



**HR boost
For Better
Employment:**

improving personnel
practices to inclusively
employ skilled workforce

**NEWSLETTER #4
2025**

**When HR becomes a
conversation, not a procedure...**

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Greetings, dear colleagues!

We are summarising the results of the Project's annual cycle of activities. During this period, an innovative and comprehensive programme for developing the expertise of HR leaders and professionals in Ukraine was implemented – ranging from a three-day offline school on strategic HR marketing and recruitment, the online course “Psychological Resilience in the Face of Wartime Challenges and Threats”, business brunches with thought leaders, to the National HR Conference with the participation of international and local Project partners.

We are proud that the key achievement has been the formation of a professional community ready to address labour market challenges and to develop inclusive approaches to recruiting employees from vulnerable population groups. The HR boost continues to evolve through a strong focus on the implementation of practical tools to support businesses through:

- Automated Module «better matching»
- A Guide to Inclusive Practices for HR
- An online platform for learning HR functions within a company.

Enjoy reading!

*Nataliya Starodub and Yuriy Bulyk,
co-founders of
NGO Center “MENTOR”*



Міхаель Пауло, GIZ Ukraine, відкриття заходу

Inclusive Labour Market, Modern Practices, and the Role of the Community in Ukraine's Recovery

On November 24, 2025, the National HR Conference took place in Kyiv – the final event of the nationwide Project “HR boost For Better Employment: Enhancing HR Practices for Inclusive Employment of Skilled Workforce” (HR boost For Better Employment). As part of the multi-donor Skills4Recovery initiative, the event brought together around 100 offline participants and nearly 500 online. Attendees included HR professionals from medium and large manufacturing (construction, agriculture, transport) and service (logistics, services) companies, representatives of the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Education and Science, the State Employment Service,

international partners, regional advisors, educational institutions, and civil society organizations.

The conference marked the culmination of the Project Team’s intensive work throughout 2025 and served as a platform for discussing solutions that help businesses adapt to wartime conditions, retain human capital, and develop inclusive HR practices.

Collaboration for Human Capital Development

The event became a landmark for partnership in human capital development, bringing participants together around the key challenges of the labour market during recovery. Representatives of the Skills4Recovery programme and government authorities emphasized in their speeches that people and professional communities are the foundation of a resilient economy, and that cooperation between the state, business, and the education sector determines the pace of necessary and timely transformations.



The conference aims to empower HR professionals by helping them create new jobs and work with diverse categories of job seekers. The event focused on creating a space for experience sharing, showcasing success stories, and enhancing motivation and professional inspiration.

Video Recording of the National HR Conference



SPEAKERS SAY:



.....
An inclusive labour market is not about benefits or separate programmes – it is about a culture of responsibility. Business, education, and the state must interact as partners so that every person in Ukraine has real access to decent work...

Bohdan Matviichuk, Director of the Employment Department, Ministry of Economy, Environment, and Agriculture

Відеозапис "Статистики ринку праці вразливих категорій населення та система "Обрiй" (UA):



.....
The vocational education system works in two directions. The first is to develop the talent of every learner, and the second is to provide specialists and professionals to the labour market and companies in particular. I am therefore sincerely glad to be here, working towards our shared goals. It is also important to discuss staff development and how to make our labour market inclusive.

Today, I am sharing the changes we are implementing in vocational education, for example, simplifying licensing for companies that have their own training centres. Certification as such has already been abolished, and we are introducing new mechanisms for monitoring education quality.

Iryna Shumik, Director General of the Directorate of Vocational Education, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine



Video Recording of Iryna Shumik's Speech on Vocational Education Reform (UA):





The event aimed to create a space for experience sharing, showcasing success stories and best practices, and enhancing motivation and professional inspiration for HR leaders.

Natalia Starodub, Deputy Chair of the NGO Center "MENTOR", Project Manager

The conference aims to empower HR professionals by helping them create new jobs and work with diverse categories of job seekers. The event focused on creating a space for experience sharing, showcasing success stories, and enhancing motivation and professional inspiration. Participants gained access to practical tools and skills that are critically important for working in today's environment.

Following the opening remarks, **Natalia Starodub**, Deputy Chair of the NGO "Center MENTOR" and

Project Manager, presented the key results of the HR Boost for Better Employment project. The project has initiated a qualitatively new level of cross-industry and interregional collaboration.

Success Stories: Real Changes in Companies

Participants heard inspiring stories from company representatives of the Project:

- **Lyudmyla Kozhukhova**, HR Manager, LLC "CONCEPT OIL" (Kyiv region)

- **Alona Rumega**, Deputy Director for HR, LLC "Askona-Pivden" (Zhytomyr and Kherson regions)
- **Nataliya Svystun**, Deputy Director for Production, Khmelnytskyi Municipal Enterprise "Electrotrans" (Khmelnytskyi region), and others.

The cases focused on the integration of new employees, the adaptation of internally displaced persons and veterans, the modernization of training and development processes, and the transformation of corporate culture under challenging wartime conditions.



Participants of the National HR Conference



Female Trolleybus Drivers, Representatives of Khmelnytskyi Municipal Enterprise "Electrotrans"

During the panel discussion, the Guide "Inclusion in Action" was presented – a tool that systematizes inclusive HR practices for companies of all sizes.

Modern HR Trends and Technologies

In this session, participants focused on topics that will shape the HR agenda in the coming years: retaining the country's intellectual potential and the impact of technology on HR process development.

Project participant **Natalia Vladikina**, HR Director of LLC "S-Engineering" from Odesa region, discussed opportunities to implement these aspects through remote employment.

Labour Market with Equal Access: Shared Responsibility of Business, Education, and the State

The first panel discussion outlined urgent employment challenges during wartime: workforce shortages, employee displacement, the need for rapid reskilling, and expanding access to jobs.

Experts from the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economy, businesses, the State Employment Service, representatives of vocational education institutions, and civil society organizations discussed:

- Inclusion in wartime conditions
- Practices for engaging internally displaced persons, veterans, and people with disabilities
- The role of education in renewing the labour market
- The need for flexible collaboration models between businesses and VET/HE institutions
- The growing importance of regional HR cooperation networks

Inclusion 360° – From Learning to Employment

In the second panel discussion, business representatives and partners presented their own cases and approaches tested in 2025:

- Mentorship as a foundation for adaptation
- New skills for company recovery
- First jobs for young people
- Strategies for supporting teams in crisis situations.

Speakers **Iryna Hnutova** and **Oleksiy Petrov**, co-founders of the AI School and AI Consult, also emphasized the importance of standardizing HR processes and developing a data-driven work culture, which is a prerequisite for the effective use of artificial intelligence in personnel management.



Speakers of the "Inclusion 360°: From Learning to Work" Panel

МЕНТОР

Skills4Recovery

Ринок праці з рівним доступом: спільна відповідальність бізнесу, освіти та держави /

A labour market with equal access: the shared responsibility of business, education, and the state



Speakers of the “Labour Market with Equal Access” Panel



.....
Artificial intelligence and modern HR technologies do not replace humans – they enhance them. Companies that learn to work with data and implement innovations build more resilient, inclusive, and effective teams.

Iryna Hnutova,
Co-founder of AI School and AI Consult

HR as a Partner and Change Leader

In her presentation, **Olha Prokhorenko**, HR mentor and researcher, and author of training and development programs for HR professionals and leaders, highlighted key trends in the transformation of HR roles, particularly the shift from HR as a service function to strategic business partnership.



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HR Boost has given us, as business association representatives, a better understanding of how we can more effectively support businesses. We gained deeper insight into HR challenges that are often shared across many companies. Following webinars and training sessions, we have updated our HR mentorship system – and we are already seeing results.

Larysa Tsyhan, Vice President of the Chernihiv CCI

The Future of Employment in Ukraine

In the final part of the conference, **Maryana Ivashyna**, Head of Learning and Development at “Halychpharm” and Regional Advisor for the HR Boost project, and **Tetyana Pashkina**, labour market expert, presented their vision for the future labour market:

- A skilled workforce as the foundation for economic growth;

- The need for retraining and upskilling programs
- The role of the HR community in regional recovery
- The necessity of cross-sector collaboration to create sustainable approaches to employment.



.....
To date, the State Employment Service uses tools to train personnel according to the needs of businesses and employers, including through modern recruitment methodologies. Employment support programs are also in place to enhance individuals’ competitiveness in the labour market and to encourage employers to hire specific population groups.

Yevheniia Pidlisna, Deputy Head of the Employer Relations Department – Head of Recruitment and Employer Services, Department for Employment Policy Implementation, State Employment Center

Summary and Resolution

In the closing part, participants emphasized that events of this format help build a community of like-minded professionals who raise issues important to a large part of society. These include employment, the development of professional teams, and creating conditions in which high-quality teams become the foundation of successful enterprises and, consequently, the country's economic resilience. The conference demonstrated that the joint efforts of businesses, educational institutions, civil society and regional organizations, and the public sector are key to improving human capital management approaches, scaling effective practices, and expanding labour market opportunities.

PROJECT IN NUMBERS:

Approximately **170** applications were submitted to participate in the HR Boost project, from which **100** companies across four economic sectors were selected. These companies aimed to improve their employment policies and were ready for change and sustainable solutions. Together, the participating company groups provide over **40,000** jobs. Unfortunately, the war has deepened long-standing issues. The labour market faces a shortage of more than **4 million** specialists, while unemployment exceeds **12%**. Since this paradox has serious consequences for the country's economy – slowing industrial development, reducing citizens' well-being, and undermining team stability – the project set out to:

- To expand HR professionals' capabilities through new knowledge and innovative approaches to people management.
- To build a strong network among HR professionals, their businesses, and regional communities supporting the employment of vulnerable groups, including women, veterans, internally displaced persons, older workers, and youth.

Companies from **17** regions of Ukraine participated in the project, making HR Boost truly unique, as it brought together a strategic state asset and laid the groundwork for developing and scaling successful practices.

The educational module lasted 160 hours over the course of the year



Participants of the National HR Conference



We present a practical and effective tool for HR managers of medium and large organizations, companies, and enterprises aiming to implement innovative approaches to recruitment, onboarding, motivation, retention, and development of youth, people aged 50+, women, former combatants, persons with disabilities, and other low-mobility groups, as well as internally displaced persons.

The guide will help HR professionals transform inclusion from a formal principle into a real strategic advantage, enhancing the resilience, flexibility, and competitiveness of companies in a turbulent world of change.

It will also be useful for business leaders in construction, transport and logistics, agriculture, and the service sector, as well as representatives of local governments, the public sector, educational institutions, and partner organizations involved in developing and implementing comprehensive programs to integrate vulnerable population groups into economic activity.

Collaboration between business, government, education, and civil society is critical for building a resilient, inclusive, and adaptive labor market model capable of effectively responding to today's challenges and contributing to national and global development goals.

An inclusive and adaptive labor market model is a system of labor organization that:

- ensures equal access to employment for all social groups (including youth, people aged 50+, women, persons with disabilities, IDPs, former combatants, and other vulnerable groups);
- provides flexible mechanisms to respond to challenges (war, demographic changes, labor migration, automation, pandemics);
- supports the engagement, onboarding, development, and retention of skilled labor even in an unstable, rapidly changing environment.

The guide is structured to provide comprehensive coverage of the topic and equip HR professionals with practical tools to implement an inclusive approach in daily practice.

**INCLUSION IN ACTION.
A GUIDE FOR HR (UA)**



Inclusive BETTER MATCHING

AI-driven Job Analysis

Аналіз вакансії

Вставте текст вакансії для аналізу

Текст вакансії

Вставте сюди повний текст вакансії для аналізу...

Аналізувати вакансію



Better Matching is a tool that allows you to review your job description and receive recommendations from an AI network. The tool analyzes the text and suggests what to change or add so that the vacancy is more likely to be noticed by the candidates you are looking for – for example, a female tech specialist or a 50+ installer. Better Matching helps make job postings clearer, more inclusive, and more attractive to different target groups in the labor market.

Better Matching focuses not only on formal requirements but also on the language of the job posting – tone, wording, hidden biases, and excessive restrictions.

These factors often discourage potential candidates who have the required skills but do not see themselves reflected in the description.

The AI network helps identify these “blind spots” and make the text more open and modern.

Using Better Matching is especially valuable in conditions of labor shortages and competition for talent.

The tool helps employers expand their candidate pool, attract people with diverse experiences and life paths, and improve the quality of applications without additional costs for job advertising.

Inclusive rewriting involves rethinking and updating a job posting to account for candidate diversity, avoiding biases based on age, gender, experience, marital status, or other characteristics. It helps remove discriminatory language and makes the job description clear and accessible to a wider range of people.

AI Job Analysis (UA)



The tool analyzes effective job postings and communication channels for different target audiences, including social media, corporate websites, recruiter portals, media, radio, and printed materials. As a result, employers receive more relevant applications, while candidates get a fair and respectful invitation to engage.

ONLINE COURSE

We present an online course for self-paced learning of new HR strategies.

Course structure:

- 5 modules
- 25 lessons
- theory, handouts, final tests

The course is built on the microlearning principle: short video lessons lasting 2–3 minutes, easy to integrate into your daily schedule and immediately apply in practice.

The program covers 5 areas, guiding participants from a systemic understanding of the organization to work with people, leadership, inclusion, and digital tools.

The course will help you see your organization as a cohesive system, where processes, roles, and culture evolve under the influence of new technologies and approaches.

Register via this QR code to gain access to the content! See you there!



Module Topics

- Strategic HR Management
- HR Marketing
- Internal Communication
- Leadership Development for Change Implementation
- Recruitment and Employee Development

We invite you to explore new practices that accelerate adaptation, promote team autonomy, shorten decision-making cycles, and support learning on the job.

The training is free for you and your teams.

Why HR Boost is useful not only for HR professionals

Changes in organizations rarely occur within a single function. New technologies, restructuring, or transformation of a business model or team always trigger a chain reaction — impacting roles, processes, culture, and decision-making.

This course develops managerial thinking and helps consider the consequences of decisions for both people and business simultaneously.

EXPERIENCE SHARING IN VIDEO FORMAT

Check out the National HR Conference



Ukrainian Labor Market 2025 – Shortage of Talent, Abundance of Challenges

The Ukrainian labor market in 2025 operates amid a deep demographic and social crisis. The key challenge is the rapid population decline. According to demographers, at the beginning of 2025, Ukraine’s population is approximately 32 million, and the downward trend continues. Mortality rates are nearly three times higher than birth rates, and life expectancy, particularly among men, has sharply decreased. This means one thing: the country’s talent pool is steadily shrinking.

Youth emigration does not yet have a critical macroeconomic impact, but it creates significant long-term risks. Already, 41% of employers report negative effects from the outflow of young workers – increasing resignations, fewer applications, and rising salary expectations. Businesses are forced to adapt by engaging older candidates, women, and revising team-building approaches.

At the same time, the workforce shortage is accompanied by a growing mental health challenge. Satisfaction with psychological well-being is declining, with nearly 70% of Ukrainians reporting deterioration. Chronic stress, anxiety, and burnout directly affect labor productivity, workplace communication, and staff turnover. In this context, attempts to operate under “pre-COVID” norms only accelerate burnout.

The labor market is responding with greater openness to previously vulnerable groups – people aged 60+, persons with disabilities, and internally displaced individuals. At the same time, the highest demand remains for skilled labor and mid-level specialists. Recruitment is gradually becoming a continuous process, combining talent acquisition with employer branding, automation, and upskilling.

The main conclusion is clear: the number of candidates will not increase. Organizations that invest today in internal talent pools, employee mental health, and flexible employment models will be the winners.

71% of companies recognize the talent shortage as a serious threat to their business.

According to the European Business Association, the workforce shortage is no longer a localized issue affecting specific industries but a systemic risk to the economy, limiting growth and investment.

The employment rate of people aged 60+ has increased from 10% in 2022 to 15% in 2025.

This reflects a forced transformation of the labor market, where older workers are once again becoming an important talent resource, and age-related limitations are gradually losing relevance.

HR boost For Better Employment

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