

# READINESS OF THE COMMUNITY OF KHARKIV TO SPREAD THE CONCEPT OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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*The paper presents the results of a social study of the Kharkiv community's readiness to transition to a circular economy and the concept of social entrepreneurship. The method of online survey of representatives of the educational community was used in the study. The results showed: 1) the presence of the community's need for educational and informational measures, which should be aimed at increasing the awareness of the residents of Kharkiv about the ideas, concepts and principles of the circular economy; 2) during the war, the value of preserving the ecology of the region and the understanding of the importance of environmental protection in Ukrainian society decreases; 3) in 2024, Kharkiv residents will be even more worried about political instability and high corruption, the importance of protecting the region's ecology is decreasing. Identified ways to support new forms of ecological and social entrepreneurship in Ukraine after the war. The results of the study will be useful for the adaptation of educational and environmental strategies of regional development.*

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*Keywords: circular economy, social entrepreneurship, social study, ecological and economic consciousness, Kharkiv community*

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## **Introduction**

Social and "green" enterprises aim not only to make a profit, but also to solve social problems and improve the quality of life of the population. In the post-war period, this is especially relevant, since the country needs effective measures to support vulnerable groups, reintegration of veterans, as well as restoration of the socio-economic environment in the affected regions, including in Kharkiv. Social enterprises are often focused on solving the problems of specific communities or regions. By creating initiatives aimed at solving local problems, they can contribute to local economic and social development, taking into account the environmental factor. Social and "green" enterprises are spreading in the concept of circular economy.

Crisis situations have given impetus to finding effective ways out of them, restoring economic, environmental and social processes. In particular the appeal to the concept of cyclical economy. This movement is also reflected in scientific publications. For example, Per Klevnäs, Alexandra Kulldorf, Per-Anders Enkvist (2019) believe that «the transition to a circular economy can make a significant contribution to the EU's priorities for sustainability, jobs and environmental protection, while opening

up great opportunities in purely economic terms - both short-term incentives and long-term productivity» (Circularity GAP report, 2021).

The analysis of scientists' works allowed to reveal approaches to defining the essence of cyclical economy as: 1) model of economic development, based on the rational use of resources and their restoration (Sergienko T., 2019); 2) an alternative to the traditional, linear economy, based on three principles of «3R»: reduction of consumption, reuse and recycling (reduce, reuse, recycle) (Kulczycka J., 2019); 3) industrial system that is restored or regenerated by design and construction (Sysoev O., 2021); 4) economic model, in which both the results and processes of resource supply and production are aimed at increasing the efficiency of ecosystems and the well-being of society (The Earth Summit, 1992).

Some researchers consider the concept of circular economy as a new stage in the development of the concept of sustainable development.

Observation of changes in the civic values of people in the Kharkiv community allows us to make the following assumptions.

Hypothesis 1. Global changes encourage meaningful transformation of the civic values of society in Kharkiv in the direction of their strengthening.

Hypothesis 2. Military danger leads to an increase in civil activity in Ukrainian society in the direction of social support.

Hypothesis 3. As a result of the war, people's environmental awareness decreases.

Hypothesis 4. Education as a social institution exerts a significant influence on the implementation of the concepts of sustainable development and circular economy, as it ensures the formation of ecological and economic consciousness, values, and culture of society, and higher and postgraduate education - training and development of specialists in the economic field.

### **Materials and Methods**

In order to identify the values of the society of the Kharkiv community and their transformation, a sociological study was conducted, which included three stages:

Stage 1. Collection of primary sociological information;

Stage 2. Processing of melons;

Stage 3. Analysis of received information, generalization of conclusions, preparation of recommendations.

The survey was conducted twice:

in 2021 - before a full-scale invasion of Ukraine;

2024 - during the war.

The research method is an online survey of respondents using the Google forms tool. The questionnaire contains questions about: awareness and understanding of the essence of the circular economy; determining the location of economic and environmental problems in crisis conditions; willingness to participate in the processes of sustainable development, green and circular economy; the importance of social, family, socio-economic, ecological values. The purpose of the survey is not only to identify the level of education and opinion of the community regarding the implementation of the concept of circular economy and social entrepreneurship, but also to draw attention to these issues.

The social research was conducted among residents of Kharkiv who are obtaining or have higher education. 131 respondents participated in the survey. The largest part of respondents (37%)

was between 41 and 50 years old, 23% of respondents were between 31 and 40 years old, and 17.8% were between 15 and 20 years old (higher education graduates were interviewed).

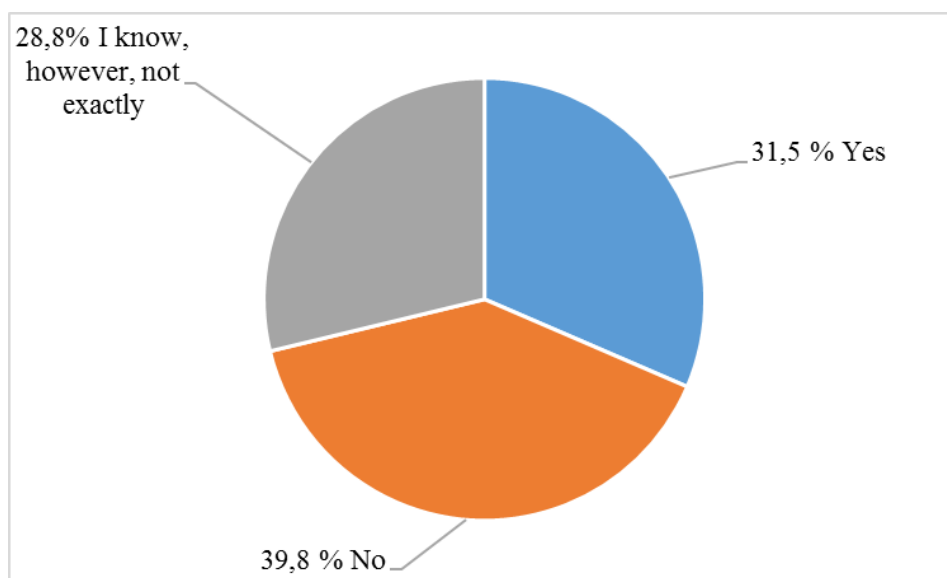
The conducted sociological research has certain limitations:

the project provided for a limited number of respondents, however, this sample is sufficient to generalize the results of the survey for the selected target group;

respondents with higher education were interviewed, so the results reflect the values and the possibility of behavioral changes of this category.

### Results and Discussion

The results of the sociological research indicate that representatives of the educational environment in the Kharkiv community are not sufficiently aware of the essence of the circular economy (39.8% of respondents answered that they do not know anything about it, 28.8% - heard something about it, but do not have a clear idea, 31.5% - believe that they understand what is being discussed).



**Figure 1. Answers to the question: "Do you know what the circular economy is?" in 2021**

In 2024, the situation has hardly changed. 38.9% of respondents answered that they do not know anything about it, 29.2% - heard something, but do not have a clear idea about it, 30.6% - believe that they understand what it is about.

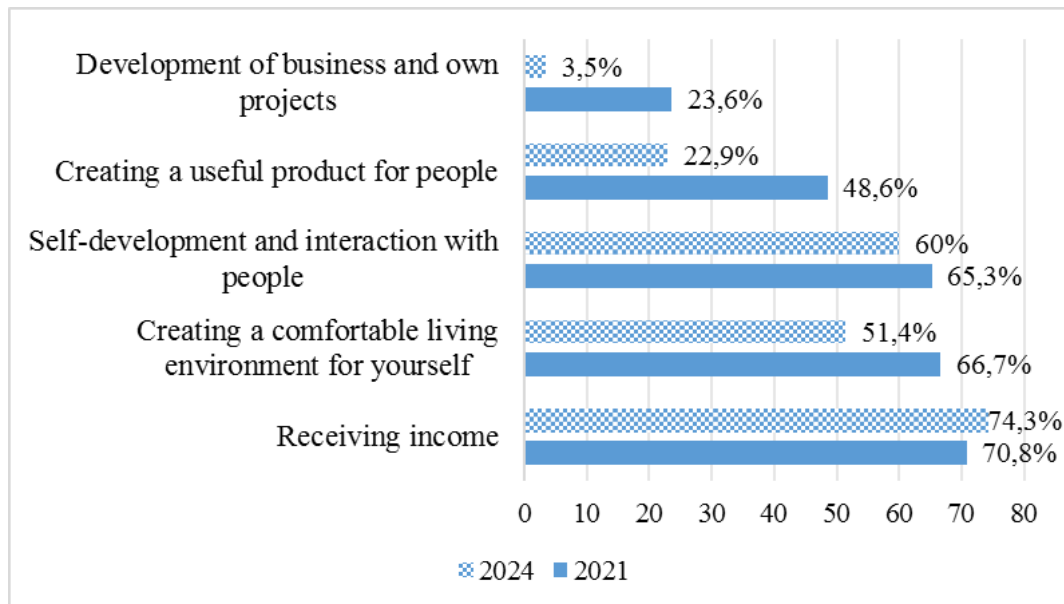
The results of the survey shed light on the community's need for educational and informational measures aimed at raising the awareness of Kharkiv residents about the ideas, concepts and principles of the circular economy.

Under the influence of wartime, the community's attitude to professional activity changed significantly. Answers to the question: "What do you think is the main purpose of human labor?" is presented in Figure 2.

An online survey in 2021 shows that the majority of respondents see income as the goal of their work (70.8%), creating a comfortable living environment for themselves (66.7%), self-development and interaction with people (65.3%); creating a useful product for people (48.6%). The respondents

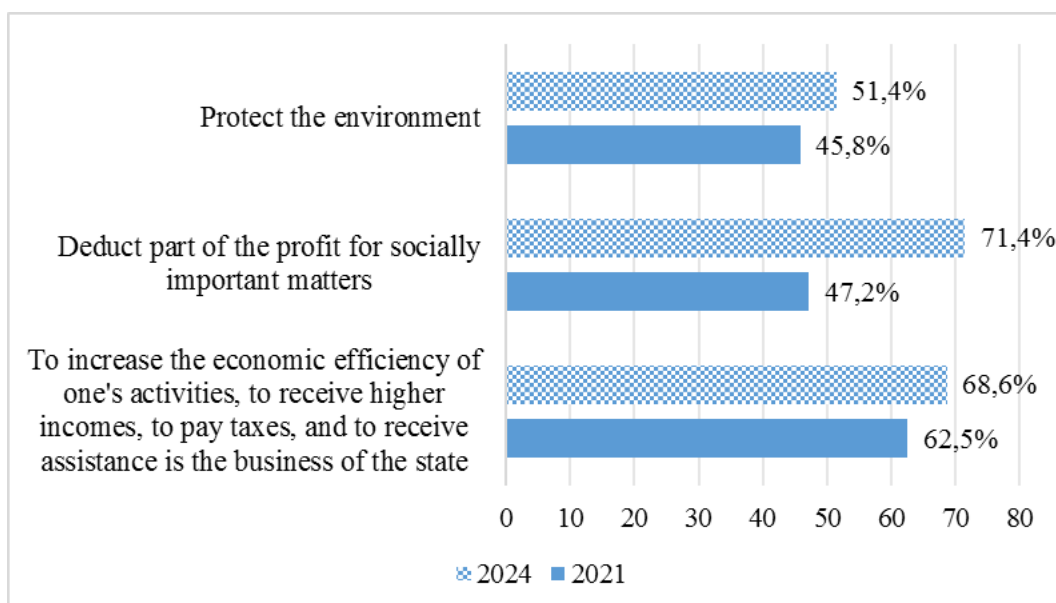
were not directly related to entrepreneurial activity, therefore they mentioned the development of business and their own projects much less frequently (23.6%).

In 2024, significantly fewer Kharkiv residents (51.4%) see creating a comfortable living environment as the goal of their work, only 22.9% of respondents will think about creating a useful product for people, and very few Kharkiv residents (3.5%) think about the development of business and projects.



**Figure 2. What do you think is the main purpose of human work?**

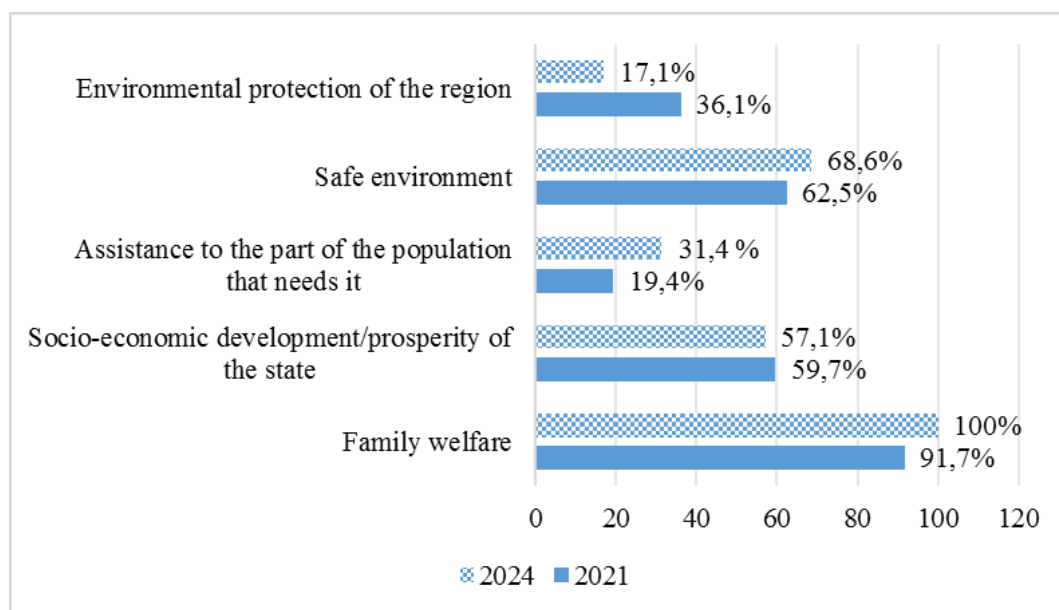
During the war period, the importance of entrepreneurial activity for society began to transform much faster. The answer to the question: "What do you think an entrepreneur should focus on?" shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. What do you think an entrepreneur should focus on?**

In 2021, 62.5% of respondents believed that entrepreneurs should increase the economic efficiency of their activities, receive higher incomes, pay taxes, assistance is the state's business. In 2021, according to 47.2% of respondents, it is necessary to deduct part of the profit for socially important matters. In 2024, significantly more respondents (by 24.2%) believe that entrepreneurs should be involved in social processes in society. 45.8% of surveyed citizens believe that it is also necessary to protect the environment. In 2024, the number of citizens holding this opinion increased by 5.6%. This indicates that society is in the process of realizing the importance of social and green entrepreneurship, however, it is obvious that the groundwork for the significant spread and support of this trend is still being laid.

It is also possible to observe some changes in the values of Kharkiv residents. The ranking of the value system is shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4. Assessment of the importance of values for residents of Kharkiv**

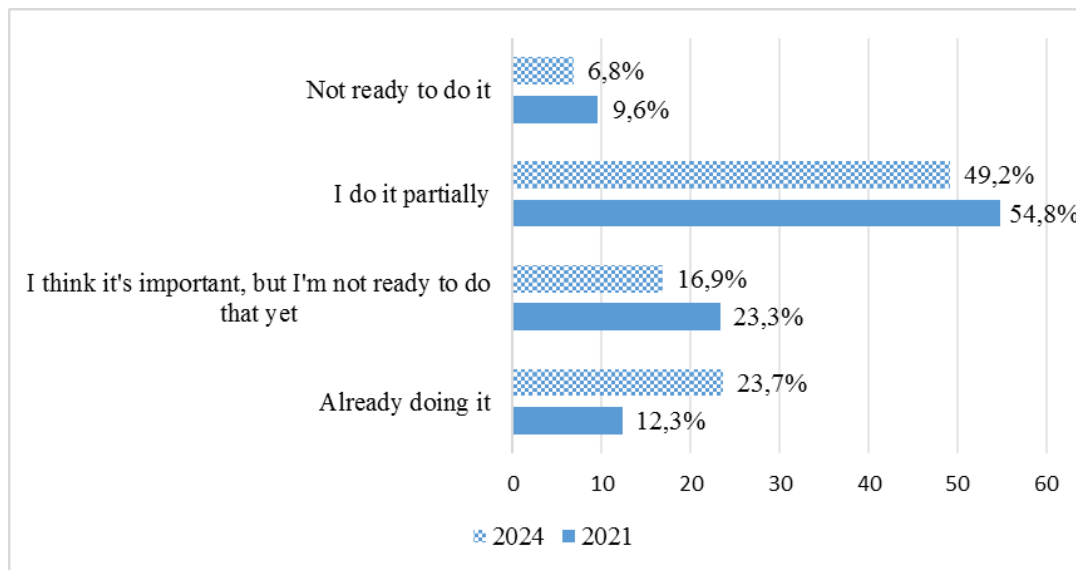
As can be seen from Figure 6, the highest value among those proposed for 91.7% of respondents in 2021. and 100% of respondents in 2024 have family well-being. The lowest value of Kharkiv residents in 2021. provided protection to the ecology of the region (36.1%), but during the war, this figure halved. In 2024, the number of people who believe that it is important to help a part of the population that needs it has increased significantly.

As a result of the war, the attitude of respondents to economic, environmental and socio-political problems also changed, which is reflected in Table 1.

**Table 1. The average value of the assessment of the importance of challenges**

|      | Intensive migration of the population of Ukraine | Political instability, safety of life | High corruption | The crisis of the education system | Ecological condition of the territories | Economic problems |
|------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 2021 | 4.34   | 4.31                                  | 4.10            | 3.47                               | 3.37                                    | 3.71              |
| 2024 | 4.00   | 4.79                                  | 4.34            | 3.55                               | 3.48                                    | 3.62              |

In 2024, the importance of population migration and economic problems for the Kharkiv community decreased. At the same time, Kharkiv residents are even more concerned about political instability and high levels of corruption. The problem of the ecological state of the regions is the least significant for Kharkiv residents. Although the reconstruction of Ukraine as a whole and Kharkiv region in particular should be based on the principles of circular economy and social entrepreneurship, which will allow raising the standard of living of citizens to a qualitatively new level. This requires the formation of ecological values and behavioral customs. The readiness of the population of Kharkiv to sort garbage is shown in Figure 5.



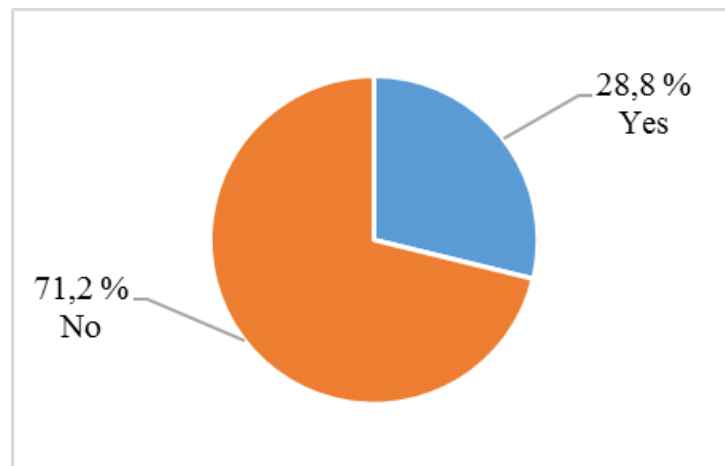
**Figure 5. Readiness of the population to sort garbage**

According to the survey, 12.3% of the population of the selected group already sort garbage, 54.8% do it partially, almost 33% are not ready to do it at all. And here, additional research is needed on the reasons, because such attitudes may indicate insufficiently developed infrastructure of the city for waste sorting and lack of education on this issue. It is interesting that in 2024, the percentage of surveyed respondents who already sorted garbage turned out to be higher than in 2021.

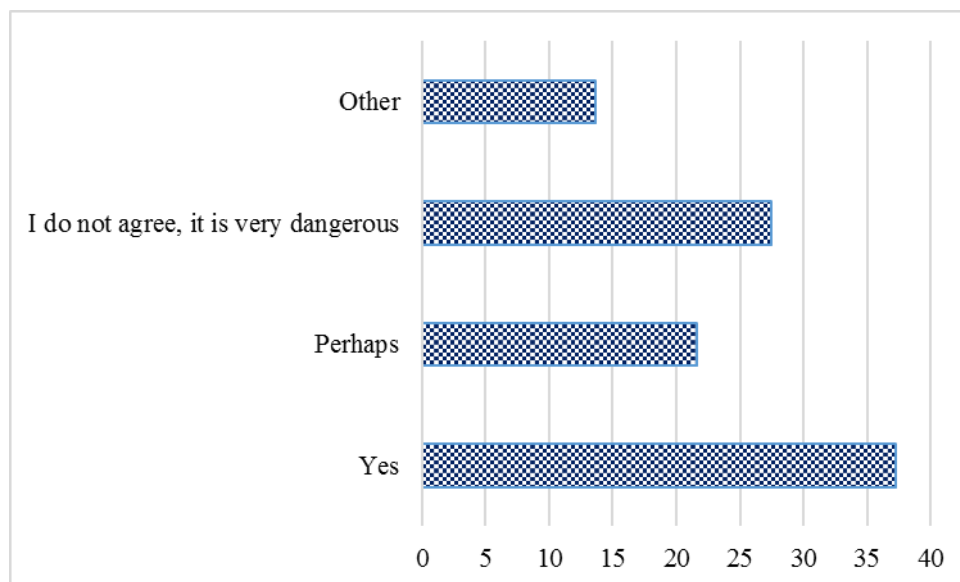
In connection with the need to rebuild the energy system of Ukraine, the need for energy conservation has intensified. The respondents' consideration of the energy efficiency factor when purchasing new electrical appliances in 2024 is presented in Figure 6.

The analysis of answers shows that 71.2% of respondents consider the energy efficiency factor when buying new electrical appliances.

In post-war times, changes are expected in the energy balance of Ukraine, perhaps most of it will be occupied by nuclear energy. The attitude of residents to nuclear energy is shown in Figure 7.



**Figure 6. Do you pay attention to the energy efficiency rating when buying new electrical appliances**



**Figure 7. Attitude of Kharkiv residents to atomic energy**

As can be seen from Figure 7.37% of respondents positively perceive such a vision of the development of the energy structure, 21.6% allow such a possibility, and 7.5% of respondents categorically oppose it, as it is dangerous for the population of Ukraine.

To transition to a circular economy model, values, norms, behavior patterns, skills, experience related to the culture of sustainable development, environmental preservation and resource reproduction must be formed in society. The orientation of the education system as a social institution contributes to solving these issues.



## Conclusion

Successful dissemination of these concepts requires efforts not only from the initiators, but also the active participation of the local community, business and government. Support for new forms of ecological and social entrepreneurship in Ukraine after the war can be done by:

- provision of financial support by the government through grants, subsidies or low-interest loans for enterprises working in the field of ecology and social development;

- legislative acts can stimulate the development of "green" and social entrepreneurship by providing tax benefits, encouraging investments in these areas and protecting the rights of entrepreneurs;

- entrepreneurs can receive support through educational programs, trainings and consultations on the creation and management of environmental and social enterprises;

- networks and platforms for sharing experiences and resources can contribute to the development of environmental and social entrepreneurship by helping businesses find partners, customers and investors;

- popularization of the concept of ecological and social entrepreneurship among the public and support of conscious consumption;

- the development of environmental infrastructure, such as waste treatment plants, solar power plants or water systems, can create new opportunities for social entrepreneurship.

The public sector responds to people's needs much faster than the state and business, so it can become a catalyst for the development of social and "green" entrepreneurship in Ukraine. Civil society organizations and social (green) entrepreneurship can play an important role in the reconstruction and development of cities after war, focusing on widespread social and environmental initiatives. To achieve these goals, public organizations can:

- cooperate with local authorities and international organizations to restore infrastructure and services in cities, in particular, water supply, electricity, waste systems;

- develop and implement "green" technologies and initiatives to improve the quality of the environment in cities, such as restoration of green areas, energy efficiency, renewable energy;

- to create opportunities for citizens to participate in the process of restoration and development of cities, organizing public discussions, developing feedback mechanisms and ensuring transparency of the activities of local authorities;

- create jobs for people from vulnerable population groups, such as veterans, disabled people, people with a low level of education;

- promote the development of local social enterprises that produce goods and services for the local market, contributing to economic growth and reducing unemployment.

Thus, the development of social entrepreneurship and circular economy in the Kharkiv urban community should become an important factor in the post-war recovery of Ukraine, contributing not only to economic growth, but also to the strengthening of social capital and stability in the country.

## Conflict of interest

The authors state no conflict of interest.

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