

Analytical Review

# Legal Clinics of Ukrainian Law Schools:

## Experience, Challenges and International Partnerships



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## Introduction

For over two decades, legal clinics of Ukrainian law schools have been an important means for the formation of practical skills of law students, ensuring access of the population to free legal assistance and developing legal culture in society. Their activities combine educational, social and human rights functions, creating a unique space where future lawyers learn through training, with citizens receiving the necessary support in solving legal challenges.

In the context of the armed conflict and martial law in Ukraine since 2014, which has become particularly acute after the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in February 2022, legal clinics have faced new challenges. They not only continue fulfilling their educational mission, but also become important providers of legal assistance for internally displaced persons, victims of hostilities, combatants and veterans, as well as other vulnerable categories of the population. At the same time, legal clinics and their members frequently operate under extremely difficult conditions: some have been forced to relocate through occupation, while others have suffered the destruction of their premises as a result of shelling. Furthermore, constant power supply and communication challenges make it difficult to conduct classes and consultations. Legal clinicians and supervisors work in stressful conditions, combining training and volunteer activities with their own survival challenges – from finding safe housing to restoring damaged property. For this reason, examining the current state of legal clinics, their needs, challenges and prospects for international cooperation is becoming particularly relevant.

The Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine (ALCU), which coordinates the clinical movement, maintains the register of legal clinics and facilitates the exchange of experience among them, serves as a key partner in this process. Through its activities, legal clinics receive methodological support, opportunities for professional development and engagement in project activities. At the same time, modern challenges (security risks, personnel and financial challenges, etc.) require a systematic analysis to determine what resources can be mobilized at the national and international levels.

Moreover, the status of legal clinics today is a mirror of broader processes in legal education and the system of access to justice. On the one hand, the war posed serious challenges to legal clinics: they lost their material base, were forced to relocate, faced a reduction in staff and the decreased volume of consultations provided. On the other hand, such difficulties became an impetus for seeking new models of cooperation, introducing modern academic training and attracting international partners more actively.

The research covers the period of 2024–2025, allowing for an assessment of the development dynamics of legal clinics following the first years of the full-scale war. It also takes into account the historical context, covering two phases of the war in Ukraine (2014–2015 and since 2022), which significantly affected the legal system and educational institutions.

## Research Methods

**The purpose of the analytical research:** to determine the current state of needs of legal clinics in Ukraine, which can be resolved using the resources of the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the ALCU), national and international partners and directly the universities where they operate.

**The period of the analytical research:** December 2024-December 2025.

**The research is aimed at solving the following tasks:**

1. Determining the main needs (organizational, security, material, legal, technical, etc.) of legal clinics in Ukraine under martial law.
2. Identifying the main obstacles to addressing such needs.
3. Establishing the difference in needs or their depth between legal clinics in Ukraine belonging to one of the five groups, such as: 1) operating in frontline territories; 2) relocated from the occupied territories to those controlled by Ukraine in 2014-2015; 3) relocated from the occupied territories to those controlled by Ukraine in 2022-2023; 4) located in territories temporarily occupied and then liberated in 2022-2023; 5) acting in territories controlled by Ukraine characterized by relative stability and dynamic development.
4. Identifying the ways used by legal clinics to address their needs, depending on a certain group specified above.
5. Establishing different types of assistance expected by a legal clinic from the ALCU and international organizations in the field of legal clinical education.
6. Reasoning the necessity to improve the legal regulation of the activities of legal clinics related to international cooperation.
7. Seeking new partners in international cooperation and intensifying cooperation with available ones.
8. Intensifying collaboration in project activities with international partners.
9. Establishing the importance of introducing a new tool – monitoring the level of social well-being of clinical students and supervisors at the level of both the legal clinic and the ALCU.
10. Developing a series of recommendations for heads of legal clinics, law school administrations, as well as our main stakeholders (the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, etc.).

**Expected results:** an analytical review based on the results of the research prepared, describing key findings, the challenges identified, success stories and recommendations for expanding the clinical component in legal training programs and strengthening the capacity of legal clinics to provide legal assistance and organize legal training events, taking into account the increased cooperation with international partners (planned electronic publishing of the analytical review, as well as guidelines for heads of legal clinics, law school administrations and key stakeholders (the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, etc.)).

## The research design

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The research is based on mixed research methods – a combination of qualitative and quantitative research strategies.

Qualitative research includes conducting focus groups with representatives of legal clinics, differentiated into **5 groups**, depending on the impact of wartime risks on their activities. These are the following groups of legal clinics:

- 1 **the first group** – clinics which operate in the frontline territories of Ukraine;
- 2 **the second group** – clinics relocated from the occupied territories to those under the control of Ukraine in 2014-2015;
- 3 **the third group** – clinics relocated from the occupied territories to those under the control of Ukraine in 2022-2023;
- 4 **the fourth group** – clinics located in territories which were temporarily occupied and then liberated in 2022-2023;
- 5 **the fifth group** – clinics which operate in territories controlled by Ukraine with relative stability and dynamic development.

Qualitative research determines the list of needs of legal clinics. To fully understand the problem, the data were verified by in-depth interviews with heads and responsible persons of legal clinics and representatives of law schools on the challenges of developing legal clinics, as well as directions for increasing the effectiveness of their activities, in particular in the international discourse.

Quantitative research, namely, an online survey, was used to quantitatively determine the most common needs of legal clinics of each group. The survey also determines the awareness of legal clinics about the possibilities of receiving support from the ALCU. Part of the survey is to determine the most common needs of legal clinics in cooperation with international partners, finding opportunities to address these needs, including using the ALCU resources.

At the final stage of the research, it is planned to resort to qualitative methods again, which will enable us to obtain deeper explanations of the trends identified and confirm their practical significance. To this end, the results will be discussed with the teams of five legal clinics, which represent different groups according to the activity conditions and, at the same time, are leading participants in the legal clinical movement in Ukraine. This approach ensures not only verification of the reliability of the data obtained, but also takes into account the experience and vision of the legal clinicians themselves, supervisors, clients and partners, including international organizations.

After completing the interview and discussion stages, the research results are to be presented at a dedicated forum, which will become a platform for a broad discussion. The opinions and suggestions of the forum participants are to be integrated into the final analytical review, which will enable to draw up comprehensive recommendations for increasing the capacity of legal clinics in Ukraine. The special focus is placed on the development of international cooperation and expanding the possibilities of providing Ukrainians with legal, informational and educational support. Thus, the research has not only an analytical, but also a practical and strategic dimension aimed at strengthening the legal clinical movement in the context of wartime challenges.

## Data collection and analysis

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**Interviews.** The needs of legal clinics (security needs, premises, remuneration, logistical support, incentives, educational and methodological support and human resources) differ depending on their location before the war and after the relocation, as well as the legal status. Therefore, the analytical research uses targeted sampling to select legal clinics. The targeted sampling means that the researcher first determines the categories to be covered.

According to the statistical data of the ALCU Register as of 1 December 2024, 70 legal clinics were registered, with 4,674 legal consultations provided (pursuant to the data provided by 69 legal clinics). For 2024 and the first half of 2025, 63 legal clinics provided data on their activities.

Compared to 2021, before the full-scale invasion, there were 69 of them according to the ALCU Register, with 5,530 legal consultations provided (pursuant to the data provided by 69 legal clinics). Thus, martial law has not affected the number of operating legal clinics in general, but the quantitative indicators of their main activity decreased by 20%.

**The online survey** includes the following groups (approximately 25 legal clinics, 25-30, legal clinicians, 5-6 clients and 5-6 partners), including international ones). The online surveys are conducted on the basis of the platform: Google Forms. Data collection is based on a non-probability sample (to be specified). The selection process is based on a random sampling method. Initially, the project team uses the ALCU database and makes a sample according to the criteria.

It is important to assess the ALCU activities, its effectiveness in strengthening the legal clinical movement and international cooperation in the following fields:

- training new heads and supervisors of legal clinics;
- consultation to law schools with regard to establishing a legal clinic;
- exchange of national and international experience, discussion of strategic directions for the legal clinical development at annual forums of legal clinics, including issues related to enhancing its internationalisation;
- openness and transparency in the elections of the chairperson and members of the board.

For this purpose, it is necessary to conduct an online survey of the chairperson and members of the ALCU board (6) and individual interviews with the current chairperson of the ALCU board and predecessors.

**Interviews** are conducted by phone (Viber, Telegram or WhatsApp) or online via the Zoom platform. Each interview is recorded, transcribed and analysed. Interviews last from 45 minutes to 1,5 hours.

**Geography of the study:** regions of Ukraine in proportion to the representation of the six groups of legal clinics; foreign countries in which legal clinics have close cooperation with domestic legal clinics.

**Focus groups.** A meeting is to be held with 6 focus groups of legal clinics (five of them are focus groups with legal clinics belonging to 5 groups differentiated by wartime conditions in the territory of Ukraine, one group is a focus group of legal clinics not registered with the ALCU), as well as with a focus group of clinical students (10).

## Research limitations

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An online survey with a non-probability sample may result in selected respondents who systematically differ from the target population in some key characteristic features. The risk will be reduced by comparing the business characteristics of the respondents with the available statistical data on national legal clinics in the ALCU register and using different channels for distributing the survey.

List of needs/challenges of legal clinics from different groups (to be updated after the first interviews).

1. **Security.**
2. **Financial issues** (compensation for material damage inflicted by the war; access to funding through grant writing).
3. **Legal.**
4. **Organizational and technical.**
5. **Personnel.**
6. **Logistics.**
7. **Social well-being of supervisors and legal clinicians** (housing issues; reconstruction of damaged housing; compensation for damaged housing).
8. **Improved international cooperation** (search for new partners; increasing the level of English language proficiency of members of legal clinics; strengthening project activities).

# 1. Historical and geographical discourse of the needs/challenges of Ukrainian legal clinics and ways to resolve them through assistance of the resources of the association of legal clinics of Ukraine (hereinafter – the ALCU), national and international partners, in particular, of the universities where they operate, for the period of 2014-2025

The armed conflict in Ukraine, caused by the Russian aggression, has officially been lasting since 13 April 2014, when the Decision of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine On Urgent Measures to Overcome the Terrorist Threat and Preserve the Territorial Integrity of Ukraine was put into effect by the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 405/2014 of 13 April 2014, and continues to the present day. However, in reality, this conflict began with the annexation of Crimea in February 2014, which resulted in the first flows of internally displaced persons and refugees abroad.

This armed conflict has two long 'hot' phases of active hostilities. The first phase took place in 2014-2015 in Donetsk and Luhansk Regions (it gradually subsided during 2015 after signing the Minsk agreements on 12 February 2015<sup>1</sup>). The second phase began with the full-scale invasion of the Russian invader into the territory of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and continues to the present. Also on 24 February 2022, martial law was introduced in Ukraine, proclaimed by the Decree of the President of Ukraine On the Introduction of Martial Law in Ukraine No. 2102-IX dated 24 February 2022, which is in force to this day.

As these 'hot' phases developed, many Ukrainian soldiers died, were wounded or captured and went missing. During these two 'hot' phases, there were two large 'waves' of internal displacement of the civilians from the occupied and frontline territories, as well as from the territories where hostilities took place, to the territories controlled by Ukraine. These 'waves' included many millions of Ukrainians who relocated and received the status of internally displaced persons (hereinafter referred to as IDPs) in communities with more stable development. Many Ukrainian citizens during the second 'wave' of displacement went abroad and received the status of a refugee or a person in need of temporary protection (mainly in EU countries). Between the 'hot' phases of the armed conflict, the flow of displaced Ukrainian citizens continued, but was not so massive.

Through the difficult military and political conditions in Ukraine, the population, in addition to various difficult life circumstances, faced new legal challenges, caused by the loss of documents during internal displacement, the imperfect laws on the rights of citizens under martial law, on mobilization and mobilization training, on social protection (benefits, guarantees) of participants in hostilities and persons with disabilities as a result of the war and their families, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Complex of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Official website of the OSCE. 12 February 2015. <https://www.osce.org/ru/cio/140221>

In all territories controlled by the Ukrainian authorities, the population's demand for high-quality operational legal assistance, dissemination of legal information and access to justice has significantly increased. Among the providers that rendered and continue rendering this entire range of services, it is necessary to note the legal clinics at higher education institutions, united into a powerful legal clinical movement in our country. The Public Organization Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine (hereinafter – the ALCU) plays an important role in establishing and developing the legal clinical movement, as well as in coordinating the actions of legal clinics in conditions of the armed conflict.

The ALCU maintains a register of legal clinics, monitors their activities, promotes the exchange of positive experiences, engages them in project activities and governs newly established legal clinics in order to improve provision of legal assistance to the population, primarily to vulnerable categories and those who have suffered from the armed conflict. Through the ALCU, analytical studies of the needs of legal clinics are constantly conducted, including during the period of the armed conflict, with recommendations prepared to address these needs to the extent possible, which are sent to the relevant authorities and the management of higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as HEIs).

It is the research of these needs and the identification of ways to address them that is the key to restoring and improving legal clinical education in Ukraine.

The needs of legal clinics during the armed conflict inflicted by the Russian aggression can be ranked by the dimensions of the purpose in the services of the legal clinic, which is set forth in the Standard Regulation on Legal Clinics No. 592<sup>2</sup> dated 3 August 2006, in the Standards for the Activities of Legal Clinics of Ukraine dated 19 June 2014<sup>3</sup>, specified in the Local Regulation on the Higher Education Institution, as a rule, in the Regulation on the Legal Clinics.

Among these measurements of the needs of legal clinics, we should note the following:

- 1 **Security needs** (with regard to a shelter, including in the event of a chemical/radiation alarm signal, personal protective equipment, first aid kits and heating in the cold season);
- 2 **Logistical needs** (with regard to office space, for conducting classes, for confidential reception of clients, repair of the premises, including major repairs, furniture, office equipment and stationery, uninterrupted lighting, Internet and mobile communication);
- 3 **Human resources needs** (with regard to the lack and turnover of personnel, especially absent managers, complete or partial absence of the legal clinic staff in the staffing schedule, training in clinical management, in particular, personnel);
- 4 **Legal needs** (with regard to the registration and recognition of the status of a specialized legal clinic, documentary assurance of confidentiality of working with clients in the manner established by law, proper legal registration of the rights and obligations of full-time employees of the legal clinic and legal clinicians, available communications manager, the possibility of drawing up memorandums of cooperation, as this is now impossible through the uncertainty of the legal status of the legal clinic at the legislative level);

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<sup>2</sup> On approval of the Standard Regulation on the Legal Clinic of a Higher Educational Institution of Ukraine No. 592 dated 03/08/2006: Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0956-06#Text>

<sup>3</sup> Standards for the activities of legal clinics of Ukraine, approved by the All-Ukrainian Congress of the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine, Minutes No. 2 dated 19 June 2014 <https://legalclinics.in.ua/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/standarti-diyalnosti-yuridichnikh-klinik-ukrajini.pdf>

- 5 **Financial needs** (with regard to remuneration for working in the legal clinic to the head, supervisor(-s), its decent level, material encouragement of active legal clinicians, winners of competitions, Olympiads and grant support with funds);
- 6 **Communication needs with the ALCU** (with regard to training in clinical management, development of digital competence of staff, trainings in international humanitarian law, international criminal law, etc., grant writing in the field of development of the legal clinical movement, expansion of ties with legal clinics of other countries, international organizations, conducting external independent monitoring/audit to reveal challenges and needs of a specific clinic, the ALCU administration of legal clinic projects);
- 7 **Needs for social well-being of the staff and legal clinicians** (housing and social issues, challenges with obtaining IDP status, psychological support and assistance, etc.).
- 8 **Needs to intensify international cooperation:** search for new partners; increased level of English language proficiency of members of legal clinics; strengthen project activities, etc.

Coverage of the dimensions of these needs and their depth also depends on the category of the legal clinic in Ukraine, taking into account the complex military and political situation in Ukraine from 2014 to the present. The higher the group (from the 5th (lowest) to the 1st (highest)), the more the measurements of the above needs are covered and the greater the depth of these needs. Thus, depending on the complex nature of the circumstances of legal clinic activities, they can be conditionally divided into five groups, such as:

**the first group** – legal clinics that, as a rule, perform online activities in the frontline territories of Ukraine, are balancing with their HEIs on the verge of closure;

**the second group** – legal clinics that operate after two relocations from the occupied territories to those controlled by Ukraine with their HEIs in 2014-2015 and 2022-2023, which have already had to start working in a new area 'from scratch' twice;

**the third group** – legal clinics of HEIs that operate in territories temporarily occupied in 2022-2023 and then liberated, which also have to resume their activities after looting by the occupiers and damage to premises and property;

**the fourth group** – legal clinics that, together with their HEIs, were relocated from the occupied territories to those controlled by Ukraine in 2014-2015, which have already been able to resume their activities for 9-10 years, but still have significant logistical and other needs;

**the fifth group** – legal clinics that operate in the territories controlled by Ukraine with relative stability and dynamic development, which are usually overloaded with work, have only some dimensions of needs, such as ensuring decent remuneration, as in conditions of martial law, constitutional rights to remuneration may be limited to higher education institutions even at increased load in providing legal services to vulnerable categories of the population.

This grouping of legal clinics and the proposed measuring of their needs will further help to determine, taking into account the research by the ALCU, scientists and specialists in the field of development of the legal clinical movement, in particular, within the framework of various projects from 2014 to the present, the extent of changing the needs. In addition, it is also important to investigate the issue of which needs of legal clinics have significantly expanded depending on the two phases of active hostilities in the Russian-Ukrainian war: the first (from 2014 to 2015) and the second (from 24 February 2022 to the present).

**The first phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war** affected the activities of legal clinics of higher education institutions relocated from the Republic of Crimea and certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions (hereinafter referred to as the Separate Districts of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions). In fact, the infrastructure of such institutions and clinics was not affected by the shelling, but the armed seizure of university premises by terrorists and the forced replacement of administration did not allow them to work, with the patriotic personnel forced to cease their activities.

Unfortunately, neither the administration of the higher education institutions nor the administration of legal clinics were able to evacuate paper archives of cases, equipment, office equipment and furniture, since the terrorists did not allow this to be done through checkpoints.

The relocated higher education institutions and legal clinics were forced to create everything 'from scratch': documentary, personnel, financial, organizational and technical support; this usually took from 1 to 3 years. Some clinics ceased their activities because there were no specialists in legal clinical education after the relocation of the institution to the territory controlled by Ukraine.

Legal clinics of the HEIs, located in the unoccupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions, as well as in the adjacent regions (Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia), took on the main part of serving IDPs, participants in the Anti-Terrorist Operation (hereinafter referred to as the ATO), informing these categories of citizens of their rights, providing legal assistance on issues arising in the field of civil, administrative, labour, social security law, etc. The civilians with IDP status were then able to visit their relatives and homes in the occupied territories and faced numerous challenges when crossing the demarcation line and the border between Ukraine and the Russian aggressor state or the territories of the Separate Districts of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions and Crimea occupied by Russia.

The state, primarily the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, was then still able to provide significant organizational, financial and material support to relocated HEIs and legal clinics within their structure, so in many cases they restored their activities relatively quickly.

A few years before the start of the second 'hot' phase of the armed conflict, the COVID-2019 pandemic began which became a significant challenge for the above legal clinics, as well as for all other clinics in the country. The needs were the same: mastering new digital skills and tools for the transition to distance legal clinical education, as well as compliance with the rules of the sanitary and epidemiological regime during contact between staff, legal clinicians and clients, etc.

**The second phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war** (full-scale stage) posed many new challenges of a general nature to the network of legal clinics. The main ones are related to the challenges faced by the higher education system – the outflow of teachers, students and applicants, decreased funding, the destruction or damage of logistics, etc. Many legal clinics are still unable to restore the full-fledged consultation of clients and legal educational activities. In other words, their ability to ensure the acquisition of practical skills by students is reduced, with the risk of reduced activities as a form of training lawyers increasing<sup>4</sup>. We should note that in conditions of martial law, almost all legal clinics face these challenges.

At the same time, the head of the ALCU Yuliia Lomzhets notes that the need to provide free legal assistance to the population, especially internally displaced Ukrainians after the full-scale Russian invasion on the territory of our country, is growing. Therefore, it is important to seek new models of legal clinics in Ukraine and advocate for the introduction of new forms of activities under the guidance of law schools<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Yu. Lomzhets Ensuring Access to Justice in Wartime: Legal Clinics Will Help Displaced Ukrainians. ALCU. URL: <https://legalclinics.in.ua/zabezpechennya-dostupu-do-pravosuddya-v-umovah-vijny-yurydychni-kliniky-dopomagatymut-peremishhenym-ukrayintsyam/>

<sup>5</sup> Yu. Lomzhets Ensuring Access to Justice in Wartime: Legal Clinics Will Help Displaced Ukrainians. ALCU. URL: <https://legalclinics.in.ua/zabezpechennya-dostupu-do-pravosuddya-v-umovah-vijny-yurydychni-kliniky-dopomagatymut-peremishhenym-ukrayintsyam/>

The Director of the Legal Clinic of National Aviation University, Iryna Bohatiuk, notes that after 24 February 2022, Ukraine has recorded massive destruction, damage to immovable and other property of Ukrainians, explanatory, informational and cultural works, as well as the dissemination of legal information among the population on issues of crossing the state border during martial law and staying in EU countries under refugee or temporary status have become relevant. She expresses the completely correct opinion that legal clinics providing legal assistance during military challenges perform extremely important work for people, the state and society<sup>6</sup> (pp. 199 – 200).

Iryna Bohatiuk also points out that legal clinics should pay attention to the awareness of supervisors and legal clinicians of the rules for proper handling of information on the Internet during martial law, their awareness of the provisions of the Law of Ukraine On the Legal Regime of Martial Law No. 389-VIII dated 12 May 2015 and other amendments to the applicable laws in this area<sup>7</sup> (p. 202). In May and June 2022, the ALCU evaluated the challenges and problems faced by Ukrainian legal clinics. During the interview, the following most critical challenges (problems) were identified, namely:

1. 1) limitations in their ability to accept clients and conduct legal educational activities due to the security situation in the country;
2. 2) the outflow of teachers-supervisors and clinical students abroad;
3. 3) the cessation of activities of a third of legal clinics due to damage to the institution and premises of legal clinics as a result of shelling, without access of clients to these legal clinics.

Among the urgent needs of legal clinics, the following were identified:

1. training in digital technologies for the implementation of remote activities of the legal clinic and the ability to work with the databases LexisNexis, Hein Online and League Law;
2. financial support for legal clinics;
3. trainings for working with clients with trauma;
4. supporting the psychological resilience of staff and legal clinicians;
5. obtaining knowledge in certain areas of law (international humanitarian law, international law, international laws on investigation of the crime of genocide and the collection of reparations) by both supervisors and legal clinicians;
6. legal consultation of clients along with foreign colleagues<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> I.H. Bohatiuk Activities of Legal Clinics Under Martial Law. Legal Bulletin. No. 3 (64), 2022. P. 199-205..

<sup>7</sup> I.H. Bohatiuk Activities of Legal Clinics Under Martial Law. Legal Bulletin. No. 3 (64), 2022. P. 199-205.

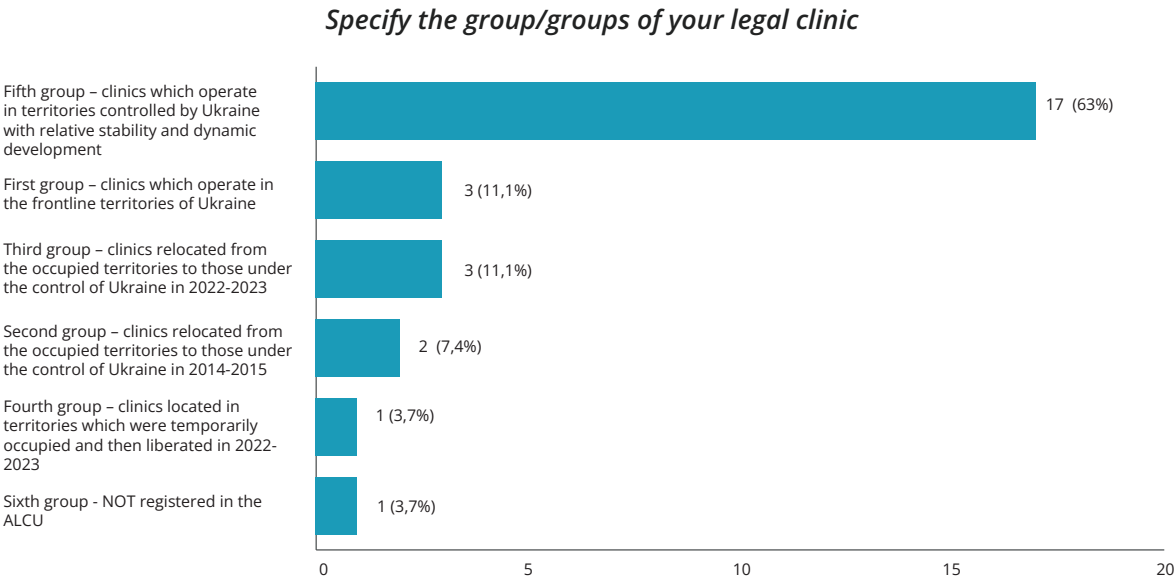
<sup>8</sup> Finger, Davida and Felstiner, Susan and Greenberg-Kobrin, Michelle, Empowering Ukraine's First Legal Responders: Ukrainian-US Collaboration and Clinics (September 13, 2024). Loyola University New Orleans College of Law Research Paper No. 2024-17, 31 Int'l J. Clinical Legal Educ. 147 (2024), Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5049252> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5049252>

# 2. Establishing current needs/challenges of Ukrainian legal clinics

## 2.1 Establishing the current needs/challenges of Ukrainian legal clinics under the influence of military and political conditions

The research was conducted from December 2024 to December 2025, within the framework of which a survey of 26 legal clinics was performed. Taking into account that 70 legal clinics<sup>9</sup> were registered with the register in 2024-2025, 38.6% of the total number of legal clinics were interviewed. As one can see from the diagram, all respondents were registered with the ALCU at the time of the survey. It enabled us to establish various degrees of their current needs, especially considering different groups of the clinics.

Answering question No. 6, each clinic specified its category among the five ones



63% of the total number of representatives of legal clinics stated that they belong to the fifth group – they perform their activities in the territories controlled by Ukraine with relative stability and dynamic development.

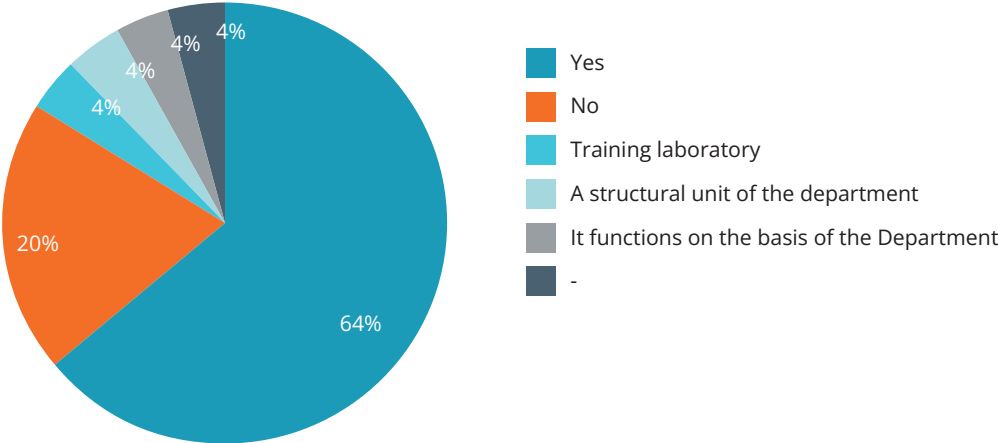
Almost a fifth of the clinics consider themselves relocated from the occupied territories to those controlled by Ukraine. A tenth of the clinics carry out their activities in frontline territories.

<sup>9</sup> ALCU Register for 2024

In the context of the research, it was especially important to get answers to questions with regard to the status and human resources of legal clinics, in particular, to find out whether the legal clinic functions as a structural unit of a higher education institution.

The analysis of the answers to general questions about the organizational structure of the legal clinics subject to the survey indicates the predominant integration of legal education into the institutional structure of universities, while at the same time demonstrating the alternative models of organization. According to the diagram, more than 60% of them function as structural units of higher education institutions. Another 20% of legal clinics do not have the status of a structural unit, and 4% operate in the format of a training laboratory, as a division of a department or on its basis.

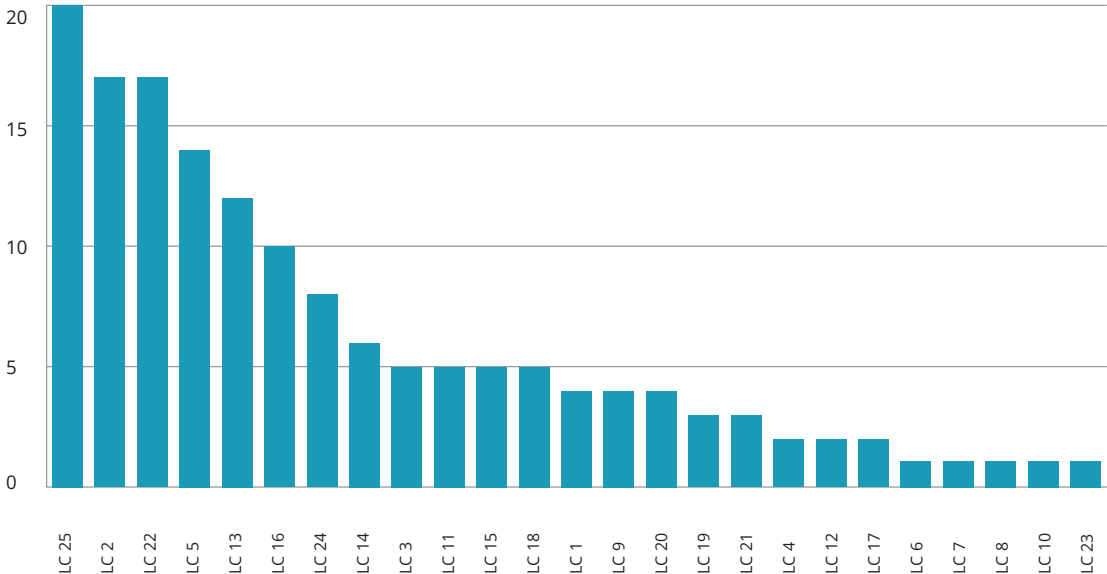
*Is the legal clinic a structural unit of the higher education institution?*



The analysis of the survey results with regard to the number of teachers engaged in legal clinics in the 2024–2025 academic year reveals a clear trend towards a compact staffing structure. The most common model is engagement of five teachers, which is observed in four clinics. In general, most clinics operate with the number of teachers ranging from one to five people. At the same time, individual clinics demonstrate a much wider scale of engagement – in particular, one of them has 20 teachers, which is the highest indicator among the responses received.

Such distribution indicates the diversity of approaches to staffing legal clinics in Ukraine.

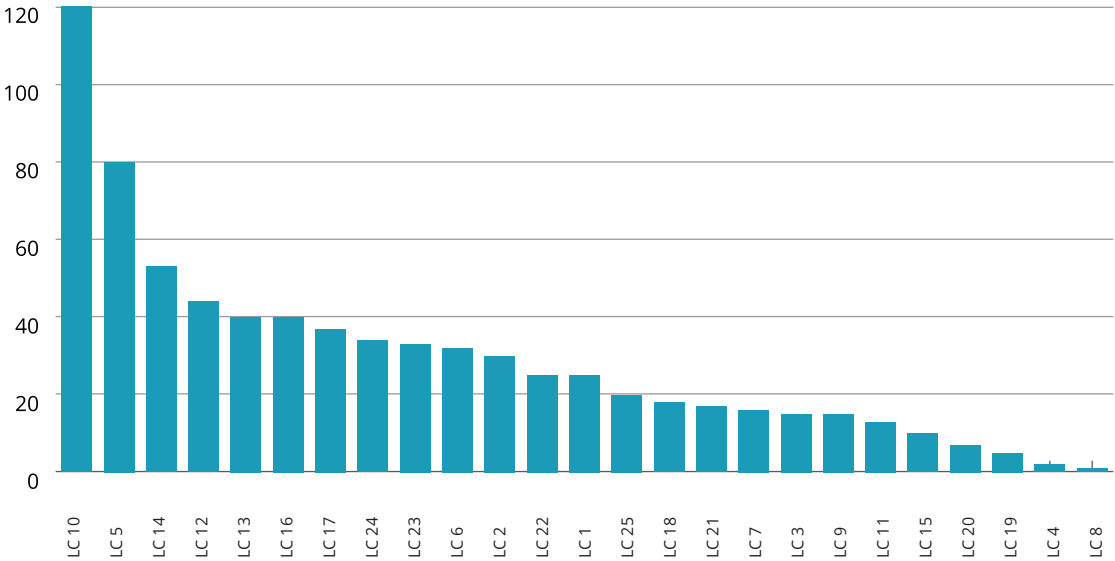
*How many female/male teachers are engaged in the activities of the legal clinic in the 2024-2025 academic year?*



In addition, the gender analysis shows that women amount to the majority of the teachers engaged – 91 (approximately 59.5%), while men – 48 (approximately 31.4%), without specifying gender – 14 (approximately 9.2%). The data indicate the active engagement of women in the field of legal education, in particular in its practical component.

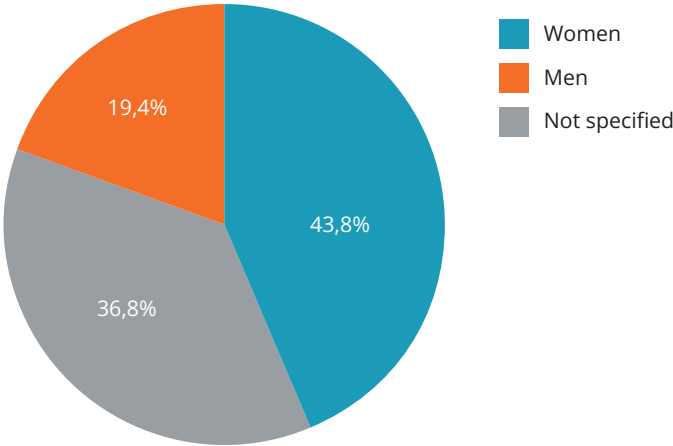
With regard to the number of students engaged in the activities of legal clinics in the 2024-2025 academic year, the survey demonstrates that distribution of students between clinics is very uneven. There are clinics with large groups of students (over 100 people), but also with a minimum number of students (1 person). This may indicate a different level of student engagement and resources in different institutions.

*Number of students in legal clinics (for the 2024-2025 academic year) - ranked*



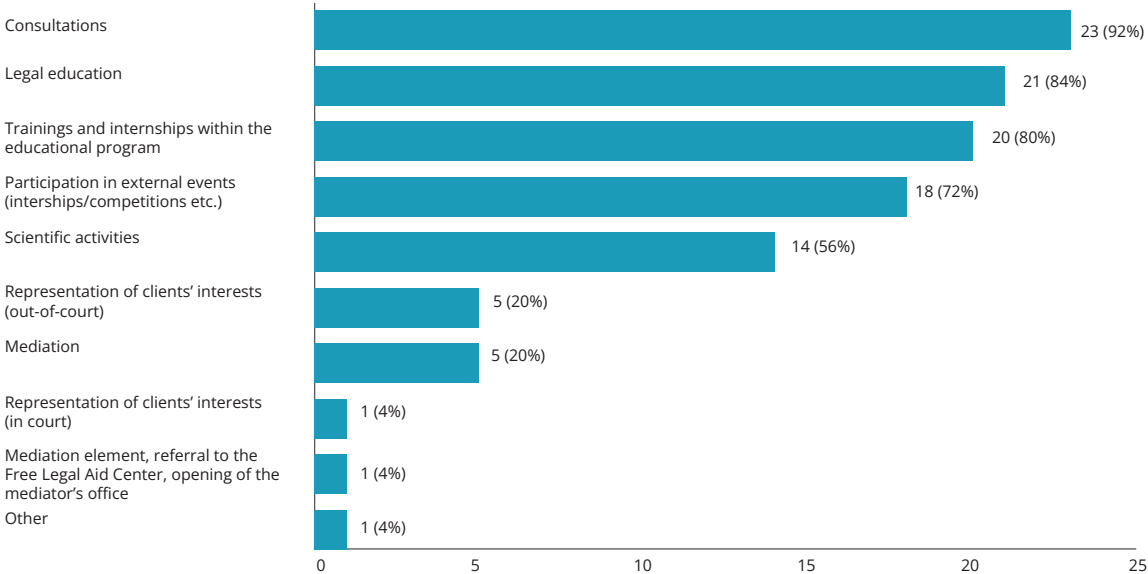
The gender composition of students engaged in the activities of legal clinics in the 2024-2025 academic year is distributed as follows in the institutions, subject to the survey. The data show that the largest group is women – almost half of the total number of participants (315 people, or 43.8%). Men amount to about a fifth – 140 people (19.4%). At the same time, more than a third of the responses (265 cases) did not contain information about the gender of the respondents.

*Gender distribution of students of the legal clinics in 2024-2025*



With regard to the types of activities of legal clinics, we can note that the legal clinics interviewed focus on consultation, practical activities and legal training, which constitute their main core. In addition, they actively participate in external events and are engaged in scientific activities. Specialized areas, such as mediation or representation of clients' interests, are less common but indicate an expansion of the clinic functions. Among additional areas of activities, some legal clinics emphasize cooperation with public institutions, charitable organizations and local governments. They also practice elements of mediation, provide referrals to free legal aid centres and an open office of a mediator.

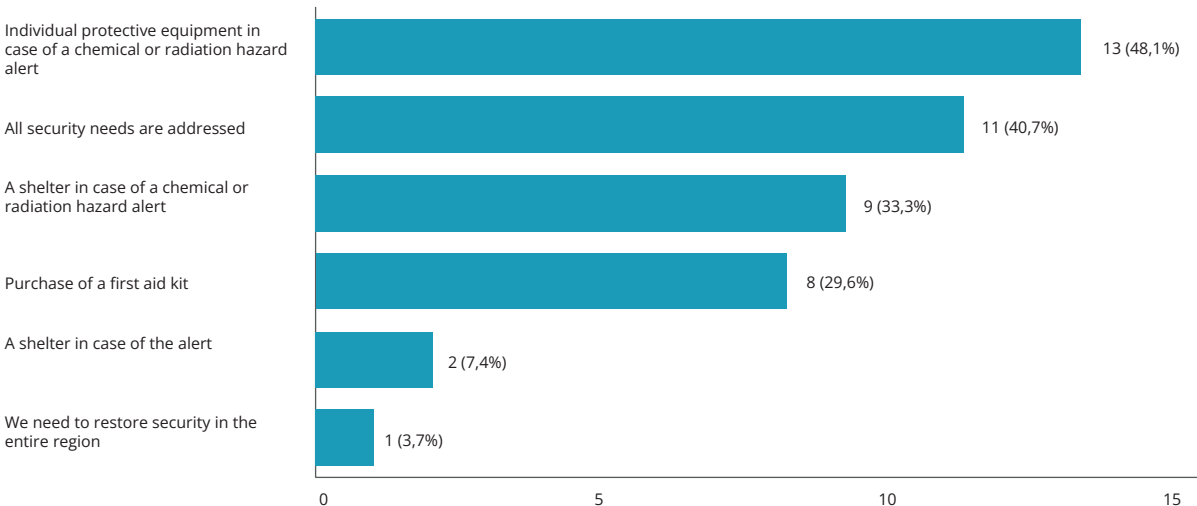
**Types of activities of legal clinics**



In terms of the necessity for a thorough research of the current needs of legal clinics and determining their priority, the results of discussions at professional forums are of particular importance, that is why at the ALCU Winter Forum – 2024, which took place on 4 December 2024 in Kyiv, its 35 participants (heads of legal clinics) established that the most significant feature is the security dimension of needs. Accordingly, in the questions asked with regard to their needs, this aspect was primarily clarified.

The following responses were received to question No. 7:

**Please specify security needs of your clinic. Do you need?**



Almost half of the respondents (48.1%) mentioned the need for personal protective equipment in case of a chemical/radiation alarm, a third of the respondents (33.3%) need shelter in case of a chemical/radiation alarm, and almost a third of the respondents consider it an important need to purchase first aid kits. One of the respondents, answering question No. 7, noted that

“in fact, our legal clinic, due to security reasons, performs its activities online. Therefore, we have global needs in ensuring security to resume usual activities.”

One of the respondents noted that

“the premises of our legal clinic were damaged by an enemy missile, with the property destroyed. The university provided a new classroom in another building, but we have not yet restored the property. Therefore, the issue of renewing the logistics is acute for us.”

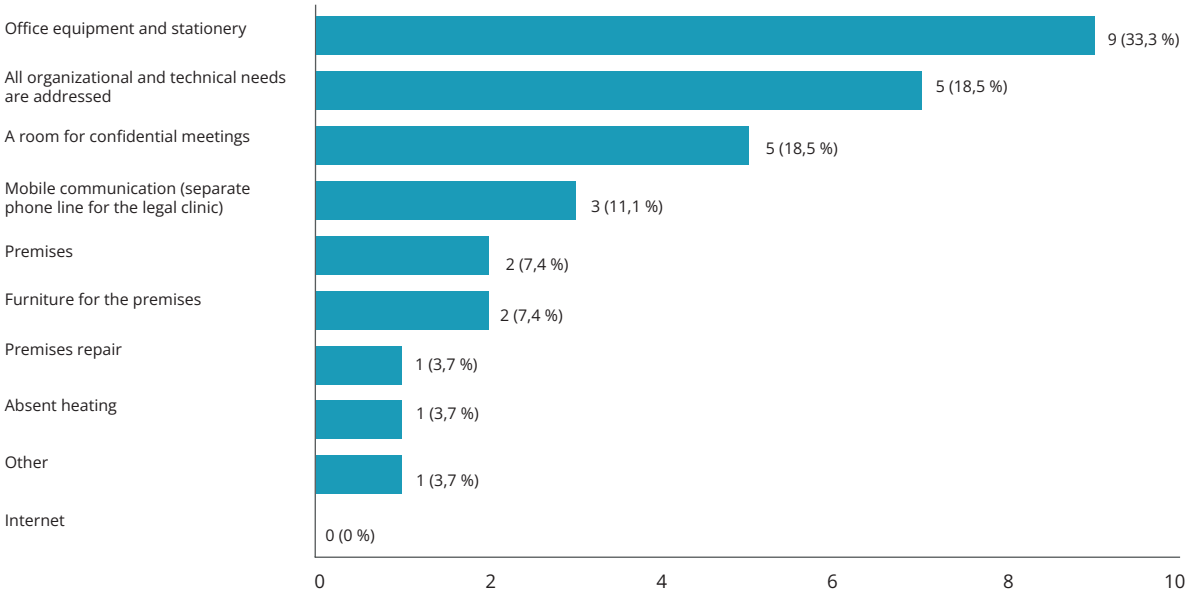
Another respondent noted that

“the legal clinic is located in Kherson (a city controlled by Ukraine, but suffering from shelling by missiles and Shahed drones), the administration of the higher education institution, some teachers and students stay in Ivano-Frankivsk, some of the students who undergo internships at the legal clinic stay in different regions of Ukraine, also in the temporarily occupied territory, with a significant part abroad, so the internship is conducted online.”

“the dispersion of students and the online mode do not establish the conditions for effective work due to the danger of the location of the higher education institution and the legal clinic close to the hostilities zone.”

The following responses were received to question No. 8:

**Please specify organizational and technical needs of your clinic. Do you need?**



Answering this question, a quarter of respondents noted that all their organizational and technical needs for full-fledged work have been resolved. 18.5% of the total number of respondents work without rooms equipped for confidential meetings. A third of respondents need office equipment and stationery. One of the clinics, relocated to another area after the full-scale Russian invasion into the territory of Ukraine along with the HEI, notes:

“Now, the university is moving to another building, so everything will have to be equipped from scratch. We are waiting for the premises.”

The clinic, which is located in the frontline zone, notes that

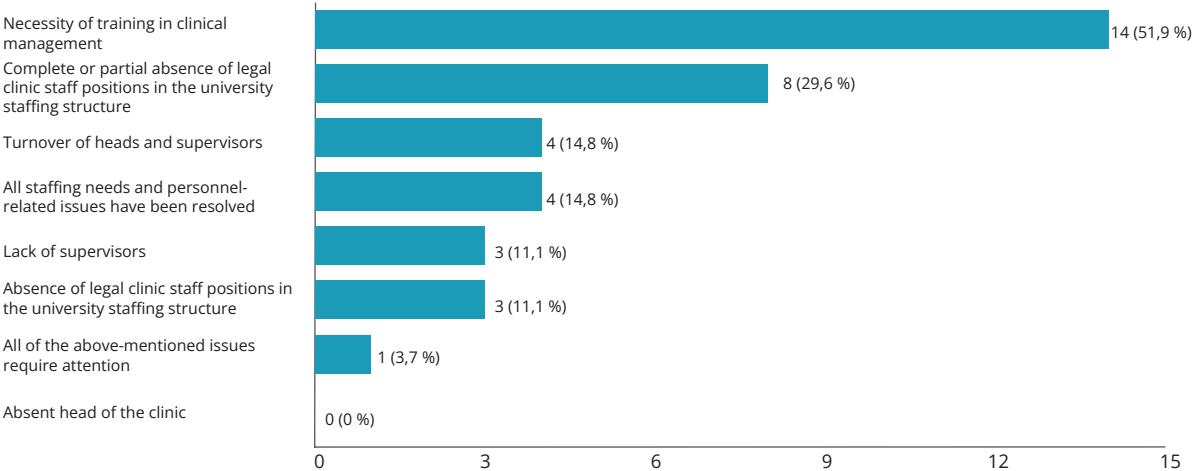
“Taking into account the format of our clinic’s activities, the key to stable work is the availability of an Internet connection. We have an Internet connection with interruptions, but it is available.”

Two respondents note that there is no logistics due to the relocation of the HEI. All respondents note that

“the long-term power outage during the business day has become a problem for full-fledged work, as there are no generators in the HEI.”

The following responses were received to question No. 9:

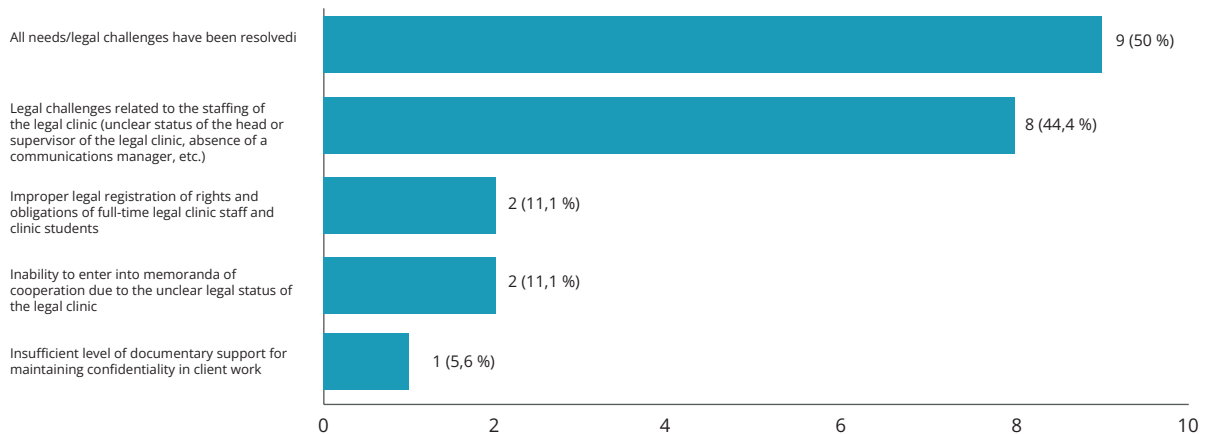
**Please specify challenges/needs of staffing of your legal clinic.**



More than half of the legal clinics feel an urgent need for training in clinical management. 29.6% of the total number of clinics note that another urgent need for staffing is the complete or partial absence of legal clinic employees in the university staff schedule. The third priority is the problem of turnover of management and supervisory staff, indicated by 14.8% of the total number of respondents. 2% of the total number of clinics note a high level of staff turnover in legal clinics located in the hostilities zone.

The following responses were received to question No. 10:

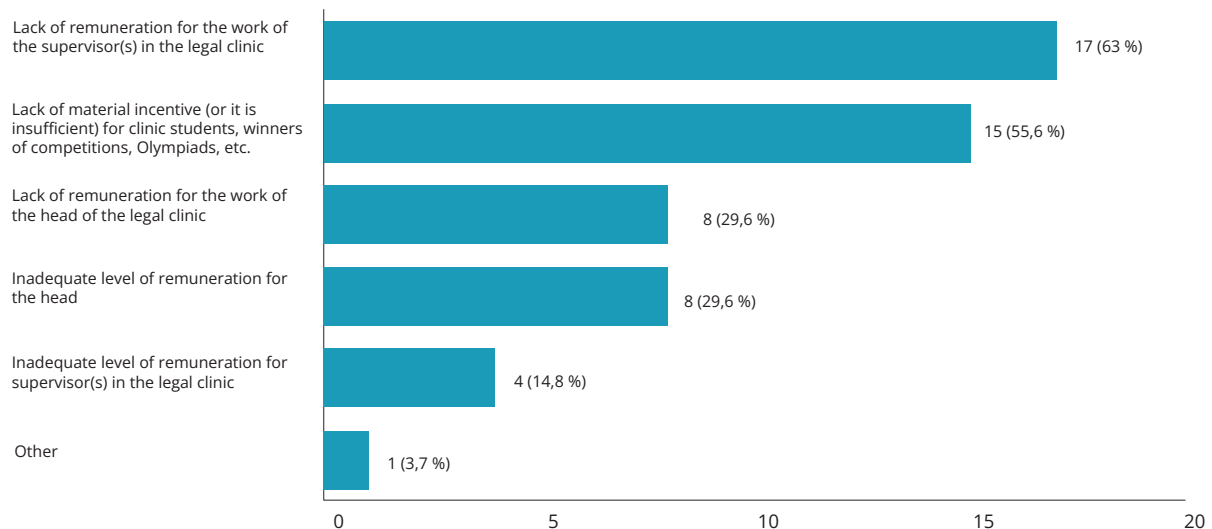
*Please specify legal challenges/needs*



The responses of legal clinics were divided almost equally. Half of the legal clinics noted that they had resolved all the challenges of a legal nature. However, the second half (almost 45% of the total number of respondents interviewed) noted a significant problem – the uncertainty of the status of the head and supervisor of the legal clinic, as well as the absence of a communications manager. One of the respondents notes that there is a need to develop a system for quality control of online consultations and monitoring their effectiveness, which should be set forth in regulations or local acts of higher education institutions.

The following responses were received to question No. 11:

*Please specify financial challenges/needs of your legal clinic*



In terms of priority, 63% of the legal clinics indicated the first need as the lack of remuneration for employment in the legal clinic by the supervisor (-s). 55.6% noted the second most important need as the lack of financial rewards (or insufficient) for legal clinicians, winners of competitions and Olympiads. The need related to the remuneration of the head of the clinic ranks third, either it is generally absent or its level is insufficient. In general, the survey on this issue showed that the clinics are staffed by employees and legal clinicians with high moral and ethical life principles, enthusiasts who are confident that they are fulfilling an important social mission for vulnerable categories of the population, providing them with high-quality legal assistance. However, on the other hand, this is also an important signal to perform qualitative and quantitative changes in the financial dimension of the needs of modern clinics.

To the additional survey question: '*Specify the needs and challenges of your clinic (security, organizational and technical, financial, staffing, etc.) in martial law conditions, not covered by this survey*', clinic representatives answered the following:

- it is difficult to spell out immediately, but such challenges are connected, first, with the online mode of the university activities and the stay of students and teachers in different cities of Ukraine;
- lack of staffing clearness for the legal clinic at the university;
- unpaid work on one's own energy and on a voluntary basis;
- supervisors cannot teach original clinical courses to legal clinicians (groups of up to 12 students), as a group should consist of 25-30 students);
- perception of the legal clinic by the administration only as a public reception centre for providing legal assistance;
- psychological training is necessary for legal clinicians to work with clients under martial law;
- insufficient number of students wishing to participate in the activities of the legal clinic. Now, fourth-year and master's degree students study online and are not interested in the activities of the legal clinic;
- there is no course (even an elective one) Legal Clinical Activities;
- I see a need to improve the qualifications of legal clinicians in practical activities (working with clients, ethics, etc.);
- the outdated clinic's logistical equipment (computers), in recent years the problem of attracting students through online training and the lack of opportunities for legal clinicians to receive financial remuneration for their work;
- the need to improve activities;
- the need to encourage and motivate students to participate in the clinic's activities;
- given the situation in Kharkiv and the online learning and work, sometimes unforeseen challenges and requests arise, but we try to respond and resolve them as quickly as possible;
- online activities;
- absent systematic payment for teachers-supervisors (now it is done through bonuses);
- challenges with finding grant opportunities and joining grant projects;
- the need to expand cooperation with partners;
- insufficient engagement of the head of the legal clinic in the governing bodies of the higher education institution, which reduces the level of advocacy of its interests in the educational process;
- strengthening motivation for work and study.

In conditions of martial law, the issue of monitoring the social well-being of staff and legal clinicians has become important for the legal clinical movement of Ukraine.

To question No. 14: '*Please indicate the needs for the social well-being of your clinic staff and legal clinicians (housing issues, challenges with obtaining IDP status, psychological support, etc.)*', the following responses were received:

- the clinic staff has challenges related to professional burnout, psychological stress, etc.;
- psychological training of legal clinicians for working with clients
- psychological support,
- IDP teachers have not had official housing for 10 years. The lease fee is very high.
- emergency psychological support
- psychological support
- psychological support, if necessary.

So, representatives of legal clinics give priority to the need for psychological support for staff and legal clinicians. One respondent notes that

“*There is an issue of the internal psychological state of clinical students after constant shelling and power outages, which also needs improvement.*”

Clinics relocated with their HEIs call the housing challenges of employees unresolved in order to improve their level of social well-being.

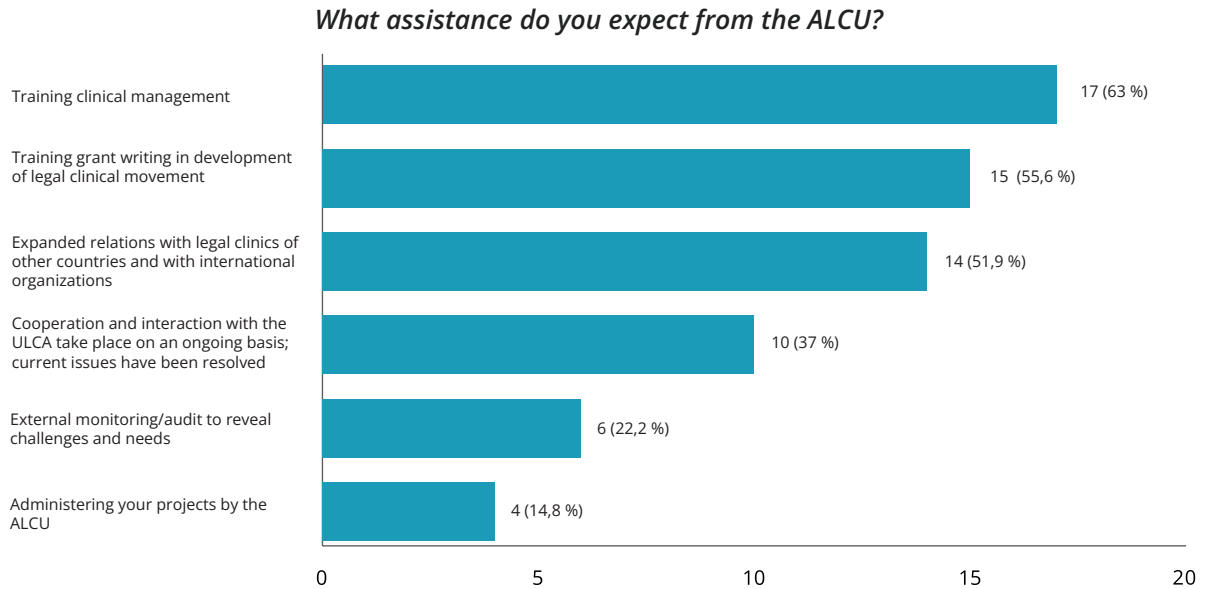
Legal clinics also have positive cases of addressing/resolving their needs/challenges.

Answering question No. 19: '*Do you have any positive experience for addressing needs and/or overcoming challenges in the activities of legal clinics for 2022-2024 that you would like to share? Please describe them*', representatives of 12 clinics out of 27 interviewed indicated:

- providing high-quality legal assistance to IDPs in new areas caused by the war (in renewing lost documents, with regard to receiving compensation and payments, etc.); collecting alimony for the maintenance of minor children; protecting intellectual property rights, etc.
- obtaining new premises;
- the opportunity to gain international experience as part of trips to Poland at the invitation of the ALCU;
- engaging postgraduate students in the activities of the legal clinic as supervisors of consultation groups significantly increases the level of scientific and research activities of the clinics;
- the shelter was repaired, which made it possible to conduct on-call duty and offline consultations;

- after de-occupation, with the assistance of the administration of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Law of State Tax University, the premises of the TL were repaired, with the damaged equipment replaced. Through cooperation with partners in the implementation of the grant project, within the framework of the Justice for All Program, we were able to ensure the stable operation of the TL, as well as financial support for teachers-supervisors engaged in the project.

The responses to question No. 12 were important



First, clinics expect from the ALCU coordination and training assistance, aid in expanding ties with partners both at the national and international levels. All the responses received can be grouped into several main areas that reflect the key needs and expectations of legal clinics, namely:

- 1 trainings and educational events (on mental health, changes in laws, digital security, mediation and legal education);
- 2 support in strategic development and advocacy of the interests of clinics, including the possibility of transformation into specialized ones;
- 3 methodological support and improvement of the logistics
- 4 ensuring access to information on grant activities, seeking donors and assistance in fundraising;
- 5 assistance in establishing partnerships with human rights organizations, lawyers, government agencies and colleagues from other higher education institutions;

Part of the survey was devoted to communication challenges between the ALCU and legal clinics. Most of the responses (20 out of 26) indicate a positive experience of interaction: respondents noted the absence of challenges, communication established and ongoing cooperation. At the same time, some participants expressed a necessity for additional support, in particular with regard to posting materials on the ALCU website, organizing joint projects, trainings and exchange of experience. In general, these responses can be grouped into several areas:

- 1 Supporting the information presence of clinics on the ALCU resources
- 2 Disseminating information on opportunities for expanding partnership and project activities
- 3 Intensification of activities to exchange experience between clinics

Thus, although communication is generally assessed positively, there is a necessity for its further development and promotion of the ALCU activities.

## 2.2. Current status, needs and prospects for international cooperation of legal clinics in Ukraine

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In addition to identifying the current needs and challenges faced by Ukrainian legal clinics, the research included a survey aimed at identifying potential areas of cooperation between Ukrainian and foreign legal clinics. The survey results also made it possible to outline barriers that may become challenges for effective partnerships – in particular, language, resource, regulatory and organizational ones.

The research interviewed 26 out of 70 operating legal clinics in Ukraine. This level of participation is more than a third of the total number of clinics registered in the Register of Legal Clinics of Ukraine. This provided a representative sample covering different regions of the country and clinics with different levels of resource provision and experience, which enabled to create an impartial picture of the needs, challenges and potential of international cooperation.

Previous experience of international cooperation of legal clinics provided a basis for the hypothesis that one of the key obstacles to the development of partnership relations may be the low level of English language proficiency among participants, that's why the questionnaire included a block of questions aimed at assessing the language competences of different categories of legal clinic participants. In particular, respondents were asked to answer questions about the level of English proficiency of teachers (question No. 13), students (question No. 14), and clinic staff, if any (question No. 15).

Interviewing teachers of legal clinics shows that the level of English language proficiency remains heterogeneous and often insufficient for active communication. Only a third of respondents can speak fluent English, while almost half are limited to understanding oral speech without speaking skills, and some – only reading texts. This situation creates a significant barrier to international cooperation, since effective partnership with foreign organizations requires a high level of language competence.

Thus, in percentage terms, the level of English language proficiency among teachers is as follows: fluent – approximately 37.5%, understanding oral speech, but not speaking – approximately 45.8%, understanding only texts – approximately 12.5%, limited English proficiency – approximately 4.2%.

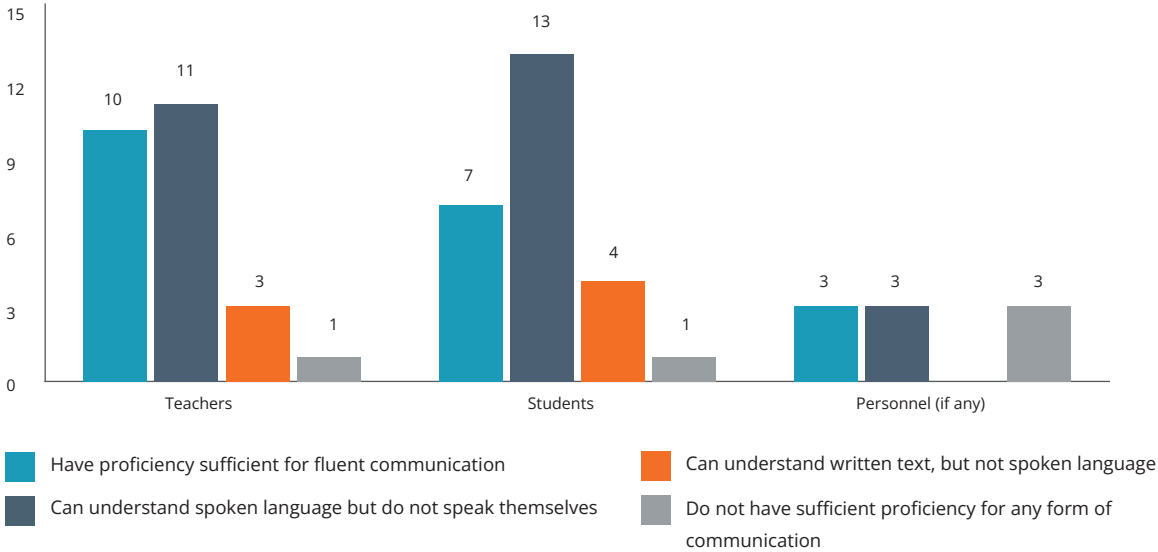
Most students (more than half) have passive skills – they understand oral English, but cannot speak the language. Only a third have a fluent level of communication, which is critically important for international cooperation. Some students can read texts only, with some not having a sufficient

level at all. This indicates the necessity for targeted language programs and live communication experience to increase students' readiness for international partnerships. In percentage equivalent, these data have the following values: fluent communication – 28%, understanding oral speech but inability of speaking – 52%, understanding only texts – 16%, limited English proficiency– 4%.

The level of English proficiency among legal clinic staff (if any) is quite low. Only a third can speak fluent English, while the rest either have passive skills (understanding oral language without speaking) or limited English proficiency.

The combined diagram below shows the general distribution of English proficiency among teachers, students and legal clinic staff. It clearly demonstrates that the majority of participants have only passive skills, while active language proficiency for fluent communication is less common.

*Level of English language proficiency of the participants of your legal clinic*

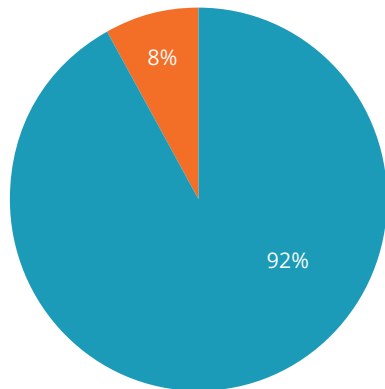


At the same time, when asked Are you ready to invest your time and effort in improving your English language skills? the absolute majority of participants expressed their willingness to improve their English, which indicates a high level of motivation among teachers, students, and personnel of legal clinics. It is worth noting that some legal clinics are working on improving their English language skills independently. A prime example is the establishment of a conversational legal English club on the basis of one of the clinics interviewed, which actively cooperates with other legal clinics in Ukraine.

Such indicators serve as a positive sign for the prospects of international cooperation, as the willingness to invest one's own resources in continued development creates the basis for overcoming the communication barrier.

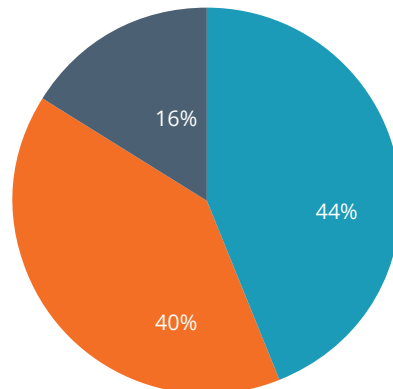
With regard to the possibility of engaging a translator in the international activities of legal clinics, the survey results show that almost half (44%) of clinics have such an opportunity, which partially compensates for the language barrier. At the same time, a significant proportion of responses (40%) remain uncertain, which may indicate a lack of clear practice or dependence on specific conditions of cooperation. Only a small group (16%) directly indicates that there is no such opportunity.

*Are you ready to invest your time and effort in improving your English language skills?*



■ Yes  
■ No  
■ Not sure  
■ Other

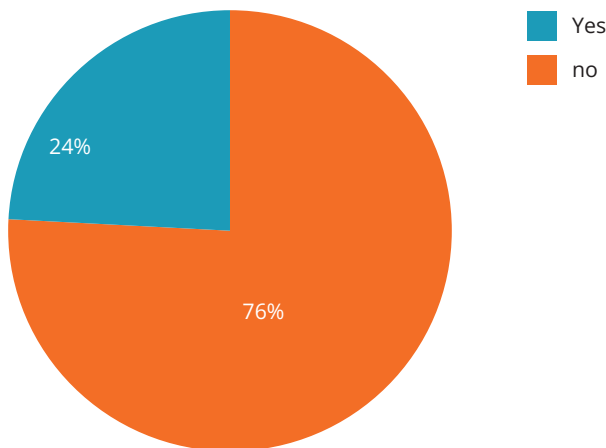
*While clinic employees and legal clinicians are learning English, do you have an opportunity to engage translators in the international cooperation of the legal clinic (if necessary)?*



■ Yes  
■ No  
■ Response to the question needs clarification

With regard to the experience of international cooperation of legal clinics, the data obtained show that only a quarter of legal clinics (24%) already have experience in international cooperation. The vast majority (76%) do not have such experience. The indicators show the limited international contacts and the necessity to create additional opportunities for clinics to be included in global professional networks.

*Does your clinic have any experience of international cooperation?*



■ Yes  
■ no

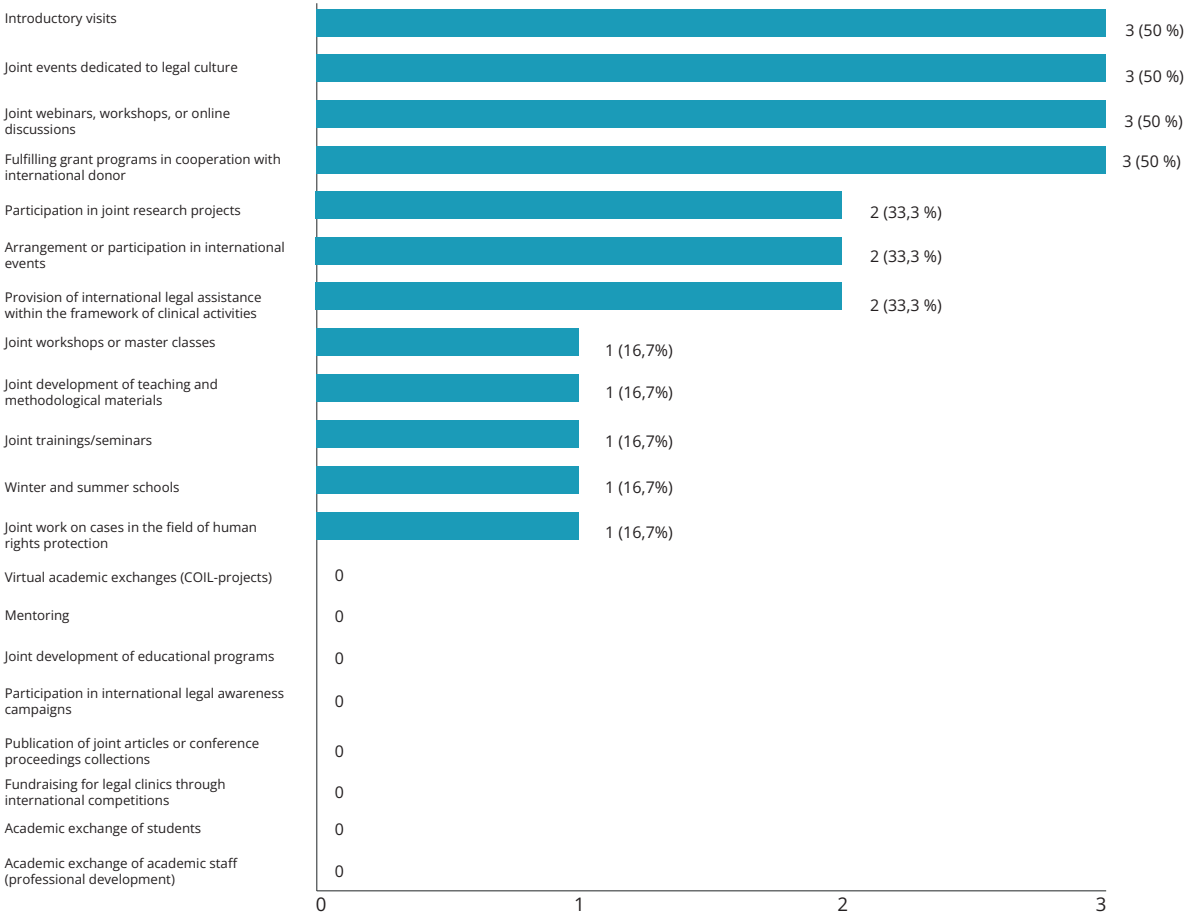
Analysing the response to the question '*With which institutions, organizations or legal clinics have you collaborated?*' we can conclude that legal clinics have both national and international partners, including government structures, human rights organizations, universities and international programs. The expansion of cooperation with universities in the USA and Europe since 2022 is particularly noticeable, which indicates active integration into the global legal space. Key examples include the government of the Swiss Confederation, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Charitable Organization Charitable Foundation Wall,

in cooperation with which projects are implemented to develop public justice centres. An important area is academic cooperation: since 2023, contacts have been established with the Legal Advice Centre of the University of Manchester, as well as with many leading law schools in the USA and Europe (Tulane University, The George Washington University, the University of Potsdam, Touro Law Centre). In addition, Ukrainian clinics actively cooperate with the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine, the free legal aid system and the Helsinki Human Rights Union, as well as participate in international workshops, in particular in Poland.

The most common form of international cooperation of legal clinics is educational cooperation, which includes such activities as webinars, workshops, summer schools and introductory visits. Institutional cooperation, which includes participation in international conferences and implementation of grant programs, ranks second. And the least common forms of cooperation are scientific cooperation and human rights activities, which include joint research projects, work on human rights cases and legal educational activities.

Among the implemented forms of interaction, joint events dedicated to legal culture, trainings, seminars, master classes and the provision of international legal assistance within the framework of clinical activities are also noted. At the same time, many potentially promising formats of cooperation remain unimplemented, such as academic exchange of students and teachers, joint development of curricula, mentoring, virtual academic exchanges (COIL projects), publication of joint scientific materials, participation in international legal education campaigns, and attracting funding through international competitions.

**What forms of international cooperation have you implemented?**



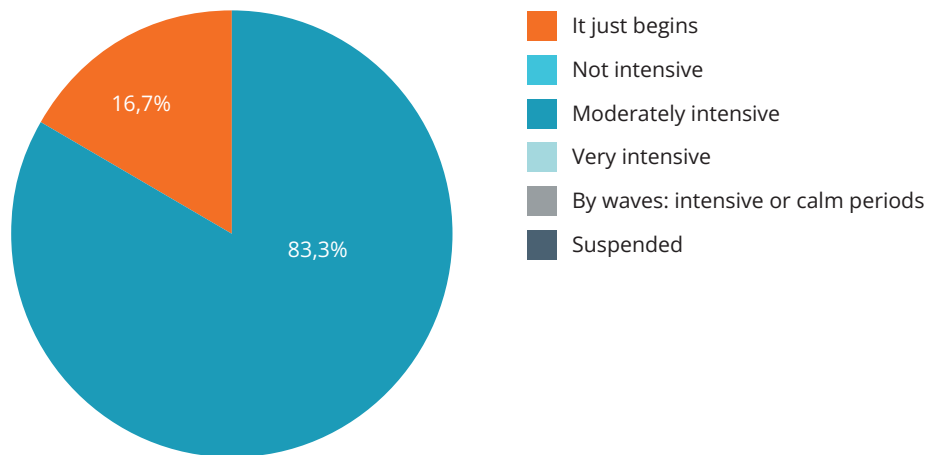
The following responses were received to question No. 23: *'Please share your success story of international cooperation (projects, events, student exchange, etc.)'*.

- Implementation of the project program Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts at Early Stages in the Kremenchuk City Territorial Community within the framework of the Tolerant Reconciliation initiative.
- Cooperation on the grant project was initiated by the Charitable Organization Charitable Foundation Wall and the administration of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Law of State Tax University, which since 2023 has made it possible to provide primary legal assistance to about 2,000 clients. Joint events have been agreed with the Legal Advice Centre of the University of Manchester, with the schedule and topics of joint online seminars for the exchange of experience of clinical students agreed.
- Cooperation with the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine, a trip to Poland in April 2024.
- Through the NGO ALCU, we had the opportunity to join a workshop on best practices in the field of legal education and informing refugees and IDPs about their rights (April 2024, the Republic of Poland).
- Participation in June-August 2022 in the online seminars 'GLOBAL LEGAL SKILLS ONLINE CONFERENCE ON UKRAINE', organized by the Comparative Law Section of the Association of American Law Schools and the American Branch of the Committee for the Study of International Law of the International Law Association, with the support of USAID Justice for All. Thanks to participation in the Global Legal Skills Virtual Workshop Series (supported by USAID), agreements were reached on cooperation and support of the Faculty of Law of Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University with Tulane University Law School (New Orleans, LA), The George Washington University Law School (Washington), Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Centre (New York), the University of Potsdam (Potsdam). In 2022, teachers and students of the Law Clinic participated in online workshops as part of the SOFT SKILLS WORKSHOP SERIES FOR LEGAL CLINICIANS OF UKRAINE, organized with the support of USAID. The ALCU, Loyola University, New Orleans, USA, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law of Yeshiva University, New York. During the period of 1 September 2020-31 May 2021, participation in the 'Model Legal English Syllabus' project to improve the standards of studying legal English within the framework of the New Justice program of USAID and the Government of Ukraine and the development of an appropriate syllabus.
- 2020 – participation of the team of the Legal Clinic in the Brown-Mosten international legal consultation competitions. 2024 – In addition, Ukrainian legal clinics participated in workshops on the development of soft skills, the 'Model Legal English Syllabus' project, international legal consultation competitions (Brown-Mosten), as well as in training on anti-discrimination topics within the framework of the TOLOKA School of Interacademic Development.

According to the respondents' answers, international cooperation of legal clinics is characterized mainly as moderately intensive, which indicates regular, but not systematic interaction with foreign partners. Accordingly, as the diagram shows, 83.3% of the clinics interviewed note moderate intensity of cooperation, while 16.7% are just starting their activities within the framework of international cooperation.

The following responses were received to question No. 24:

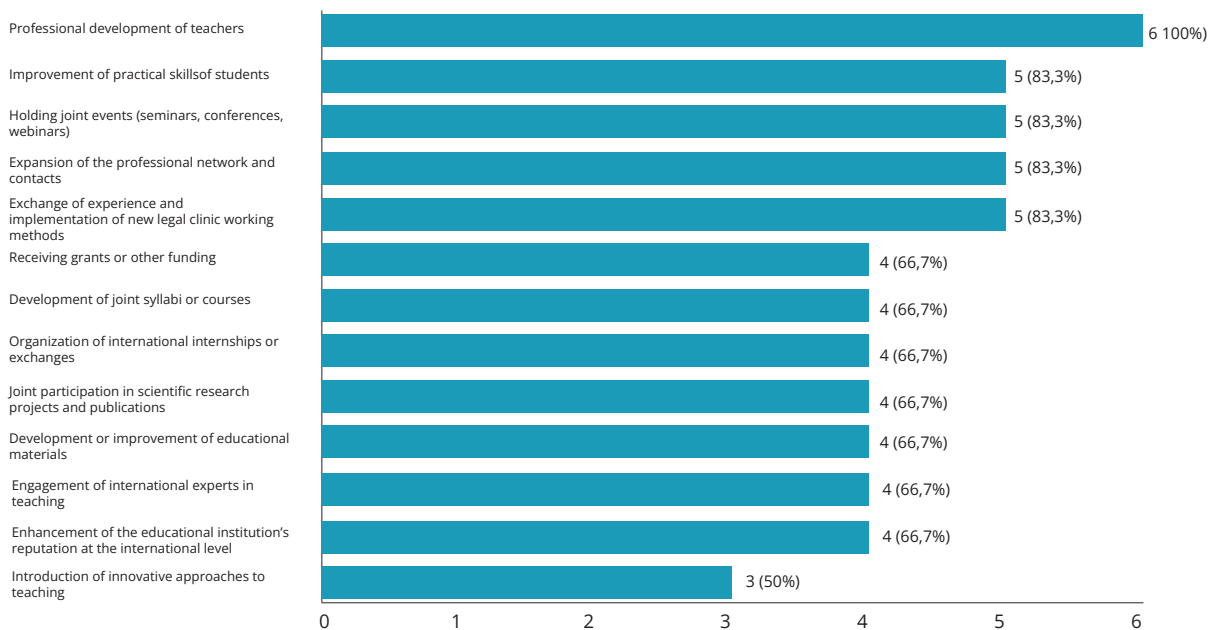
**How often did your cooperation take place?**



The analysis of respondents' answers with regard to the most important achievements of international cooperation of legal clinics enables us to identify priority areas that are of greatest value to participants in the educational process. The most frequently mentioned achievements were the improvement of students' practical skills and the professional development of teachers. Also of high importance is the expansion of the professional network, holding joint events (seminars, conferences or trainings) and the exchange of experience with the implementation of new methods in the activities of clinics. Respondents attributed the achievement of medium importance to obtaining funds, developing joint educational programs, organizing international internships, participating in scientific research, compiling or improving educational materials, engaging international experts in teaching and improving the reputation of educational institutions. At the same time, a less common area is introducing innovative approaches to learning.

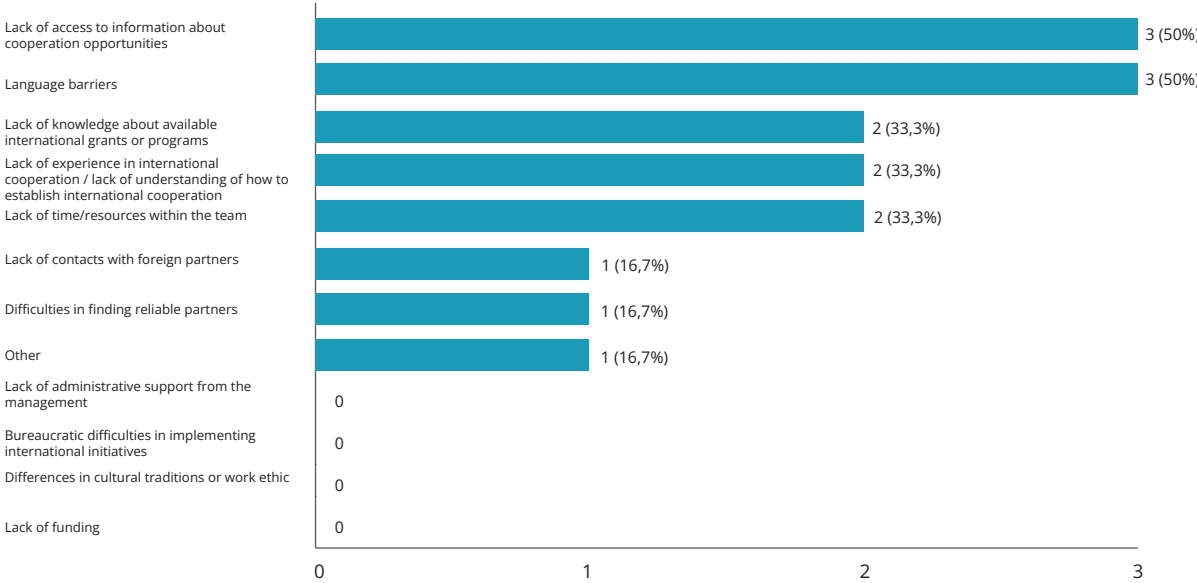
The following responses were received to question No. 25:

**What achievements in the international cooperation do you consider the most important?  
Choose all appropriate variants**



With regard to difficulties in establishing international cooperation, the analysis of the responses of representatives of legal clinics indicates a number of systemic barriers. The most frequently mentioned difficulties were the lack of access to information on cooperation opportunities, the language barrier, the lack of knowledge about international grants and programs, as well as the limited time and resources of clinic teams. In addition, respondents indicate difficulties in finding reliable partners, the lack of contacts with foreign organizations and insufficient experience of international interaction, which makes it difficult to understand the mechanisms of effective partnership. Among other difficulties, individual clinics note the accreditation procedure. At the same time, a number of potential barriers were not indicated by legal clinics as significant obstacles. In particular, respondents do not consider the following factors as significant constraints, such as lack of administrative support from administrations, bureaucratic difficulties in implementing international initiatives, cultural discrepancies or differences in employment ethics, as well as lack of funding.

**What barriers (difficulties) have arisen in establishing international cooperation?  
(Choose all variants that apply to your clinic's experience)**



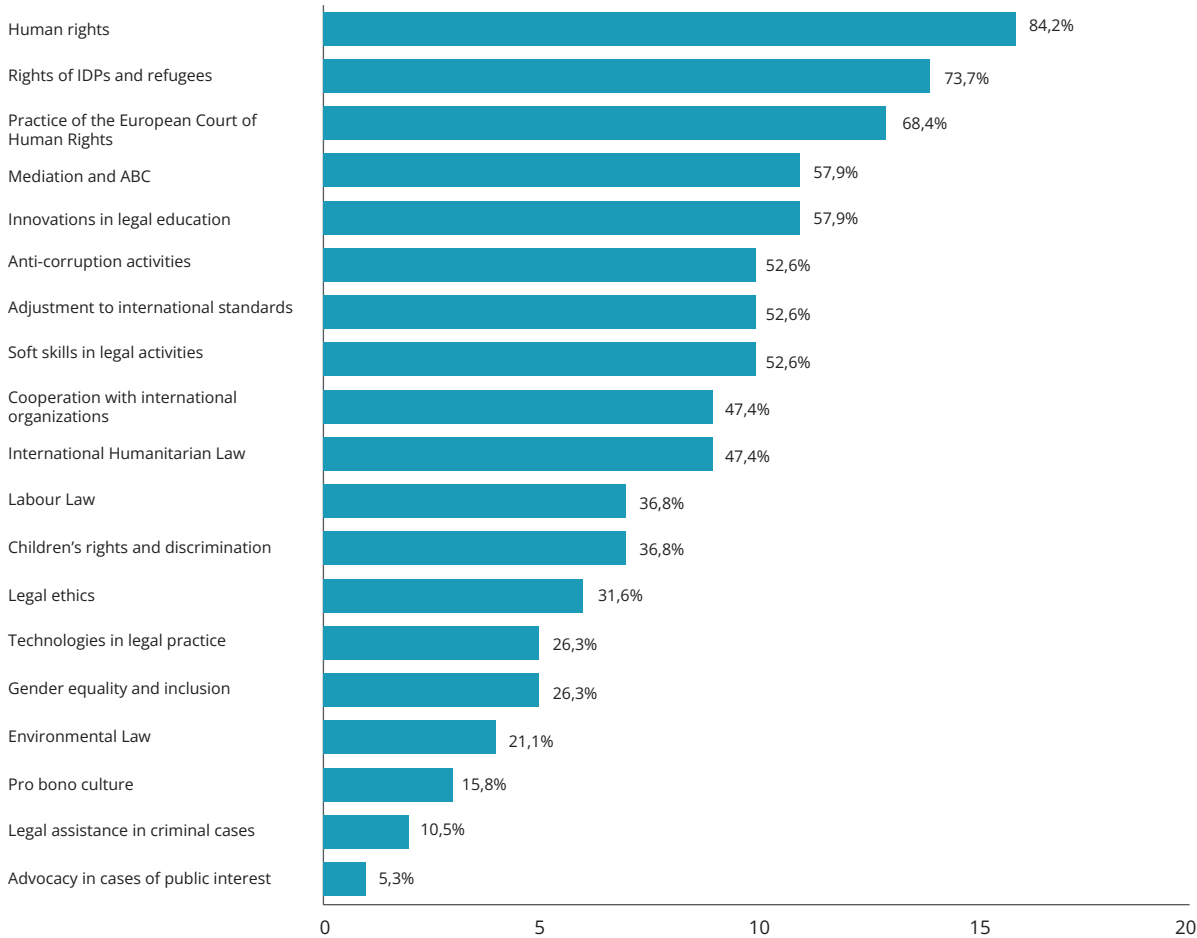
The analysis of responses with regard to further plans in the field of international cooperation indicates a high level of motivation of legal clinics to continue and expand the partnership established. Most respondents confirm their intention to maintain available relations, in particular through the continued programs with international institutions, such as holding joint events with the Legal Advice Centre of the University of Manchester, as well as participation in the Public Justice Centres project supported by USAID. Some clinics expressed their desire to implement all areas that were identified as the most important achievements of international cooperation. Separately, they emphasize plans to continue joint workshops with universities in the United States and Europe, as well as activities aimed at improving English language proficiency.

The analysis of responses to questions about preferred formats of cooperation with foreign legal clinics indicates a wide range of interests of Ukrainian clinics, with a clear emphasis on practical interaction, academic exchange and resource mobilization. The greatest interest (89.5%) is aroused by the implementation of grant programs in cooperation with international donors. Academic student exchange (78.9%) and participation in international conferences (73.7%) also have a high level of support, which indicates a desire to integrate into the global educational space.

About two-thirds of respondents (68.4%) are interested in academic exchange of teachers, holding joint events, workshops and initiatives related to the promotion of legal culture, as well as fundraising through international competitions. Formats related to the development of curricula and (methodological materials (36.8%), as well as virtual academic (31.6%), have a moderate level of support. Mentoring is the least interesting (21.1%).

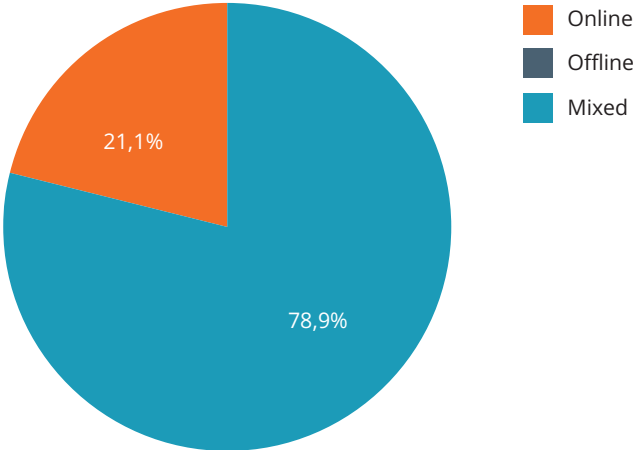
The survey results show that the most relevant topic was identified by respondents as human rights (84.2%). A high level of interest was also demonstrated by areas related to the protection of the rights of internally displaced persons and refugees (73.7%), the practice of the European Court of Human Rights (68.4%), mediation and alternative dispute resolution (57.9%), as well as innovations in the field of legal education (57.9%). A significant share of preferences (52.6%) falls on the topics of anti-corruption activities, development of soft skills and adjustment of laws to international standards. The topics of international humanitarian law, children's rights, labour law, legal ethics, gender equality, technologies in legal practice and environmental law have a moderate level of support (from 47.4% to 21.1%). At the same time, such areas as pro bono culture, legal assistance in criminal and public interest cases and advocacy in legal clinics remain less popular (from 15.8% to 5.3%). Among the additional topics of interest to legal clinics in the context of international cooperation, the issue of social protection of military personnel, veterans and their family members attracts attention, with a special emphasis on studying international experience and implementing best practices of democratic countries into national laws.

**Topical issues for international cooperation of legal clinics**



With regard to the preferred format of events within the framework of international cooperation of legal clinics, the responses provided indicate overwhelming support for a mixed format (offline + online). This distribution demonstrates the clinics' desire for a flexible interaction model that combines the advantages of personal communication and digital tools.

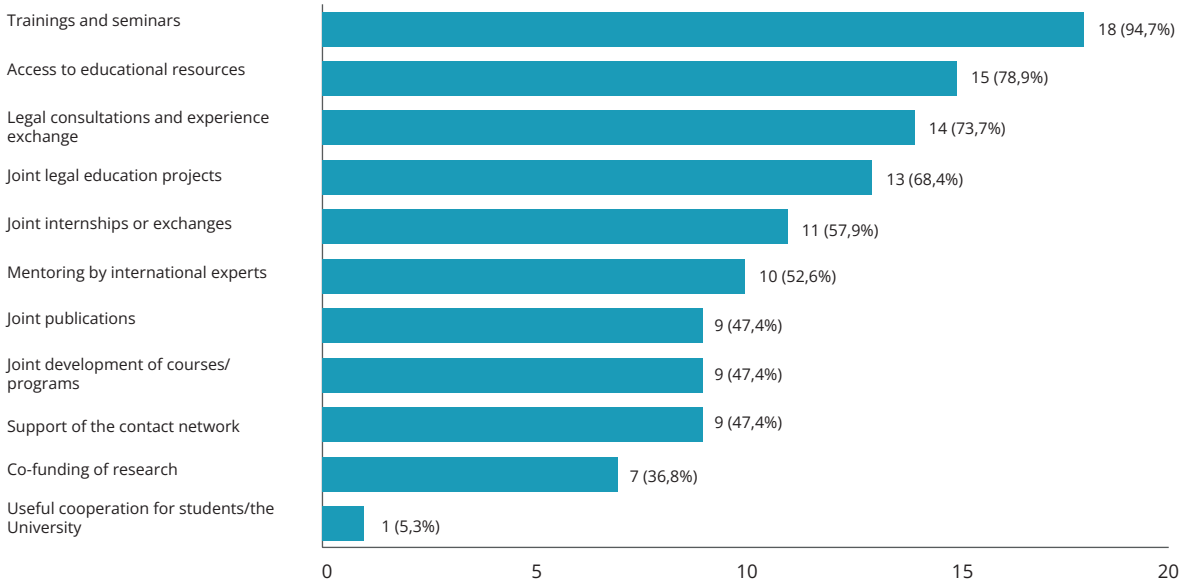
*What format of events would be more desirable for you?*



With regard to the expected types of interaction from foreign partners, the format of trainings and seminars for teachers and students received the highest support (94.7%). Providing access to educational resources (78.9%) and legal consultation and exchange of practical experience (73.7%) also aroused high interest.

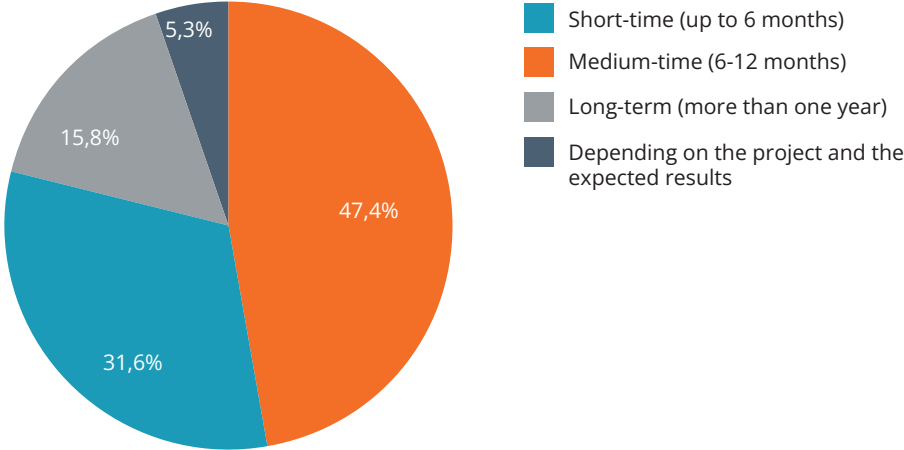
More than half of the respondents are interested in joint legal education projects (68.4%) and organizing internships or exchanges (57.9%). Mentoring from international experts (52.6%) and joint development of training courses (47.4%) are also considered important areas of cooperation. A relatively smaller, but still significant part of the respondents expects co-financing of research initiatives (36.8%) and joint publications in international media (47.4%). The response "cooperation that will be useful and interesting for students and the university" received the fewest mentions (5.3%).

*Expected types of interaction of legal clinics of Ukraine with foreign partners*



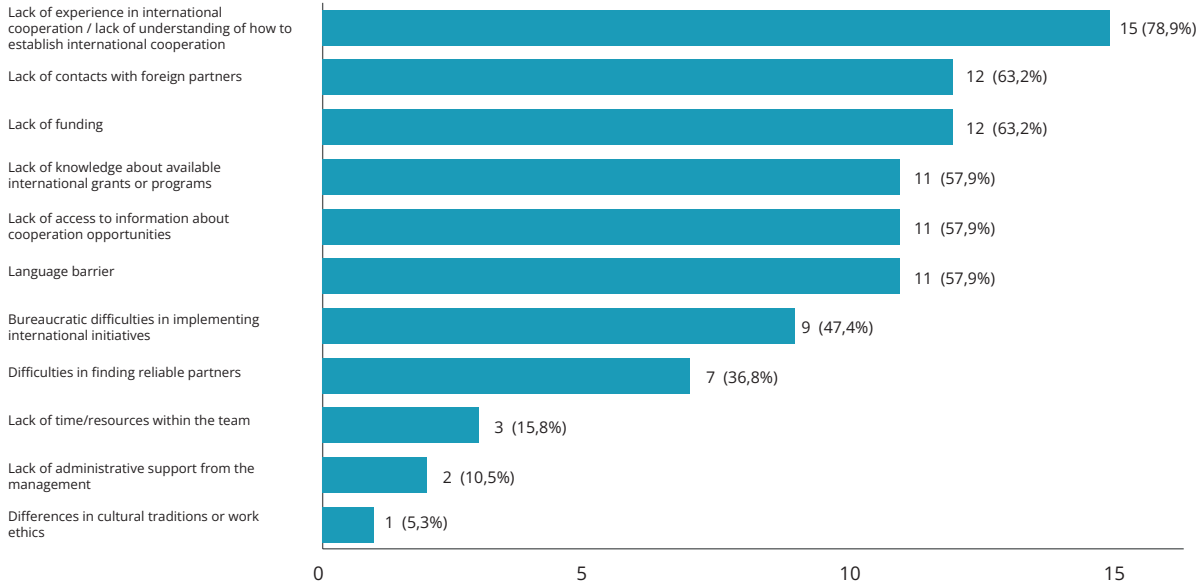
The timeframes for implementing joint projects by legal clinics are as follows: long-term (more than a year) – 15.8%; medium-term (6-12 months) – 47.4%; short-term (up to 6 months) – 31.6%

**What timeframes for implementing joint projects are convenient for you?**



The most common barriers to international cooperation of legal clinics, as the respondents specify, are: lack of experience, lack of knowledge about grants, language barrier and limited access to information and contacts.

**What barriers, in your opinion, may arise in establishing international cooperation? (Choose all variants that apply to your clinic)**



The analysis of the responses to the question with regard to the support expected from the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine (ALCU) in the field of international cooperation shows that there is a comprehensive request from legal clinics for institutional, informational and organizational assistance. Most often, legal clinics indicate the necessity for support in establishing and developing partnerships with foreign clinics. Requests for trainings and seminars for teachers and students on international activities, informational support for participation in international projects, as well as assistance in fundraising for grants and internships also received high support.

A significant part of the clinics expect mentoring and consultation on organizational issues, in particular, organizational assistance in holding international events (conferences, symposiums and trainings), as well as support in developing joint training programs and courses.

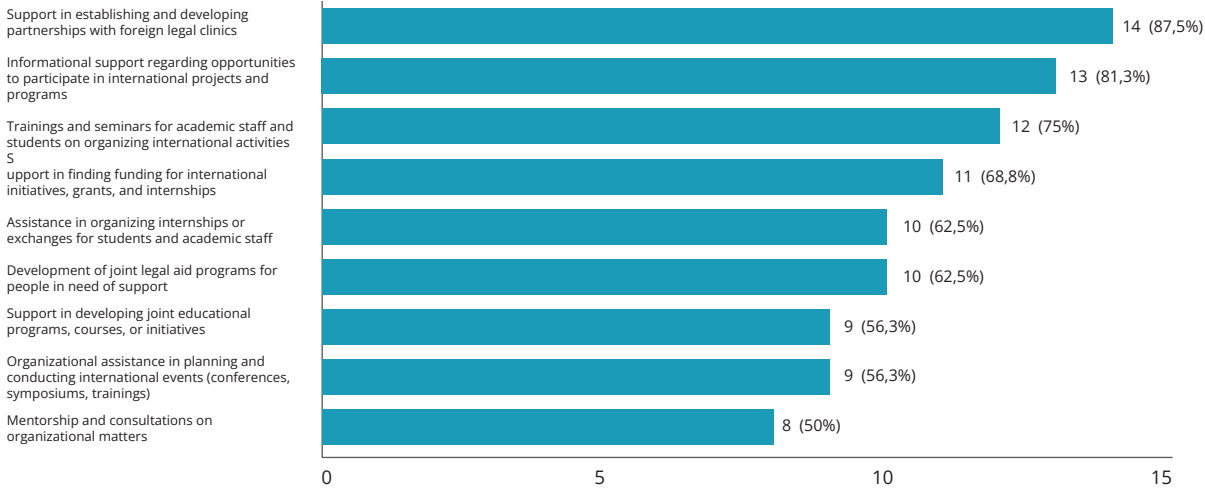
Separately, respondents emphasize the importance of developing joint legal assistance programs for vulnerable groups, including refugees and internally displaced persons.

It is important to note that legal clinics expect from the ALCU not only a coordinating role, but also active engagement in creating conditions for the sustainable development of international cooperation – through training, institutional support, resource provision and advocacy of the interests of the clinical community.

In this context, it is important to emphasize that the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine plays an active role in developing international cooperation and expanding the capabilities of clinics in finding and developing new partnerships, which is a key factor in the integration of Ukrainian clinical education into the global space. In July 2025, the Association acted as a partner of the 12th World Conference of the Global Alliance for Justice Education (GAJE) and the 11th Conference of the European Network for Clinical Legal Education (ENCLE). The central theme of the forum was “Justice Education in the Changing World: Exploring New Approaches to Global Challenges.” Ukrainian clinics presented the network’s key achievements: strengthening institutional capacity, expanding international partnerships, launching a specialized clinic on war issues and developing legal education through annual Street Law competitions.

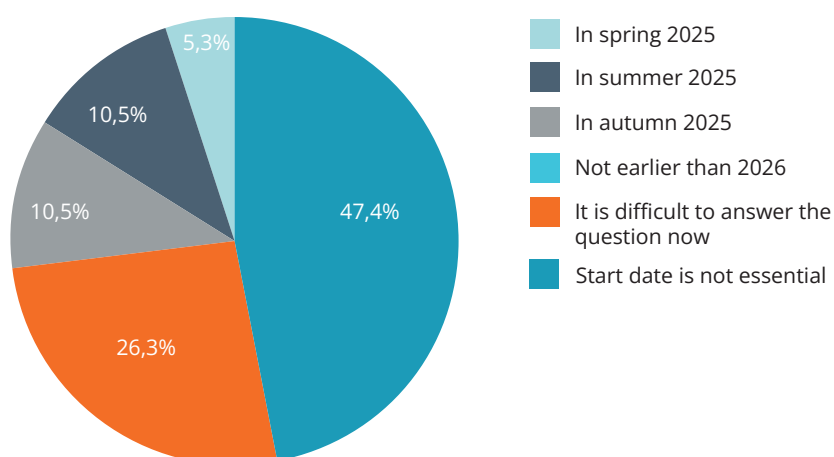
At the same time, despite the key importance of such events for the development of international partnerships and exchange of experience, the participation of Ukrainian legal clinics remained limited. Only individual representatives of the network participated in the conference – no more than ten clinics were active. This indicates internal barriers (organizational, resource or motivational) that hinder wider engagement. This situation emphasizes the need to further strengthen institutional capacity and stimulate the activities of all network participants to use international opportunities as effectively as possible.

**What support do you need from the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine (ALCU) to develop international cooperation?**



The analysis of the responses to the question with regard to the readiness of legal clinics to start international cooperation indicates a predominant flexibility in choosing the timeframes, which shows openness to cooperation in case of a meaningful initiative available, regardless of calendar restrictions.

### *When are you ready to start international cooperation?*



Summing up Section 2.2 Current Status, Needs and Prospects of International Cooperation of Legal Clinics of Ukraine, we can note that the results of the research show a high level of interest of the legal clinics interviewed in the development of international cooperation. The vast majority of respondents confirmed their willingness to continue available partnerships and expand them in new directions. The clinics show a strategic vision of international cooperation as a tool for improving the quality of legal education, professional development of students and teachers, as well as strengthening human rights activities.

**Priority forms and topics of cooperation.** The most desirable forms of cooperation are the implementation of grant programs in partnership with international donors, academic exchange of students, participation in international conferences and holding joint trainings and seminars. Thematically, cooperation is focused on current challenges, in particular: human rights, protection of the rights of internally displaced persons and refugees, ECHR practice, mediation, anti-corruption activities and innovations in legal education and development of soft skills.

**Barriers and restrictions.** Despite high motivation, legal clinics face many barriers, namely: lack of experience in international cooperation, lack of knowledge about international grants and programs, language barrier, lack of contacts with foreign partners and limited access to information on cooperation opportunities. The lack of funding, administrative support and difficulties in finding reliable partners were also noted.

**Expectations from the ALCU.** Legal clinics expect active coordination and resource support from the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine (ALCU). Among the priority requests: assistance in establishing partnerships with foreign clinics, organization of trainings and seminars on international activities, information support on participation in international programs, support in finding funding, mentoring, and assistance in developing joint training courses and legal education initiatives.

**Timeframes and readiness for cooperation.** More than half of the respondents believe that the start date of projects is not a significant factor, which indicates flexibility and openness to cooperation. The optimal time frame for the implementation of joint initiatives is determined to be the medium-term period (6-12 months).

## 3. Strategic directions for development and overcoming challenges of the legal clinical movement: analytical conclusions from the interviews

### 3.1 Review of interviews with representatives of the legal clinical movement

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To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the condition of the legal clinical movement, several series of interviews were conducted with key representatives of the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine. The first series included the current chairperson, former heads and members of the board of the ALCU, who shared their vision of the organization's activities in the unstable conditions of recent years. They spoke about the challenges faced by the association since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the state of legal clinics in the times of war and the prospects for the development of the movement.

Among the experts interviewed are:

**Yuliia Lomzhets** – Chairperson of the Board of the ALCU since 2019 to the present.

**Andrii Halai** – Chairperson of the Board in 2015–2016 and 2017–2019, one of the founders of the movement.

**Vitalii Yelov** – Chairperson of the Board in 2012-2015, one of the founders of the movement.

**Yuliia Matvieieva** – Head of the Legal Clinic Training Laboratory, a member of the Board since 2014.

**Mariia Tsypiashchuk** – Member of the Board from 2017 to 2024, active participant in the international clinical movement.

**Khrystyna Kovtsun** – Head of the Legal Clinic of Ukrainian Catholic University, a member of the Board since 2019.

**Viktoriia Zholudieva** – Head of the Legal Clinic Pro Bono of Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University, a member of the Board since 2023.

**Liudmyla Rudenko** – Head of the Specialized Legal Clinic of Sumy State University, a member of the Board, active since 2016.

## Adjustment of the legal clinical movement to modern challenges and threats

The introductory part of the interview concerned the ability of legal clinics and the Association to adapt to crisis periods that fundamentally changed the landscape of their activities: the beginning of the war in 2014, the global Covid-19 pandemic and the full-scale invasion of 2022. Each of these stages required not only situational decisions, but also a deep transformation of operating models, a change in priorities and a rethinking of daily activities.

The period after 2014 became a time of both institutional formation and the first serious tests for the legal clinical movement. As Andrii Halai notes, the key challenges were the uneven activity of clinics and the first wave of university relocation, which was not always accompanied by the resumption of clinical activity. At the same time, these challenges stimulated the movement towards systematization. According to Yuliia Matvieieva, 2014 became a point of renewal and systematization. In response to the emergence of internally displaced persons and ATO participants, clinics began actively working with new categories of cases. The culmination of this process was the adoption of the Standards for Legal Clinics on 19 June 2014, which laid the foundation for further standardization and improvement of the quality of legal assistance.

The Covid-19 pandemic became the second major challenge that required rapid digital transformation. According to Yuliia Lomzhets, who headed the ALCU at that time, the main challenges were the transition to online activities, loss of contact with clients and suspension of projects. Mariia Tsypiashchuk adds that these facts forced them to urgently adjust legal educational events, in particular, they had to arrange the large-scale Street Law festival as an offline event and hold it online. This period revealed both the vulnerability of traditional models and the potential of remote technologies for providing consultations and implementing educational initiatives.

The full-scale invasion of 2022 posed existential threats to the legal clinical movement, affecting all aspects of its activities. Collective testimonies of leaders reveal a consistent set of threats faced by clinics and the ALCU:

- ➔ **Loss of personnel**      The ALCU team lost about 30% of its staff, which significantly affected its operational capacity.
- ➔ **The second wave of relocations**      Mass relocation of universities, especially from the east and south, led to the loss of logistics – archives, equipment and premises, as Viktoriia Zholudieva describes in detail using the example of the clinic of Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University.
- ➔ **The emergence of new categories of cases**      There was an urgent need for consultation on war crimes, the rights of military servants, as well as a whole range of new legal challenges directly arising from the war realities.
- ➔ **Psychological exhaustion**      As Liudmyla Rudenko notes, in 2024, one of the basic challenges was the decreased students' motivation caused by the prolonged war and emotional stress.
- ➔ **Security and operational risks**      Activities were complicated by constant power outages, blocked government registries and general security threats.

These cumulative crises not only tested the resilience of the movement, but also revealed the urgent need for robust internal mechanisms, such as the Registry and Monitoring, to coordinate the fragmented network and maintain quality standards under extreme pressure.

## Operational mechanisms and institutional capacity of the ALCU

Stability and quality of the legal clinical movement in unstable conditions largely depend on the effectiveness of the Association's internal tools. Such mechanisms as the Register of Legal Clinics and Monitoring of Their Activities, as well as formalizing the status of clinic heads, are the basis for maintaining standards and coordinating the network. The views of the experts interviewed on these issues differ: although there is general agreement on the necessity for these tools for standardization and coordination, significant concerns remain with regard to their practical implementation, verification and formal recognition, which emphasizes the gap between aspirations and reality.

The Register of Legal Clinics. Among the positive assessments and advantages of the register, its value for collecting statistics and analytics is noted, which enables to see the overall picture of the movement (Halai, Rudenko). It is useful for redirecting clients and ensuring geographical coverage (Matvieieva, Tsypiashchuk), and also ensures the relevance of information and access to updated contacts and data (Lomzhets, Zholudieva). In addition, the registry is important for accreditation, as it helps universities confirm the availability of an operating clinic (Tsypiashchuk). At the same time, there is a topical issue – the lack of verification. The registry is based on trust, which makes it difficult to verify actual activities and the quality of services (Lomzhets, Rudenko).

Monitoring the activities of clinics. Monitoring is assessed as an extremely valuable tool: Yuliia Lomzhets calls it “10 out of 10” in terms of usefulness for development. It helps to verify the compliance of clinics with the standards approved (Matvieieva), can become an incentive for development, part of a training policy and an advocacy tool (Lomzhets, Zholudieva). Adjustment to war conditions is also important – the development of an online version with the support of the OSCE (Matvieieva). Among the risks, Andrii Halai draws attention to the possibility of subjectivity and inflated estimates. There is also a need for official recognition of the monitoring results to be taken into account at the MES level.

Administrative status of the head of the clinic. The equal status of the head of a legal clinic with that of the head of a department could stimulate professional development and increase the level of responsibility (Matvieieva). Such a practice is implemented at leading universities in the world – Berkeley, Liverpool, South Africa – and emphasizes the importance of clinical programs (Tsypiashchuk). However, there is no legal basis for such a step, which makes it impossible in real terms (Zholudieva). Vitalii Yelov expresses a conceptual objection, arguing that the main mission of the clinic – practical assistance and legal education – is fundamentally different from the academic and research tasks of a traditional university department.

## Strategic Priorities and Development Vectors

This part of the interview examines the strategic directions that the ALCU experts considered key for the future development of the legal clinical movement. The analysis of the interviews revealed a common vision of the importance of strengthening project activities and international partnerships, the necessity to introduce new specializations in response to the challenges of the time, as well as the awareness of the unique role legal clinics played and can continue to play in the process of post-war reconstruction of Ukraine.

**Project activities are the driving force behind the development of the movement.** The speakers note the critical importance of support from international and Ukrainian partners, including the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, the International Renaissance Foundation, the OSCE, ENCLE, GAJE and many others. As Andrii Halai aptly noted, it was through such support that a “window of opportunity” opened for Ukrainian clinics. The projects cover a wide range of areas: from anti-corruption initiatives and the development of mediation to the legal education program Street Law and protection of the rights of IDPs, which enables clinics not only to provide legal assistance, but also to participate in systemic changes.

**The need for specialization and new competencies.** The war has drastically changed the range of legal requests faced by clinics, creating an acute need for new and highly specialized competencies. Experts, including Yuliia Lomzhets, Yuliia Matvieieva and Vitalii Yelov, unanimously identify the key areas of necessary specialization: military law, social security law, protection of the rights of IDPs and documentation of war crimes. At the same time, Mariia Tsypiashchuk complements this list, emphasizing the importance of developing modern competencies, such as mediation and digital skills, as well as a deep understanding of gender aspects, which is necessary for working with various vulnerable groups.

**The role of legal clinics in economic recovery.** The leadership of the ALCU strategically positions legal clinics as a vital component of Ukraine's post-war economic recovery, identifying several key areas for activities:

- 1 Business support**  
providing advice to small and medium-sized businesses, as well as social entrepreneurship
- 2 Civil society development**  
assisting in drawing up statutory documents for public organizations and initiatives
- 3 Compensation for losses**  
participating in the development and implementation of mechanisms for compensating for damage inflicted by the war, both for businesses and citizens
- 4 Educational component**  
expanding educational programs and facilitating the employment of clinic graduates in recovery projects

The issue of the advocacy function of the ALCU raises different opinions. Yuliia Matvieieva and Mariia Tsypiashchuk consider advocacy as a mandatory component of activities aimed at protecting the rights of clients and strengthening the status of clinics. In contrast, Andrii Halai expresses a more restrained attitude, believing that it is not always an effective tool. However, a common understanding of the need for its institutionalization is emerging. This strategic shift towards professional development is embodied in the ALCU plan, voiced by Yuliia Lomzhets, to include the establishment of the position of advocacy manager in the official strategy.

Implementation of these ambitious strategic priorities is impossible without the main resource – people, and therefore requires systematic attention to their well-being and professional growth.

## The human dimension: mental health and professional development

The sustainability and effectiveness of the legal clinical movement directly depend on the well-being, motivation and professional competence of its participants – students, supervisors and leaders. Especially in times of war and constant stress, human capital becomes the most valuable and, at the same time, the most vulnerable asset.

The issue of mental health is a cross-cutting topic of all interviews, which emphasizes its acute character. Experts describe various approaches to supporting psychological resilience, which can be grouped as follows:

- **Professional methods** Engaging psychologists and taking specialised training for working with people affected by war (Andrii Halai, Khrystyna Kovtsun).
- **Organizational approaches** Formation of awareness of the social significance of activities (Yuliia Lomzhets), creating a healthy psychological climate in the team (Andrii Halai), as well as team building and holding corporate events (Liudmyla Rudenko).
- **Personal practices** Using art, sports and communication with nature and animals as individual ways to restore psychological resources (Yuliia Matvieieva, Mariia Tsypiashchuk, Vitalii Yelov).

The problem depth is illustrated by the testimony of Khrystyna Kovtsun, who emphasizes the difficulty of working with veterans and the need for a comprehensive approach. “The main challenges are the challenges of wartime, namely: the complex nature of clients’ applications, in particular veterans with severe trauma, the lack of specialists... and the need to establish mental health centres,” Khrystyna Kovtsun says. It is human capital and its sustainability that guarantee the future success of the entire legal clinical movement.

Expert interviews with representatives of the ALCU outlined the legal clinical movement as a community hardened by crises and capable of transformation. The analysis of the interviews showed an evolutionary way from rapid adjustment to the existential threats of war, pandemic and full-scale invasion to a proactive strategy focused on institutional formalization, specialized expertise, and most importantly, on the sustainability of human capital. The exceptional resilience and adjustment of the movement were emphasized, as well as the need for institutional strengthening through the formalization of the status of leaders, state validation of monitoring tools and professional development of the advocacy function. At the same time, it was determined that individuals, including legal clinicians, supervisors, and students, remain the primary resource yet the most vulnerable category. Their support, competency development, and professional well-being constitute a strategic imperative for the future of the legal clinical movement.

## 3.2 Review of the results of interviews with heads of higher education institutions and law schools

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As part of the research, a series of interviews was conducted with the heads of higher education institutions that have legal clinics within their structure. The Dean of the Law School of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Volodymyr Venher, the First Deputy Director of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Law of Sumy State University, Olha Stolova, the Rector of Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University, Illia Khadzhyrov, and the Director of the Law School of Ukrainian Catholic University, Svitlana Khyliuk, joined the interviews. Their interviews enabled us to outline institutional models for organizing clinics, challenges of staffing and logistics, as well as prospects for the development of clinical education at universities. These interviews reflect the vision of the administration of higher education institutions with regard to the role of legal clinics in a modern law school and their importance for the establishment of the practice-oriented training of students.

## Institutional status and integration into university management

The formal status of a legal clinic and the level of its integration into management structures are decisive for its stability, resource provision and strategic influence. The analysis shows that Ukrainian universities are moving from the model of an optional project to recognizing the clinic as an integral part of the educational ecosystem, although the forms of this integration differ significantly.

### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT MODELS

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#### Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University

Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University positions its clinic as an “academic and practical laboratory.” This model is given special importance by the recent symbolic decision to name it after one of the founders of the clinical movement, Mykola Udod. As the Rector notes, “...*this will be the first clinic in Ukraine named after the founder.*” Institutional integration is ensured by a formalized requirement for the participation of the head of the clinic in the faculty’s academic council.

#### Sumy State University

Sumy State University has undergone a consolidation process, uniting clinics that previously operated in different departments. The head of a single clinic is a member of the academic council of the institute, which, although not mandatory for all departments, demonstrates its significant status. An important institutional lever is the Council of Employers, which systematically articulates the request for practice-oriented training, thereby strengthening the position of the clinic.

#### The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy demonstrates an approach where “the format of the legal clinic is secondary compared to its mission.” The head of the clinic is a member of the faculty council, which guarantees her engagement in the management processes. The promising vision of Dean Volodymyr Venher is the desire to formalize the status of clinics at the national level, because he “... *considers it appropriate to set forth such participation in laws.*”

#### Ukrainian Catholic University

Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) has integrated a legal clinic into the master’s curriculum as a practical component from the beginning. An important element has become pro bono work, which is considered an integral part of the profession of a lawyer. After the full-scale invasion, the role of the clinic has significantly increased: one of the campuses was converted into a shelter for mothers with children and children from orphanages, who often had no documents. The clinic has taken on the support of such vulnerable categories of the population, which has confirmed its social mission. It functions as a separate structural unit of the School of Law, with the new regulation providing for the inclusion of the head of the clinic in the Academic Council of the faculty after the reform.

Thus, a common trend is the recognition of the need to integrate clinics into the management structures. However, the effective integration directly depends on human capital, with the personnel potential filling these structures with real content and determining their capacity.

## Staffing and motivation systems

Staffing in legal clinics appears to be a central area of tension between institutional ambitions and the financial realities of public higher education. The analysis shows that all three universities are forced to build complex hybrid models of motivation, with enthusiasm and grant ‘crutches’ compensating for the systemic problem of low base pay which depends on the tariff schedule.

### APPROACHES TO STAFFING AND INCENTIVES:

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#### Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University

At Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University, the clinic staff is “small”, with a formal position of head of the laboratory. A key barrier is uncompetitive remuneration determined by the state tariff schedule. The incentive system combines rates, bonuses and grant funding to maintain “...a balance between budgetary and extra-budgetary resources.” The recognition by Rector Illia Khadzhynov that supporting the clinic “...requires significant efforts, often taken free of charge”, highlights the fundamental dependence of the model on altruistic motivation, which is unsustainable in the long term.

#### Sumy State University

At Sumy State University, the clinic staff is mainly formed from students, with three key employees employed on a grant basis, which creates risks of staff turnover and institutional instability. The engagement of a practising lawyer as a head provides connections with the professional environment. The long-term dependence on bonuses through the inability to obtain rates highlights systemic financial constraints.

#### The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

At the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, the clinic staff consists of a head and an administrator, with the educational process provided by “teachers-supervisors”, among whom the two most active are practising lawyers. The motivation system is diversified: it includes rates, internal part-time work, as well as a unique internal mechanism – the university provides small grants for the completion of modular term papers, which is implemented through project groups.

#### Ukrainian Catholic University

At Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU), the clinic staff includes a head, two supervisors and an administrative assistant. Since the university is private, there is no budget funding. Teachers receive specific rates, with bonuses awarded on a general basis, and with grant funding prevailing. To be a lawyer is the basic requirement for the head.

This dependence on external projects and unpaid labour for staff stability directly correlates with the financing models and the state of material support of the clinics, which determines the limits of their operational capacity.

# Logistics and financing

The available modern logistics and stable sources of financing are the foundation of the operational activities of the legal clinic. However, it is in this area that the gap between needs and capabilities is most acutely manifested, with dependence on grants compensating for personnel challenges and at the same time creating strategic vulnerability.

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**Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University**

Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University. The logistics condition is assessed as *“requiring strengthening.”* The resource base is modest (*“... the possibility of allocating two tablets for the clinic, as the university applications are used for data storage”*), which necessitates focusing on the strategy of *“balance between university resources and grant programs”* as the only way to development.

**Sumy State University**

Sumy State University. The logistics is *“satisfactory”* and adjusted to the challenges of wartime, with *“... certified shelter, five classrooms, computers, a generator and stable internet.”* The funding model, based on *“a balance of grant resources and wages for full-time employees”*, reflects a general trend for the sector.

**The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy**

The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. The available base includes *“rooms and cabins for clients”*, which is a necessary condition for confidential work. The Dean’s desire to create a comfortable environment, including the idea of *“equipping a tea point”*, indicates an understanding of the importance of informal infrastructure. Although grant activities are important, *“diversification of income does not exceed a third of the budget”*, indicating a relatively high dependence on basic university funding.

**Ukrainian Catholic University**

Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) has a basic set of resources, but as the scale of activities grows, it needs more. Rooms for training and meetings with clients, conference rooms, ramps and lifts are equipped on different campuses. One campus is located on a hill, which creates difficulties for people in wheelchairs. Cases are collected even in hospitals, which indicates the expansion of practical activities.

Available resources are necessary but not sufficient condition for success. The key factor is how effectively these resources are integrated into the educational process to train future specialists.

## Integration of the legal clinic into the educational process and practical training

The main mission of legal clinics is to develop practical skills, therefore the depth of their integration into the curricula is a key indicator of institutional maturity. It is here that the clinic moves from the status of an additional activity to a fundamental element of legal education, which directly affects the quality of graduate training.

### MODELS OF INTEGRATION OF CLINICAL EDUCATION

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#### Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University

At Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University, practical training is exercised *"mainly in the senior years."* The fact that the *"clinical training syllabus is still being developed"*, with a general course on the basics of clinical education not included in the curriculum, indicates the initial stage of formalization of the educational component.

#### Sumy State University

At Sumy State University, the clinic has its own *"training base"* and a developed syllabus. Although the corresponding course is *"elective"*, strategic plans *"...to make it a mandatory component of the curricula since the next academic year"* show a clear movement towards full integration.

#### The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

At the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, educational integration is the deepest: the central role is played by the course Legal Practical Training, which is *"the core of the program, provides credits and is approved by the department."* The built-in feedback mechanism through students' survey enables continuous improvement of the program.

#### Ukrainian Catholic University

At Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU), the legal clinic course is integrated into the curricula as an educational component that establishes the institution of business reputation and contributes to the fight against academic dishonesty. In the third year, students undergo two-month training, after which they gain access to work with clients. An elective course in military law for masters is additionally offered, as well as courses of the worldview core, which expand the educational context.

Thus, there is a clear spectrum of institutional maturity: from the model of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy with deep integration of the Legal Practical Training into the core of the program, through the transitional model of Sumy State University, moving towards the mandatory nature of training, to the initial stage of Donetsk National University, where the educational component is still at the stage of formalization. Effective educational activity, in turn, requires constant enrichment through external cooperation and the introduction of innovations.

## Strategic directions of development and innovation

In conditions of rapid social and technological changes, legal clinics are forced to adjust, looking for new vectors of development going beyond the traditional provision of legal assistance. Their ability to innovate and respond to global trends will determine their long-term relevance.

### VISION OF PROMISING TRENDS

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#### International relations

At Donetsk National University, they depend on the language competencies of students; at Sumy State University, they are supported through recommendations on mobility; at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, they are given priority, confirmed by cooperation with Jagiellonian University and the Italian Pegasus University; at Ukrainian Catholic University – cooperation with universities in the UK, the USA, France and Poland, participation in the Consortium of Catholic Universities, with a panel dedicated to veteran assistance planned.

#### Mediation competence

All four universities recognize its importance. The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy already has a mediation service for conflict resolution, and at Ukrainian Catholic University, there are appropriate procedures that enable integrating mediation and consultation into the clinic activities.

#### New areas of activities

Here, universities show unique vectors. The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy focuses on recording war crimes and research in the field of artificial intelligence, as well as expanding cooperation with business. Donetsk National University sees potential in legal education and compensation for losses for business. Ukrainian Catholic University actively works with vulnerable groups – mothers, children, veterans, which emphasizes the social mission of the clinic.

Implementing these ambitious plans is impossible without taking into account the most important challenge of our time – war, which puts psychological resilience and support for human capital to the forefront.

## Mental health support and cooperation in times of war

The full-scale war has transformed psychological support from an additional option into a critically important element of ensuring the sustainability of the educational process. The effectiveness of legal clinics, which often deal with traumatic experiences of clients, directly depends on the psychological condition of both students and teachers.

### APPROACHES TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

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#### Cooperation with psychological services

Sumy State University organizes targeted meetings and trainings for first-year students; Donetsk National University confirms regular interaction with university psychologists; the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy has a university psychologist; at Ukrainian Catholic University, the clinic cooperates with the Psychological Consultation Unit, which works with children who lost their parents at the front and conducts trainings for students and clients.

## Mechanisms for supporting the team

The Rector of Donetsk National University, Illia Khadzhyrov emphasizes the importance of a normal psychological climate and the ability to “switch”, using the metaphor of a “spacesuit”. The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy uses tools to strengthen team spirit – field trips, excursions and team building. Ukrainian Catholic University has an approach to supporting psychological resilience through mandatory communication, retreats, trips to the Carpathians, meetings with dissidents and cultural events (for example, painting Easter eggs).

These efforts are an integral part of ensuring the sustainable functioning of clinics, which enables us to generalize the key analysis conclusions.

## 3.3 Overview of the results of interviews with representatives of partner organizations

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During the research, interviews were conducted with two partners of the legal clinical movement. Their experiences represent two important dimensions of the development of legal clinics and their human rights initiatives:

**Olha Nastina** is the head of the Law and Practice legal clinic of Bila Tserkva National Agrarian University and the Executive Director of the Legal Development Network. Her vision reflects the internal institutional development of legal clinics in Ukraine, the challenges of integration into the higher education system and the prospects for advocacy.

**Tetiana Havryliuk** is a board member of the Franco-Ukrainian Association, Courage UA La Ciotat, a lawyer and an active participant in the Ukrainian Diaspora in France. Her experience shows how Diaspora organizations combine humanitarian aid, cultural diplomacy and legal support, creating an external framework for support for Ukraine.

Together, these interviews enable us to consider legal clinics as part of a broader ecosystem: from local educational institutions to international initiatives. Olha Nastina emphasizes that it is precisely such multifaceted cooperation that creates a powerful ecosystem of support for the movement. This coalition unites state institutions, such as the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the free legal aid system, with local governments, private lawyers and international partners, including Polish colleagues. Such a partnership enables expanding the influence and capabilities of the clinics far beyond the university. An important area of activities is legal education, implemented through innovative formats that make legal information accessible and understandable to a wide audience.

The further development of legal clinics, according to Olha Nastina, is impossible without targeted advocacy activities. She emphasizes the need to “develop plans, engage advocates and unify the status of clinics in higher education institutions.” The proposal to borrow the experience of Canada, where the position of the head of the clinic is equal to an administrative one, is a direct response to the problem of “reduced attention” from university administration. Such a status would give clinics institutional weight and stability, preventing their marginalization. No less important is the development of key competencies of both students and teachers. The priorities are “mediation, gender, research and digital skills” that comply with modern requirements for the profession of a lawyer.

Another important aspect of legal clinics in modern conditions is emphasized by Tetiana Havryliuk. In her opinion, legal clinics could help support displaced Ukrainians within the country and abroad, in particular by providing social and legal assistance, providing legal advice on labour rights and mobility in the EU, as well as participating in intercultural and legal education projects. Such cooperation would enable them to combine the local experience of clinics with the resources of Diaspora organizations, creating a comprehensive support system for Ukrainians who have lost their homes and need assistance in new living conditions.

## 4. Recommendations based on the results of the research on the status of legal clinics activities

### For the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine:

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- to develop an advocacy strategy and an advocacy plan;
- to establish cooperation with the Association of Law School Directors;
- to take the initiative for the Association of Law School Directors to include heads of legal clinics in the academic councils of the faculties;
- to develop a Standard Program for Clinical internship (training on the basis of a legal clinic).
- at the beginning of the academic year, to conduct integration workshops for new legal clinics, members of the ALCU, for new heads of legal clinics (to add soft skills training to the program), to organize interviews and supervision for heads and supervisors of legal clinics;
- to develop a standard algorithm for the redistribution of cases between legal clinics;
- to selectively check the data submitted by legal clinics to the Register (for example, in the case when the statistical data of a legal clinic differs several times from the average ones of the network for the year);
- to provide for the collection of information on clients in the Register by various indicators (demographic indicators: gender, preferential status, age, etc.);
- based on the results of monitoring, in addition to certificates and a report, to send an official appeal from the ALCU to the administration of the law school and/or higher education institution with a description of the results and recommendations provided;
- to integrate trainings on psychological support and mental recovery into the ALCU activities;
- to initiate the establishment, in cooperation with foreign partners, of a single coordination platform for establishing partnerships, exchanging experience and disseminating information on current opportunities for international cooperation;
- to regularly disseminate information on international programs, grants, competitions and trainings;
- to develop instructional guidelines on international activities, including legal, financial and ethical aspects.

## **For government stakeholders**

(the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, the Committee on Education, Science and Innovation and the Committee on Legal Policy)

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- to make amendments to the Standards of Legal Education (for bachelor's and master's levels) to include in the list of professional competencies and program outcomes, knowledge and skills acquired through engagement in the activities of legal clinics of law schools;
- to approve a new Standard Regulation on the Legal Clinic of the Law School;
- to introduce a provision on the mandatory nature of the legal clinic (along with the requirements to ensure it) in the licensing and accreditation conditions for the provision of legal education;
- to integrate the components of legal clinical education and practice into the Law of Ukraine On Higher Legal Education and Initial Access to the Profession of a Lawyer;
- to provide financial and grant support, which will consist of introducing a specialized state program to promote international initiatives of legal clinics, in particular: competitive micro-grants for implementation of joint projects with foreign partners, financing participation of students and teachers in international internships, conferences and trainings;
- to establish a separate section or information portal on the MES website dedicated to the international opportunities of legal clinics, with regular updates on grants, competitions and partnership programs;
- to initiate the development and implementation of certified advanced training programs for teachers and students of legal clinics (language and intercultural competence).

## **For administrations of law schools and/or higher education institutions**

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- to ensure the functioning of the legal clinic as a separate structural unit, with the activities complying with the Standards;
- to support the activities of the legal clinic, projects for the development of legal clinical education, science and training;
- to avoid using temporary tools to ensure proper functioning (establishing a legal clinic for a project, transformation into an NGO, public reception centre, etc.);
- to promote participation of male and female students in national and international events of legal clinics;
- to motivate legal clinic staff to improve their qualifications in the field of legal clinical education and science.

## For legal clinics of law schools of Ukraine

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- to participate in training in project management, fundraising and contact the ALCU for organizational and coordination support in independent project activities;
- to join the projects and activities of the Association;
- to use the available information resources of the Association (Feedback on the ALCU website, Google tools – mailing lists and groups on Facebook and Telegram) in order to receive and disseminate information in the network of legal clinics;
- to regularly monitor activities (self-assessment or ALCU monitoring);
- to cooperate with other departments of the higher educational institution (for example, psychological support departments, digital technology development laboratories, ethics and integrity commissions);
- to develop initiative and independence, establish internal teams for international cooperation, responsible for finding partners, preparing applications and coordinating projects.
- to improve competence, participate in trainings on project management, grant writing and intercultural communication, and to develop the language skills of students and teachers;
- to promote the search for partnership, use available networks (the ALCU, universities and international organizations) in order to establish contacts with foreign clinics.

## Acknowledgements

We express our sincere gratitude to the legal clinics that participated in the analytical research and provided valuable evidence to make a generalized picture of the clinical movement development in Ukraine. Through their participation, we managed to collect practical examples, outline institutional models and identify key challenges faced by legal clinics today.

The participation of each clinic was an important contribution to understanding the role of clinical education as a tool for developing the legal system and supporting citizens in difficult conditions of war and reconstruction.

### Legal clinics that participated in the research:

1. Legal Laboratory of Clinical Teaching Methods of Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University
2. Mykola Udod Legal Clinic of Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University
3. Legal Clinic of H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University
4. Legal Clinic Ex aequo et bono of the Admiral Makarov National University of Shipbuilding
5. Legal Clinic of Mariupol State University
6. Legal Clinic of Kherson State University
7. Legal Clinic Pro bono of the National University of Ostroh Academy
8. 8. Educational Legal Centre Pravova STUDIJA of the Poltava University of Economics and Trade
9. Legal Clinic Legal Protection of the Donetsk State University of Internal Affairs
10. Legal Clinic Defendo of the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute"
11. Legal Clinic Centre for Legal Protection of the State University of Trade and Economics
12. Training Laboratory Legal Clinic of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy
13. Legal Clinic Pravozakhyst of Kremenchuk Mykhailo Ostrohradskyi National University
14. Legal Clinic Artium de lex of Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State University
15. Training Laboratory Legal Clinic of State Tax University
16. Legal Clinic Quorum of Berdiansk State Pedagogical University
17. Legal Clinic Hromadska Pryimalnia of the Kyiv Cooperative Institute of Business and Law
18. Legal Clinic of National University "Odesa Law Academy"
19. Legal Clinic Law and Practice of Bila Tserkva National University
20. Legal Clinic Veritas of Lutsk National Technical University
21. Legal Clinic Istyna of the Dnipro State University of Internal Affairs
22. Legal Clinic Zakhyst+ of the National Academy of Internal Affairs
23. Legal Clinic PRO BONO of the National Technical University "Dnipro Polytechnic"
24. Legal Clinic Adiutorium of Chernihiv Polytechnic National University
25. Educational and Training Laboratory Legal Clinic of the Kyiv Applied College of Tourism and Hospitality
26. Legal Clinic of Ukrainian Catholic University

The research was made possible through the participation of heads of higher education institutions, in which legal clinics function. Their vision and experience enabled us to outline institutional models, identify challenges and prospects for the development of clinical education in Ukraine.

**The following experts were interviewed:**

- Rector of Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University Illia Khadzhyrov
- Dean of the Law School of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy Volodymyr Venher
- First Deputy Director of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Law of Sumy State University Olha Stolova
- Director of the School of Law of Ukrainian Catholic University Svitlana Khyliuk

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**The following participants were interviewed:**

Current and former chairpersons of the ALCU:

- Yuliia Lomzhets (2019 - present)
- Andrii Halai (2015-2019)
- Vitalii Yelov (2012-2015)

Current members of the ALCU board:

- Mariia Tsypiashchuk
- Khrystyna Kovtsun
- Viktoriia Zholudieva
- Yuliia Matvieieva
- Liudmyla Rudenko

