social benefits transparently. UNICEF and the World Food Program have already tested crypto-based aid transfers in Ukraine.

Future Perspective: Wider adoption of blockchain-powered smart contracts to automate social benefits payments. Introduction of a digital social wallet, where citizens can manage pensions, subsidies, and donations in one place.

## Conclusions

Ukraine's modern social services system plays a crucial role in ensuring the well-being of its citizens, particularly in the context of war and economic instability. Through financial aid, digitalization, healthcare access, and support for IDPs, the system is evolving to meet new challenges.

As Ukraine continues its European integration, further modernization and international collaboration will be key to creating a resilient and inclusive social services framework. Ukraine is setting a global example in digital governance and social service transformation. The integration of AI, blockchain, cybersecurity measures, and mobile accessibility will continue to drive innovation. Despite challenges such as internet disruptions and digital literacy gaps, Ukraine's commitment to digital resilience ensures that millions of citizens can access essential services regardless of their location.

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