



CIVIL SOCIETY POSITION

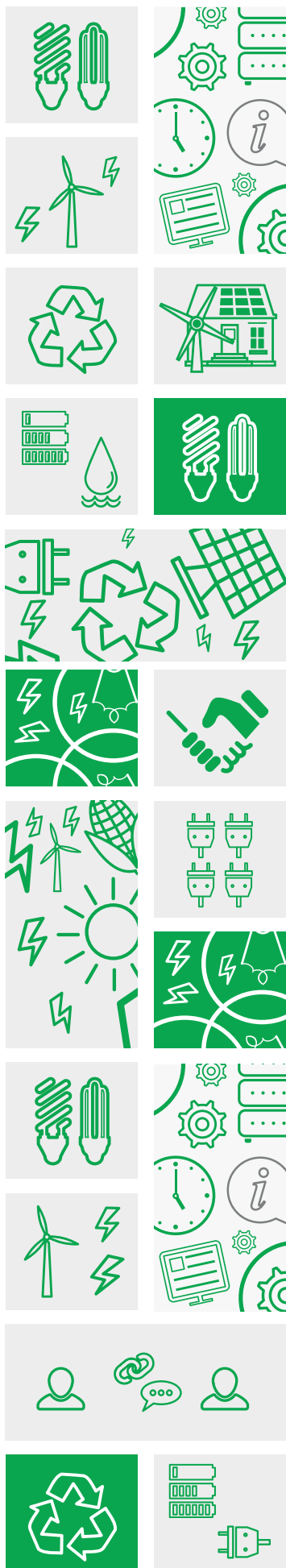
ON COAL MINING COMMUNITIES' JUST TRANSITION IN THE POST-WAR RECOVERY OF UKRAINE



The full-scale invasion of Russia delayed the coal mining towns' plans and strategies for a just transition. The war exacerbates the problems of these communities. There is the destruction of critical infrastructure and the flooding of mines with all the accompanying environmental consequences, in addition to the already existing environmental problems caused by the coal industry. People are forced to evacuate, and it is not known if they will return to their communities. However, the just transition of coal towns will help create conditions not only for post-war green recovery but also for further sustainable economic and social development.

In particular, it is important to pay attention to such areas as energy, environmental protection, economy, education, housing policy, gender equality and inclusiveness.

- Energy security issues should be solved not only by rebuilding the infrastructure but also by shifting the focus to low-carbon and energy-efficient technologies, with the development of distributed generation from renewable energy sources.
- Solving issues of environmental and technogenic safety should involve solving problems that arose as a result of the coal industry functioning, as well as due to destruction caused by military actions, and should also take into account the impact on the health of the population.
- Economic recovery and economic development of coal mining communities should include diversification of the economy, take into account communities' specific features and conditions, and promote sustainable development.
- Education for the recovery of mining communities should include reforming the education system, career guidance, re-profiling and support of specialists of different age groups.
- It is important to provide housing and access to social infrastructure, as one of the determining factors for defining the possibility of living in a certain area.
- Finally, it is important to consider the aspect of gender equality and universal accessibility in matters of employment, education, remuneration, etc.



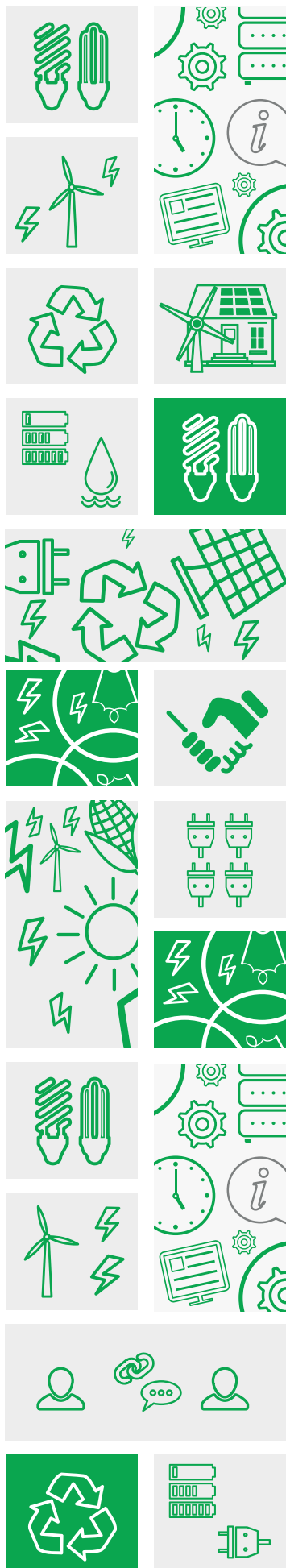
On 15 September 2022, for the first time leaders of coal mining communities from different regions of Ukraine [signed](#) a joint appeal regarding the role of their communities in the recovery of Ukraine and the prospects for a just transition. This public letter testifies to the aspiration to rebuild coal communities based on the principles of just transition and the desire to join the planning of this process now.

Due to Russia's military aggression, coal mining communities suffered significant negative consequences. In the east (Donetsk and Luhansk regions), it means the destruction of infrastructure, flooding of mines, deterioration of the environment, population evacuation and partial occupation. At the same time, population migration, humanitarian support, housing and employment of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have become serious challenges for the central and western Ukrainian coal mining communities located in the Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv and Volyn regions, as also the case with most of the rear communities of Ukraine. In general, coal communities face similar challenges as any other war-affected community.

Of course, the just transition of mono-industrial towns and cities (including coal mining ones) is envisioned in the Recovery Plan of Ukraine and strategic documents at the national and local levels. Although the implementation of pre-war strategic documents has been put on hold, they need to be revised in view of the impact of the war. Some coal communities have already started working on strategic documents for a just transition, so they can be a source of ideas and inspiration for the recovery of other mono-profile communities. Besides, measures must be implemented that are largely similar to those needed in any other mono-industrial community, but at the same time, coal towns require unique additional steps related to the challenges caused by the coal industry.

Among such unique challenges, the issues of employment and economic development, preservation of the environment and ensuring the sustainability of the energy system are especially acute. At the same time, a number of coal communities have their unique, previously insufficiently realized potential, for example, in the field of tourism, agriculture, industrial complexes, etc.

Certainly, some coal communities are currently located in the occupied territories or close to the front line and have suffered significant destruction, which makes full recovery impossible until the end of Russia's military aggression. However, a vision

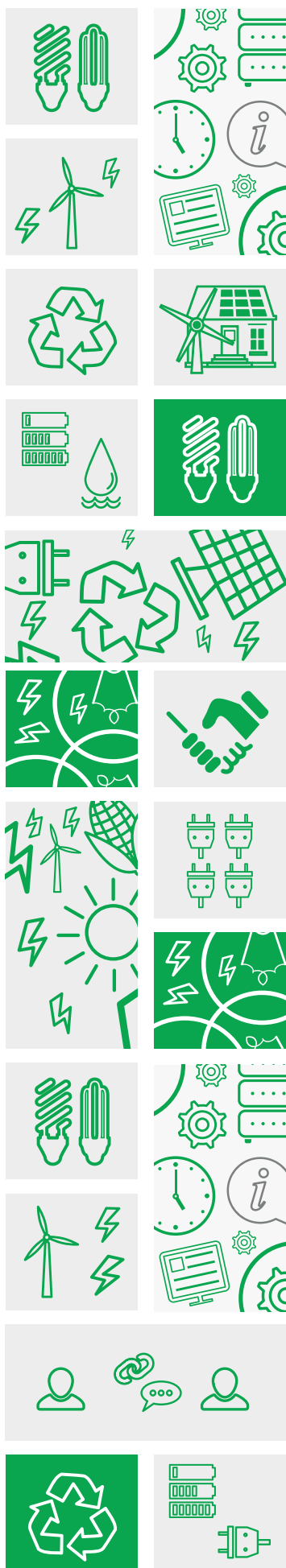


for the restoration of such communities must be created today to lay the foundation for future just transition.

To support coal mining communities in their quest for a just transition, civil society **calls for the following recommendations to be taken into account and considered in the further process of developing the Concept and Program for the just transition of mono-industrial cities/communities, based on previous experiences and taking into account new challenges.**

The recommendations are divided into the following groups

- 1.** Energy
- 2.** Environmental protection
- 3.** Economy
- 4.** Education
- 5.** Housing policy
- 6.** Gender equality and inclusiveness



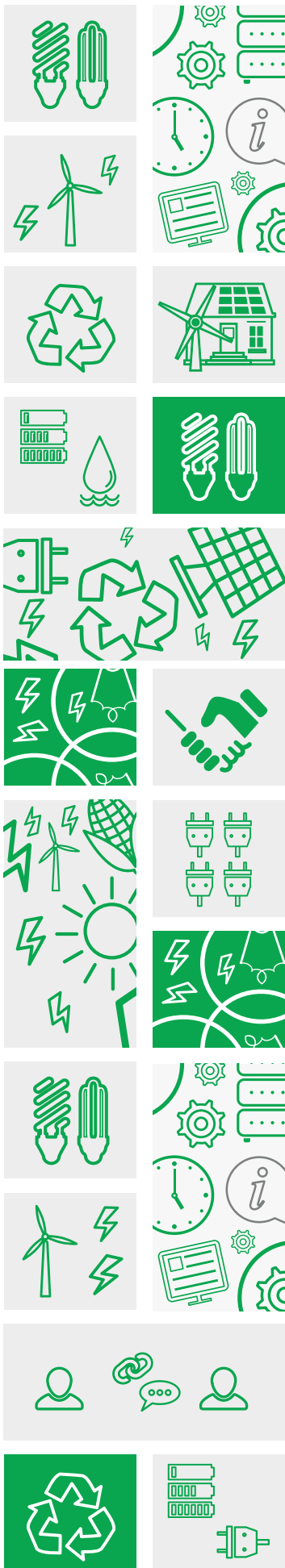
ENERGY

Masures to strengthen **energy security** in the reconstruction of coal communities should include not only the restoration of the energy infrastructure but also the restructuring of the economy based on clean, low-carbon and energy-efficient technologies. Therefore, in addition to rebuilding critical infrastructure, it is important to focus attention on the following,

- Development of decentralized generation of renewable energy sources in communities,
- De-carbonization of heating by gradually replacing gas and coal with renewable energy sources (for example, heat pumps),
- Reuse of mine water for energy needs (for example, in heating),
- Development of bioenergy based on the so-called “second generation” of biomass, which will comply with the updated EU Directive on the development of renewable energy (RED III), for heat supply and electricity production (after bringing Ukrainian legislation into compliance with EU standards),
- Creation of energy cooperatives.

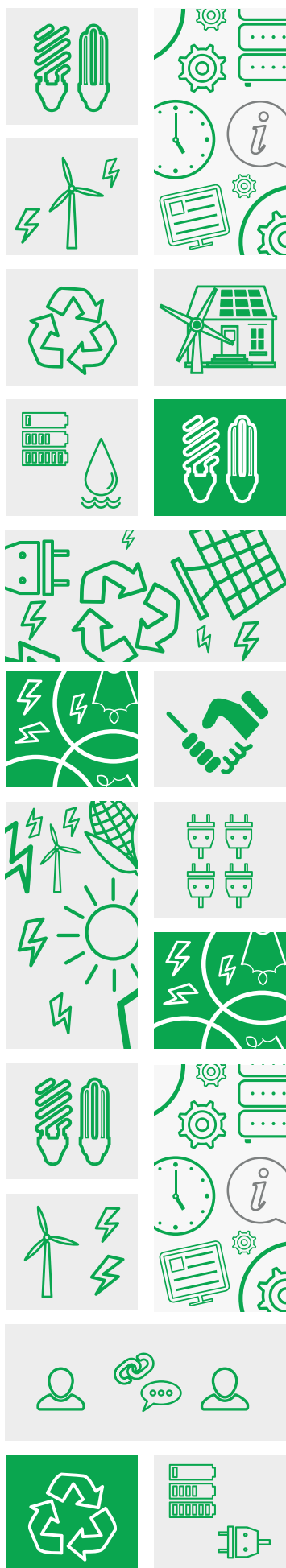
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Environmental and technogenic safety should be at the centre of decision-making. The operation of coal mines, and especially their flooding, causes and exacerbates a number of environmental problems related to surface and underground water and soil pollution. This creates high risks of man-made disasters, the prevention of which requires significant resources. The consequences of the operation and flooding of mines cause a deterioration in the health of people, who are forced to drink insufficiently clean water, eat contaminated food, etc. Even before the start of the war in 2014, the pollution of water, air, and soil in coal communities was significant. Currently, due to Russian aggression, the negative consequences of enemy shelling have also been added to this list.



Therefore, it is important to prevent the deterioration of the environment, and after the end of the active phase of hostilities, to investigate their consequences and focus efforts on the restoration of natural ecosystems and reclamation of the affected territories. Therefore, it is necessary to plan the following activities and research,

- Setting up and technical support of the system of monitoring the state of the surface and underground water, air and soil, unification of methods and equipment of the system of monitoring the state of the environment under the Association Agreement of Ukraine with the EU,
- Comprehensive environmental audit of coal mining regions after the end of the active phase of military operations, substantiation of quantitative parameters of natural and anthropogenic changes in the environment and man-made load on communities affected by the mining industry, analysis of the safety of working enterprises,
- Creation of an information and reference system of ecological and geochemical data on coal communities,
- Development of local ecological and geochemical monitoring programs to substantiate measures for the safe use of drinking water and research into the possibility of using mine water as drinking and/or technical water,
- Orientation of the regional environmental policy to ensure the measures of ecologically-oriented restoration of territories,
- Implementation of measures for ecological restoration of territories affected by the mining industry and/or mine flooding. In particular, the development and implementation of measures to eliminate the consequences of mine flooding, cleaning and reclamation of contaminated land, restoration of soil fertility, greening of rock dumps, waste disposal (including accumulated highly toxic waste) and wastewater treatment,
- Management of mine waters to limit threats to the environment after the end of mining operations, restoration and stabilization of runoff from flooded mines to maintain the level of underground water at safe depths,
- Management of methane emissions resulting from the operation/conservation of mines.

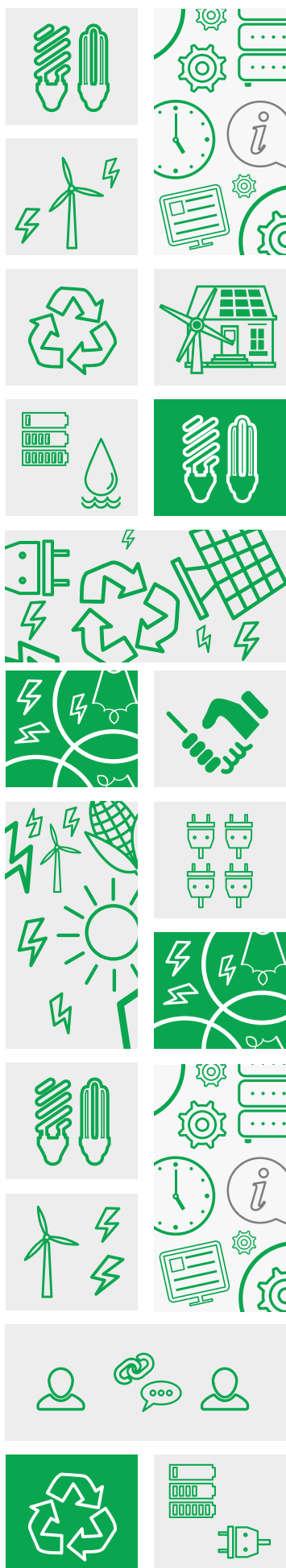


ECONOMY

Economic development should provide for the restoration of the economy through orientation towards a low-carbon, energy-efficient, nature-oriented and clean production and balanced consumption. It must be based on principles of joint responsibility, innovation, cooperation, solidarity, flexibility and interdependence. To take into account specific features of coal regions in the process of planning the recovery of Ukraine, it is important to consider the specifics of each individual community and its opportunities for development.

This may require:

- Research of prerequisites and needs for attracting investments to coal and other mono-industrial communities, including for the production of renewable energy sources,
- Effective infrastructural and energy provision of investment activity,
- Development of unique perspective profiles of communities taking into account pre-war assessments and changes that occurred as a result of Russia's military aggression,
- Search for opportunities to use existing industrial sites, facilities, mine water, industrial waste and other resources of coal enterprises, as well as production chains adjacent to the coal industry,
- Creation of new points of economic growth, taking into account the existing economic and human potential for the diversification of the economy of coal mining communities,
- Diversification of the economy due to the development of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship and systematic business support in market niches, individually determined for each community, at the expense of, in particular, the creation of special programs and funds,
- Implementation of pilot projects in coal mining communities,
- Support of entrepreneurial initiatives in the field of green circular economy,

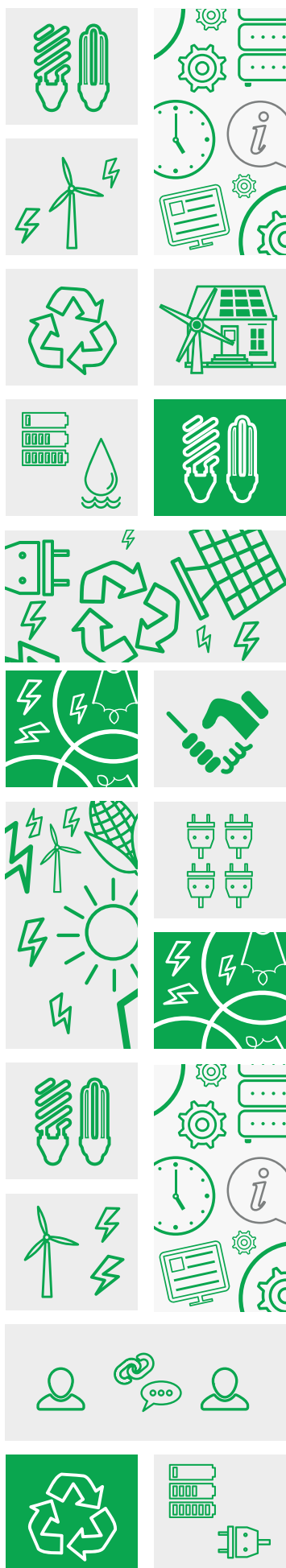


- Strengthening of inter-sectoral relations, industrial cooperation, public-private partnership and inclusion in the systems of existing economic clusters of those sectors, enterprises, etc., which are defined as communities' economic growth points,
- Creation of joint investment-attractive community products (industrial parks, prepared land plots for investment),
- Creation of new production chains with high added value and joining existing ones at the national and international levels,
- Development of innovative entrepreneurship and creative industries.

EDUCATION

Education is a sphere that will also require changes to re-orient the economy considering the need for low carbon technologies, energy efficiency and nature orientation. Because of Russian military aggression, education and science faced significant challenges related to the destruction of the educational infrastructure, the migration of education workers abroad and the increase in the number of IDPs among them. To mitigate and overcome the financial, infrastructural and personnel challenges, it is necessary to ensure the following,

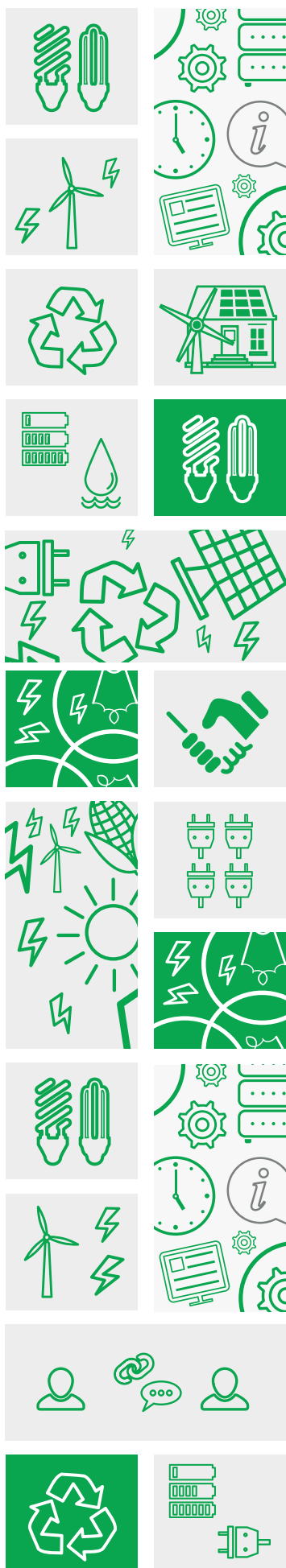
- Creation of offline/online programs and training for residents and IDPs from coal communities,
- Development of programs to support specialists of various age categories,
- Re-profiling of coal mine workers, which may take place in related industries (for example, construction, which will be especially relevant during the recovery period) or other areas that do not require extended retraining and allow them to start working in a short period of time, including before the end of hostilities,
- Re-profiling already existing vocational and technical educational institutions and introducing programs focused on environmental and energy disciplines that meet the needs of de-carbonization and transformation of coal regions,



- Implementation of regionally requested programs for personnel retraining and the creation of an early retirement program for coal mine workers,
- Implementation of measures aimed at the reintegration of educational institutions after de-occupation,
- Reforming the youth career guidance system on the basis of modern modernized networks and educational institutions,
- Creation of an effective system of training qualified personnel, focused on new types of economic activity, in particular through the establishment of training in financial literacy and business skills on the basis of state employment centres,
- Changes in educational programs aimed at integration with the European academic space, as well as the implementation of measures to promote academic mobility and the exchange of Ukrainian and European educational institutions,
- Establishment of dual education,
- Creation of joint programs of institutions of higher education and business,
- Development of education may include, among other things, the creation of new educational institutions, research and innovation centres at the regional and local levels, for example, youth innovation, creative economy and robotics centres in communities,
- Creation of an innovative network of institutions of higher/ pre-higher education, business, research organizations, local and regional institutions of local economic development, youth centres of creative economy and robotics.

HOUSING POLICY

The full-scale Russian invasion caused the largest housing crisis in the history of Ukraine. Settlements in the east of Ukraine, in particular coal mining communities, suffered large-scale destruction and damage in the residential sector. Therefore, the following measures are necessary,



- Study of the situation of displaced persons from coal mining communities by region (internal and external migration),
- Development and provision of social housing, including for long-term rent,
- Large-scale thermal modernization of existing multi-apartment and private residential buildings,
- Ensuring sufficient access to hospitals, polyclinics and health care services in general, as this affects decision-making regarding residence (both by older people and the young generation) in a certain area.

GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Gender equality remains a challenge, including after the full-scale Russian invasion. The situation varies by community, but since coal mining is a male-dominated profession, population movements and working conditions differ by gender. For example, in connection with the mandatory evacuation during the heating season, many women and children are forced to leave the territory of the Donetsk region. And if in some communities men are able to move with their families, in others they stay to work in local mines. Therefore, it is important to consider the gender aspect during post-war recovery through,

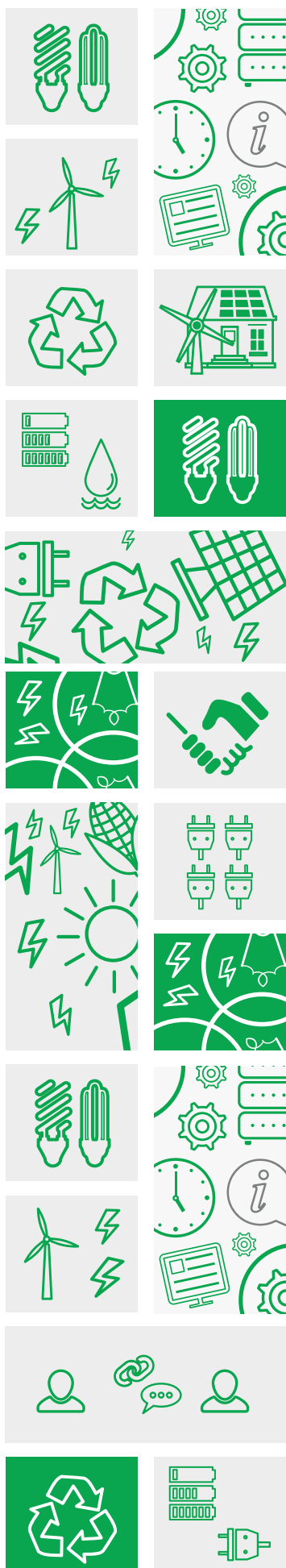
- Combating the gender wage gap and horizontal gender segregation through a system of benefits aimed at single women with children and women of retirement (elderly) age, through programs and projects aimed at women's employment,
- Support not only to the miners but also to their families, in particular regarding training/retraining, social opportunities, etc.,
- Taking into account the needs of various population groups, including groups with limited mobility,
- Taking into account gender stereotypes and the appropriate division of responsibilities, which is especially noticeable in



coal communities, in training and retraining programs for the population of coal regions,

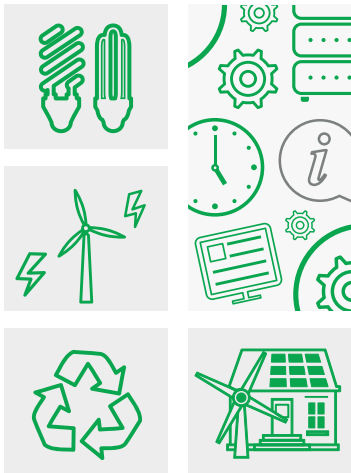
- Collection of gender statistics reflecting differences and inequality in the position of women and men in all spheres of life, broken down by sex, age, etc. Data collection methods should take into account the presence of stereotypes, as well as social and cultural factors that may cause the appearance of gender bias.

Of course, mining communities face many challenges and a significant part of the problems will wait for solutions until Ukrainian victory. However, it is important to plan this process and involve communities now. We request to consider the above recommendations and integrate them into the further process of developing the Concept and Program for the just transition of mono-industrial cities/communities.



MATERIALS:

1. An open letter from the mayors of coal mining communities regarding Ukraine's recovery process
<https://interfax.com.ua/news/press-release/859008.html>
 [Ukrainian]
2. Draft Strategy for the Transformation of Coal Communities of the Donetsk Region
<https://myrnograd-rada.gov.ua/news/23492-povidomlennya-pro-oprilyudnennya-projektu-strategiyi-transformaciyi-vugilnix-gromad-doneckoyi-oblasti> [Ukrainian]
3. Life without a choice: manifestations of inequality and discrimination in coal mining towns, which should be taken into account during a just transition— Analysis (summary and recommendations)
<https://ecoaction.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/nerivnist-u-vuhilnyh-mistah-abs.pdf> [Ukrainian]
4. Study of the process of de-carbonization in eastern Ukraine — Analytical report
<https://r2p.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/analitichnij-zvit-shhodo-doslidzhennya-proczesu-dekarbonizaczi%D1%97-u-shidnij-ukra%D1%97ni-povna-versiya.pdf> [Ukrainian]
5. Green Reconstruction of Ukraine: Position of Civil Society
<https://ecoaction.org.ua/zelena-vidbudova-ukrainy-pozytsia-hromadskosti.html>
6. Program of Economic Diversification of the Dobropillia Urban Amalgamated Territorial Community in the Conditions of Green Transition
<https://doc.mrd.gov.ua/component/documents/8890:pro-zatverdzhennia-prohramy-ekonomichnoi-dyversyfikatsii-miskoi-dobropilskoi-miskoi-obiednanoi-terytorialnoi-hromady-v-umovakh-zelenoho-perekhodu> [Ukrainian]
7. Program of Economic Diversification of the Petropavlivsk Territorial Community
https://petropotg.dp.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/145/uploaded-files/Draft_ASTAR_Programma_Petropavlivka1.pdf [Ukrainian]



8. Program of Economic Diversification of the Pershotravensk Urban Territorial Community in conditions of just transition until 2024
https://rada.info/upload/users_files/34357055/a2c830f0fe042f5bf7640fe25d112266.pdf [Ukrainian]
9. Concept of the State Target Program for the Just Transition of Coal Regions until 2030
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1024-2021-%D0%BF#Text> [Ukrainian]

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