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FACILITATION AND RETRAINING OF THE UKRAINIAN MILITARY VETERANS: EXPLORATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS

***Annotation.** 3 surveys were conducted regarding the project of the Norwegian University of Nordland (Norway) and Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical Oil and Gas University (Ukraine) of the facilitation and retraining of veterans (so-called «Norwegian Project»). The surveys were aimed at the exploration of entrepreneurial intention among the participants of the Ukrainian veterans' program (regular and in the Pandemic).*

***Key words:** facilitation and retraining of veterans, entrepreneurial intentions, survey.*

***Анотація.** Проведено 3 дослідження щодо проекту Норвезького університету Нордланду (Норвегія) та Івано-Франківського національного технічного університету нафти і газу (Україна) фасилітації та перепідготовки*

ветеранів (так званий «Норвезький проект»). Опитування були спрямовані на вивчення підприємницьких намірів серед учасників Української ветеранської програми (звичайної та під час пандемії).

***Ключові слова:** сприяння та перепідготовка ветеранів, підприємницькі наміри, опитування*

Introduction. The project of social adaptation and facilitation of veterans is aimed at retraining a target group in civil professional areas that are in demand on the labor market of Ukraine, providing the participants of the project with legal and social adaptation to the conditions of civil society [1].

The executors of the main part of the project are educational institutions of Ukraine (namely, Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical Oil and Gas University) and the Norwegian University of Nordland which organizes and provides professional retraining of the participants of the project in selected professional areas.

After successful mastering of the curriculum, the graduates receive three documents: the certificate of professional retraining of the state sample (from the educational institution of Ukraine, namely Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical Oil and Gas University), the certificate of the University of Nordland and Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical Oil and Gas University, and the diploma of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense of Norway.

During professional retraining, the participants of the project receive assistance in legal adapting, psychological rehabilitation, employment, and advice on starting their own business. This problem is solved by non-governmental organizations, foundations, government agencies, local government, and small businesses under the overall coordination of the International Foundation for Social Adaptation.

The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway with the participation of the Ukrainian partners of the project. Additional services, provided by

the Ukrainian partners, make up at least 20% of the total funding from the Norwegian side.

The major criteria of the quality of the project are improved living conditions of its participants. The estimation of the results of the project is done after the completion of the retraining courses, after three months, and a year.

The purpose of this article is to assess the progress of the project participants in terms of their entrepreneurial intentions. With this purpose, several surveys were conducted.

Research results. Our surveys took place in 3 time frames: at the beginning (March 1, 2021), in the middle (April 20, 2021) and at the end of the program (June 10, 2021). In spring 2022, the Norwegian project didn't take place due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The surveys were placed online in Google forms at the following addresses:

Survey 1:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/11KBGcbbUSYiexbSVBQvGSNOv5Sjq51Dcr8Wp1GmHxR0/edit#responses>

Survey 2:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1yfHUE5qb39eYApNcpciq4mrVieljJ08so4QAFK47DgA/edit#responses>

Survey 3:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1j9Ok98Q3ssYppROgf8KBaIRA5MzlSwWuh7bunZ8Za_I/edit#responses

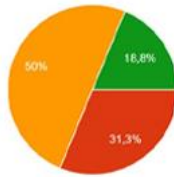
There, you can find survey results with the original text and diagrams.

We received 32, 22, and 17 answers for each survey, respectively (Fig. 1). The number of the participants had a tendency to decrease overtime. This can be explained with the willingness, possibilities, and abilities of the listeners to proceed with their learning. So, the answers were received from the most regular and active participants.

9. Do you think you have the knowledge to become an entrepreneur?

Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

9. Чи вважаєте Ви, що маєте знання, щоб стати підприємцем?
32 відповідей



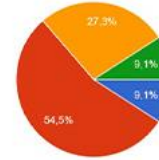
Neutral – 50%
Agree – 31,3%
Disagree – 18,8%

Цілком погоджуюся
Погоджуюся
Нейтрально
Не погоджуюся
Категорично не погоджуюся

17. I know how to develop an entrepreneurial project.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Я знаю, як розробити підприємницький проект.
22 відповідей



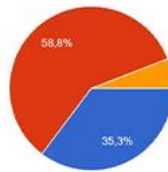
Agree – 54,5%
Neutral – 27,3%
Strongly agree – 9,1%
Disagree – 9,2%

Цілком погоджуюся
Погоджуюся
Нейтрально
Не погоджуюся
Категорично не погоджуюся

9. Do you think you now have the knowledge to become an entrepreneur?

Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

9. Чи вважаєте Ви, що тепер маєте достатньо знань, щоб стати підприємцем?
17 відповідей



Agree – 58,8%
Strongly Agree – 35,3%
Neutral – 5,9%

Цілком погоджуюся
Погоджуюся
Нейтрально
Не погоджуюся
Категорично не погоджуюся

Fig. 1. Samples of questions from the 3 surveys

The first and the third surveys give us an idea of how entrepreneurial intentions of veterans have shifted post-course and provide a chance to compare the overall results and success of the program. The second survey looks at how strongly the veterans were intended to develop their businesses in the middle of the course.

This survey consists of 5 parts: Entrepreneurial knowledge, Personal Attitude; Social Norm; Perceived behavioral control, and Entrepreneurial intentions [2 - 4].

The participants were mostly military veterans (48,4% in the first survey and 41,2% in the final survey) and military veteran’s family members (41,9% and 47,1% respectively); males (59,4% and 52,9%); 36 – 45 years old (43,8% and 47,1%).

Their definitions of an entrepreneur did not change considerably: in most cases participants defined an entrepreneur as a person engaged in entrepreneurial activity for their own profit; though in the final survey the emphasis was on a winner, creative and active workaholic, organization, confidence, and self-sufficiency.

43,8% of the participants in the first survey and 47,1% in the final survey agree that entrepreneurs have a positive image within society. 40,6% of the participants in the first survey strongly agree that entrepreneurs have a positive image within the militaries (in the final survey, 58,8% agree with that).

Now we are going to show you the shift in opinions, in the first and final survey, respectively.

«My family would support me financially being an entrepreneur»: 50% and 52,9% agreed with that.

«My family would support me morally being an entrepreneur»: 59,4% agreed with that and now 47,1% agree and 47,1% strongly agree with that.

«Do you think you have the knowledge to become an entrepreneur?»: 50% of the participants were neutral to that; now 58,8% agree with that.

«I prefer to be an entrepreneur rather than to be an employee in a company/an organization»: 43,8% strongly agreed and now 52,9% agree with that.

«Do you think you will become an entrepreneur in a year?»: 40,6% were neutral to that; now 52,9% agree with that.

«The risks involved in setting up a business are high»: 59,4% agreed with that; now 47,1% are neutral.

«Diligence and hard work lead to business success»: 65,6% strongly agreed with that; now 52,9% agree with that.

Now 64,7% of the participants agree that they have important skills that are needed to be an entrepreneur (previously it was 56,3%).

Now 58,8% of the participants agree that they have the mental well-being to be an entrepreneur (previously it was 53,1%).

Now 41,2% of the participants agree that they have access to capital to start a business (previously 37,5% were neutral to that).

Now 64,7% of the participants agree that they have good social networks that can be utilized when they decide to be an entrepreneur (previously it was 40,6%).

Now 52,9% of the participants agree that they have access to supporting information to start being an entrepreneur (previously it was 50%).

Now 52,9% of the participants believe that entrepreneurship in the Pandemic is possible (previously it was 65,6%).

Now 52,9% of the participants believe that the digital industry might be the most profitable category for entrepreneurship in the Pandemic (previously it was 59,4%).

Now 52,9% of the participants agree that their military career has prepared them for entrepreneurship (previously it was 40,6%).

Now most of the participants agree that knowledge and communication were the best thing about the course; they would like more practice though. And their next steps will be starting their own business.

Regarding entrepreneurial knowledge, in the middle of the course 45,5% of the participants agreed that thanks to their experience, they knew how to start a viable business; 59,1% agreed that thanks to their professional experience, they knew the problems of clients well; 45,5% disagreed that it was easy for them to identify business opportunities in their professional field; and 50% of them agreed that thanks to their knowledge they were comfortable in their work because they knew how business worked.

Speaking of personal attitude, 54,5% of the participants agreed that being an entrepreneur meant more advantages than disadvantages for them; 50% agreed that an entrepreneur's career was attractive to them; 45,5% of them agreed that among the various options, they would rather choose to be an entrepreneur.

Regarding social norm, 50% of the participants agreed that they felt support for their entrepreneurial initiatives from their close family; 45,5% agreed that they felt

support for their entrepreneurial initiatives from their friends (and 45,5% of them appeared to be neutral); 45,5% were neutral about support for their entrepreneurial initiatives from their colleagues; 40,9% agreed that they felt a positive perception of their entrepreneurial initiatives from their close family; 45,5% agreed that they felt a positive perception of their entrepreneurial initiatives from their friends (and 45,5% of them were neutral); and 50% of them appeared neutral about positive perception of their entrepreneurial initiatives from their colleagues.

Speaking of perceived behavioral control, 36,4% of the participants agreed that they were ready to create a viable company; 50% agreed that they could control the process of creating a new company; 54,5% agreed that they knew the necessary practical details to create a company; 54,5% agreed that they knew how to develop an entrepreneurial project; and 59,1% of them agreed that if they tried to create a company, they would have a high probability of success.

Regarding entrepreneurial intentions, 36,4% of the participants agreed that they were ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur; 31,8% strongly agreed that their professional goal in the short term was to start a business (and 31,8% agreed with that); 40,9% strongly agreed that they were set up to create a company in the future; and 63,6% strongly agreed that they had a firm intention to create a company someday.

Conclusions. Entrepreneurial intentions among the participants of the Ukrainian veterans' program were rather high despite the Pandemic. And the program itself was especially helpful for them in terms of networking and new knowledge.

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