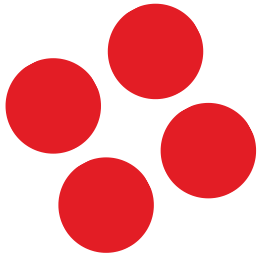
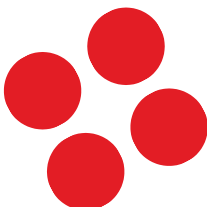


RÊVECA 

RETURNING
VETERANS
CARE 



INTERNATIONAL
INITIATIVE SPEARHEADED
BY CZECH POPPIES ORG.

PROGRAM FOR THE REINTEGRATION SUPPORT OF UKRAINIAN VETERANS COMING TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

**THIS TRANSLATION IS BASED ON
THE CZECH VERSION OF REVECA
AND REFLECTS ISSUES SPECIFIC
TO THE CZECH ENVIRONMENT.**



**WE ENCOURAGE PARTNERS AND
EXPERTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES
TO SHARE THEIR OWN NATIONAL
PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES,
AND SOLUTIONS RELATED TO
VETERANS' REINTEGRATION. THE
REVECA FRAMEWORK IS
DESIGNED TO EVOLVE THROUGH
SUCH INTERNATIONAL
EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE AND
KNOWLEDGE.**





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WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT RETURNING VETERANS?



War does not wait until it ends to produce veterans — it creates them right now, every single day. Every wounded, traumatized, or discharged soldier is a veteran. From the first day of full scale invasion, Ukraine is directing the vast majority of its capacity and funding to the front lines, while care for veterans is not prioritized.

As a result, these veterans are starting to seek help in EU countries, including the Czech Republic. So far, dozens confirmed and a few hundred unofficially have arrived — mostly to receive medical care and rehabilitation, or to reunite with family members living here since the beginning of the war. But this number will grow — due to medical discharge, new conscription rules, and eventually demobilization. A sudden influx of thousands of veterans is likely.

Veterans are not typical migrants. Although many of them held various civilian jobs here before the war, they now carry combat experience. Without a prepared system and adequate capacity, their successful reintegration is at risk.

REVECA is not a reaction to a crisis — it is a forward-looking system for early identification, monitoring, and reintegration of veterans — not by creating new institutions, but by leveraging what we already have: the experience of the public and nonprofit sectors, the capacity of community centers, and insights from working with Czech veterans.

REVECA also aims to encourage Ukraine to develop its own veteran care system — to which we can contribute methodologically and through direct support of Czech charitable projects in Ukraine. We are also building partnerships with other countries and their veteran and integration organizations.

We are not asking the state to create yet another strategy. We are asking it to support the collaboration and education of those who are already helping. The time to act is now.

WHO LEADS THE PROGRAM

- The Czech Poppies Org. (cz: SPOLEK VLČÍ MÁKY) is an independent charitable organization that has been helping contemporary veterans, their families, and survivors since 2014.
- Providing social, legal, and psychological support.
- Financing rehabilitation, barrier-free home modifications, and reintegration into civilian life — including further education and help with launching small businesses.
- Public awareness — organizing talks and exhibitions, producing podcasts, and publishing articles.
- Supporting the integration of Afghan interpreters' families evacuated in 2021 with the Czech military — from counseling and language courses to sewing classes for women, children's education and university scholarships.
- Employing disadvantaged veterans and the wives of Afghan interpreters in our EasyShorts sewing workshop, where they produce adapted underwear for people with disabilities.
- Delivering food aid to disabled and socially disadvantaged clients through the Rozvozenky project.
- Connecting and supporting humanitarian organizations helping Ukraine through the Project Hemingway initiative, including visits to rehabilitation centers directly in Ukraine.

We are independent, apolitical, and our work is mostly volunteer-based.



12 Years of Experience with Czech Veterans

- Hands-on experience with direct community support
- Firsthand knowledge of conditions in Ukraine
- Cooperation with charities supporting Ukraine
- We bring innovative transcultural solutions

WHO THE PROGRAM TARGETS

REVECA focuses on two groups of individuals with war experience in Ukraine:

- Ukrainian veterans arriving in the Czech Republic
- Czech volunteers who joined the Ukrainian Armed Forces

1. Ukrainian Veterans

We distinguish two subgroups:

- Veterans with pre-war experience of living and working in the Czech Republic — speak Czech, with knowledge of local culture and law.
- Veterans arriving to join family — their relatives fled to the Czech Republic after 2022. These veterans have no knowledge of the Czech language or local environment.

Some arrive with disabilities, both physical and psychological — PTSD, sleep disorders, chronic pain, or substance dependence. Any of these can impair their ability to work, which further affects their financial stability and ability to reintegrate into society.

2. Czech Volunteers

Czech citizens who participated in Ukraine face similar consequences. REVECA holds the position that these individuals are also Ukrainian veterans. Ukraine bears the same moral responsibility for them and owes them the same obligations (including compensation) as it does to its own citizens. From the Czech law perspective, most of these volunteers joined the Ukrainian army illegally (without the presidential approval). Regardless, they are encouraged to join REVECA.



Veteran definition within REVECA

The key factor is how the individual sees themselves — whether they identify as a veteran, not what their official status is. The legal definition of a war veteran in the Czech Republic is narrow, and Ukraine's is evolving similarly.

For effective reintegration, we favor the British model, where anyone who has served, regardless of length or combat deployment, is considered a veteran.

From our work with Czech soldiers, we know that those who leave service often face the same physical and mental health issues as those who served in combat. They share the same values, mindset, and service background.

Access to support through REVECA must be based on individual personal need, not official definitions.

FOUR PRINCIPLES OF REVECA

The REVECA program has several unique features that set it apart from standard integration projects. It responds to a new pan-European phenomenon and links national solutions with international cooperation. It offers a systemic approach that strengthens domestic structures, activates the nonprofit sector, and creates added value — not only for Ukrainian veterans but also for Czech veterans and society as a whole.

1

Sharing Experience and Methodologies at National and International Levels

REVECA seeks to connect governmental and nonprofit actors both nationally and internationally. It proactively builds partnerships with organizations in the countries mostly affected by Ukrainian diaspora. We also want to serve as a bridge for aid from American and British veterans organizations and foundations.

2

Preventing Social Consequences and Strengthening Systemic Support

REVECA is a tool that:

- ✓ Reduces the risk of crime, substance abuse, homelessness, and exploitation.
- ✓ Uses existing infrastructure and instead of creating new ones.
- ✓ Expands the competencies of officials and nonprofit organizations working with other target groups to include veteran-specific issues.

3

An Opportunity to Improve Conditions for Czech Veterans

Any new services for Ukrainian veterans must first be available to Czech veterans. The REVECA program increases pressure for the development of systemic care for Czech veterans. By working with Ukrainian veterans, we raise awareness of our own veterans' situation, including public recognition of their service.

4

Transforming the Focus of Czech NGOs Supporting Ukraine

Many Czech charities and initiatives have so far focused on delivering equipment, medical supplies, or technology directly to Ukraine. REVECA offers an opportunity to redirect their energy, knowledge of Ukraine, and fundraising experience to a new mission — supporting Ukrainian veterans.



TEN PILLARS OF THE PROGRAM

**1. IDENTIFICATION
AND OUTREACH
TO VETERANS**

**2. HEALTH
SCREENING**

**3. SCREENING AND
TREATMENT OF
ADDICTIONS**

**4. FINANCIAL
STABILITY**

**7. REINTEGRATION
INTO FAMILY LIFE**

**5. EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES**

**8. COMPREHENSIVE
MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT**

**6. SUPPORT IN EXERCISING
LEGAL RIGHTS**

**9. REHABILITATION
AND HOME CARE**

**10. CULTURAL
INTEGRATION**

1. IDENTIFICATION AND OUTREACH TO VETERANS

- Authorities and NGOs must be willing and able to recognize that they are dealing with a veteran. This enables them to listen effectively and recommend appropriate services.
- The Ministry of the Interior (MV) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MPSV) should be able to at least record in their databases, for statistical purposes, that the individual is a veteran.
- **As part of REVECA:**
 - Training staff in immigration, social, and health service centers to communicate with veterans and identify their needs.
 - Participation in the development of informational materials and intake questionnaires.

For Czech veterans: When assisting Czech veterans, we constantly encounter institutional failures to communicate respectfully and build trust. Large-scale training for frontline personnel is a key opportunity to improve this.



2. HEALTH SCREENING

- Up to 60% of Ukrainian veterans may suffer from PTSD or other nonspecific mental health disorders.
- They may also suffer from “trench diseases” (tuberculosis, hepatitis, intestinal infections, skin conditions, etc.). Neglected prevention of lifestyle-related diseases must also be taken into account.
- Basic screening can occur during registration, or based on positive responses to intake questionnaires, the veteran can be referred to medical specialists.
- Community organizations can assist with self-screening (blood pressure, blood sugar, hearing, vision, etc.).

For Czech veterans: Czech veterans are entitled to a “Health Support Program” provided in military hospitals and funded by the Ministry of Defense. However, this program needs greater capacity (shorter wait times), better promotion, and improved communication — even within Ministry-operated facilities, staff often fail to recognize veterans’ specific needs.



3. SCREENING AND TREATMENT OF ADDICTIONS

- Combat experience and injury treatment often lead to veterans' exposure to addictive substances.
- PTSD, depression, and adjustment disorders often lead to self-medication through alcohol or drugs.
- Veterans need access to addiction treatment services, including counseling and peer support groups in community centers and low-threshold programs.
- **As part of REVECA:**
 - Educating general practitioners, addiction counselors, and pharmacists on hidden addictions among veterans.
 - Connecting healthcare providers with nonprofit organizations.

For Czech veterans: Czech veterans also struggle with substance abuse (especially hidden alcoholism). Simply addressing the issue publicly can trigger positive self-reflection. They also lack access to anonymous addiction and mental health services.



4. FINANCIAL STABILITY

- Veterans often struggle to return to their original civilian professions or they suffer reduced employability due to injury. Their families may be accustomed to military salaries (steady income).
- At the same time, they lack financial literacy, consumer rights, and employee protections — putting them at risk of debt traps.
- **As part of REVECA:**
 - Engaging debt counseling services and training their staff to address veteran-specific issues.
 - Creating financial literacy campaigns targeting veteran families.
 - Motivating and supporting community centers and charities to offer emergency or bridge assistance programs similar to Army Help Program by Czech Poppies Org.

For Czech veterans: Czech veterans also fall into debt spirals. For those still in service, this often results in the loss of security clearance. Financial education and counseling must also be made available to them — including easier access to debt relief.



5. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Financial stability, personal fulfillment, and mental well-being all require that veterans engage with the legal labor market.
- This requires access to Czech language courses — including job-specific language — through organizations that expanded such services after February 2022 (major influx of Ukrainian refugees).
- **As part of REVECA:**
 - Partnering with companies and training HR professionals.
 - Methodological support for companies seeking to employ veterans.
 - Supporting social enterprises and projects as a tool to integrate disabled veterans.
 - Helping veterans write résumés and prepare for job interviews (as done in the Army Job program by Czech Poppies Org.).

For Czech veterans: All of the above services benefit Czech veterans directly.



6. SUPPORT IN EXERCISING LEGAL RIGHTS

- Veterans may face difficulties claiming their allowances from the Ukrainian state — such as applications for disability pensions, injury compensations, or reimbursement for assistive devices.
- **As part of REVECA:**
 - Connecting Ukrainian lawyers with community centers.
 - Creating informational campaigns about legal entitlements.
 - Training civil and legal advisors on the specific legal claims of Ukrainian veterans.

For Czech veterans: Czech veterans face obstructions when seeking compensation for injuries from the Ministry of Defense. Under the Act on Professional Soldiers, veterans are not allowed to take their cases to court, which is the standard procedure for all other citizens. Instead, the Ministry itself decides on veterans' claims. Due to this conflict of interest, veterans avoid seeking help from services established by the Ministry. Furthermore, there is no charitable fund available to cover legal costs.



7. REINTEGRATION INTO FAMILY LIFE

- Families face alienation, shifting roles, and shared trauma — which all can lead to domestic violence, the isolation of the veterans-spouse, alcoholism, or suicidal tendencies.
- **As part of REVECA:**
 - Training personnel in family-related institutions (child protection services, schools, counseling centers, helplines, etc.) to identify risky behavior in veterans and offer support.
 - Cooperation with the Ministry of Education (especially with school prevention specialists).
 - Participation in awareness campaigns for Ukrainian families in the Czech Republic (web, videos, brochures) — informing them about family protection in the Czech legal system (e.g., restraining orders) and available support services.
 - Awareness around violence against men — Ukrainian veterans themselves may also be victims of (domestic) violence and abuse.

For Czech veterans: Training school staff can improve conditions for veterans' children.



8. COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- Veterans may suffer from PTSD and other unspecified psychological disorders (depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, etc.). Their spouses and children may also be affected.
- We must consider Ukrainian veterans' mistrust toward psychiatry due to its abuse in the former Soviet Union.
- **As part of REVECA:**
 - Training staff in mental health centers and psychologists in veteran-related issues.
 - Supporting peer group programs for veterans at community centers (including peer-to-peer mentoring).
 - Public awareness campaigns to destigmatize mental health — such as “Invisible Wounds” by Czech Poppies Org.

For Czech veterans: The Ministry of Defense has long downplayed the mental health of Czech veterans. The arrival of Ukrainian veterans will bring more visibility to this issue. Training for psychologists and mental health issue de-stigmatization will benefit Czech veterans.



9. REHABILITATION AND HOME CARE

- As of 2024, Ukraine had an estimated 200,000 veterans with amputations — meaning a substantial number of severely physically disabled individuals may join families in the Czech Republic.
- **As part of REVECA:**
 - Coordinating training programs for family caregivers, where veterans' wives learn rehabilitation and caregiving skills — which they can also apply to other clients.
 - Facilitating self-managed rehabilitation therapy.
 - Supporting networks of organizations working with physically disabled people for the benefit of veterans.
 - Cooperating with spa towns, sanatoriums, and rehabilitation institutes.
 - Involving companies and universities in the development of prosthetics.

For Czech veterans: Rehabilitation — both in-home and residential — must be strengthened. Current capacity and Ministry of Defense willingness to support veterans with permanent service-related injuries remain inadequate.



10. CULTURAL INTEGRATION

- Ukrainian veterans come from a cultural background that diverges from European norms in certain respects (e.g., nationalism, corruption, misogyny) and are further shaped by combat experience and a generally militarized lifestyle.
- **As part of REVECA:**
 - Supporting education focused on the values of a lawful democratic society, transparency, equality, and civic responsibility.
 - Training partner organizations on how to respond to inappropriate attitudes from veterans — respectfully but firmly.

For Czech veterans: We also encounter extremist attitudes among some Czech veterans — unfortunately tolerated or even encouraged by certain military officials. This includes topics like the rules of war. These subjects must be addressed clearly and publicly — for both Czech and Ukrainian veterans, as well as for the general public.

INCEPTION - SWOT ANALYSIS

Czech Poppies Organization has been preparing the REVECA program since 2023, when it began offering consultations to Czech-Ukrainian charitable organizations. In early 2024, members of the organization visited Ukrainian sanatoriums and frontline soldiers. Based on these experiences, they continued supporting Czech-led reintegration projects for veterans directly in Ukraine. In spring 2025, the organization invited government officials and NGOs to a working meeting at the Vaclav Havel Library. In the following months, it held individual consultations with these stakeholders and conducted an analysis that resulted in this document.

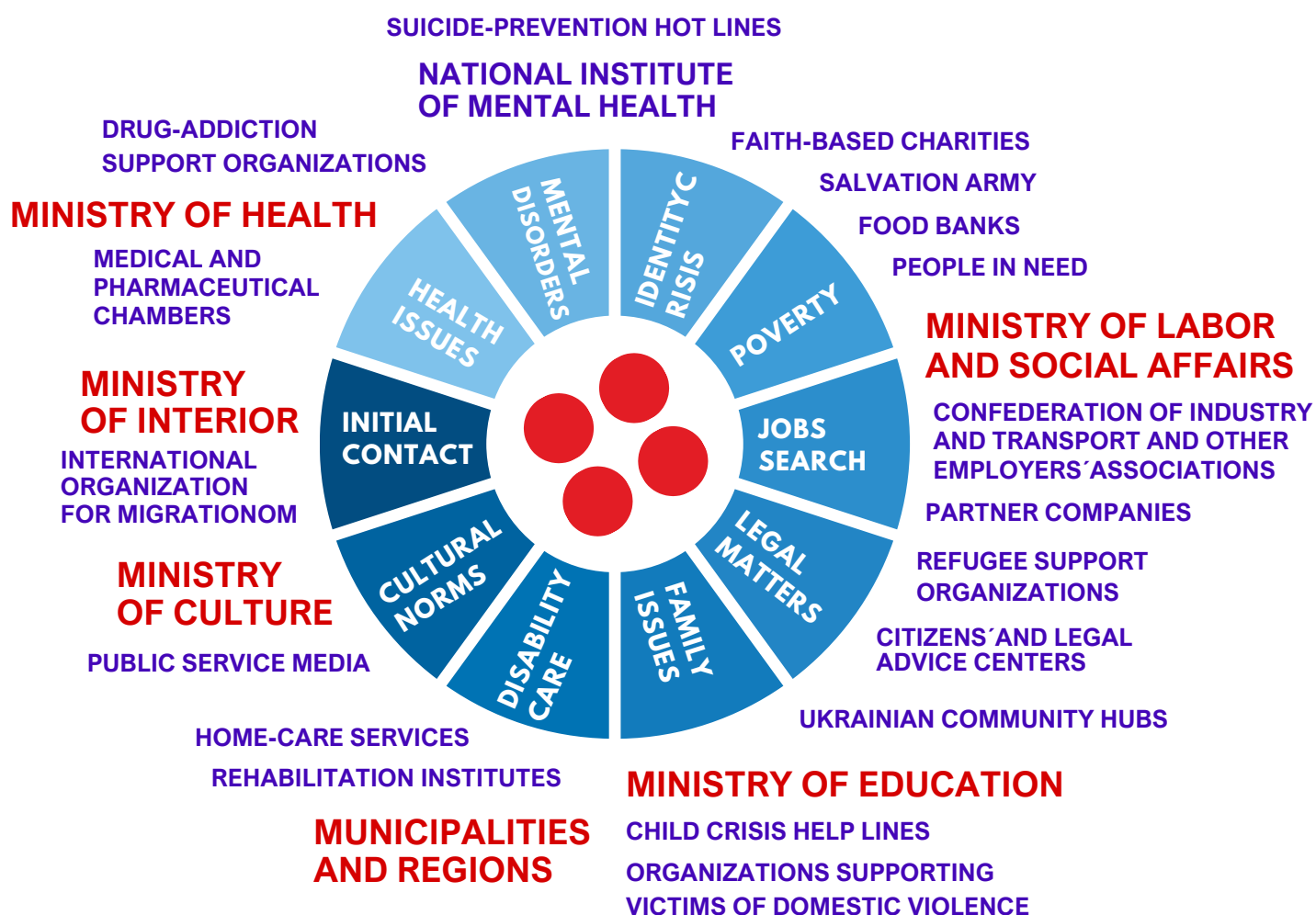
Although responsible institutions have yet to publish any official strategy — and are still seeking political endorsement and funding — REVECA already defines the key areas, methods, and goals necessary to address Ukrainian veteran integration in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary manner. It also promises positive impacts for Czech veterans.





COOPERATION WITHIN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

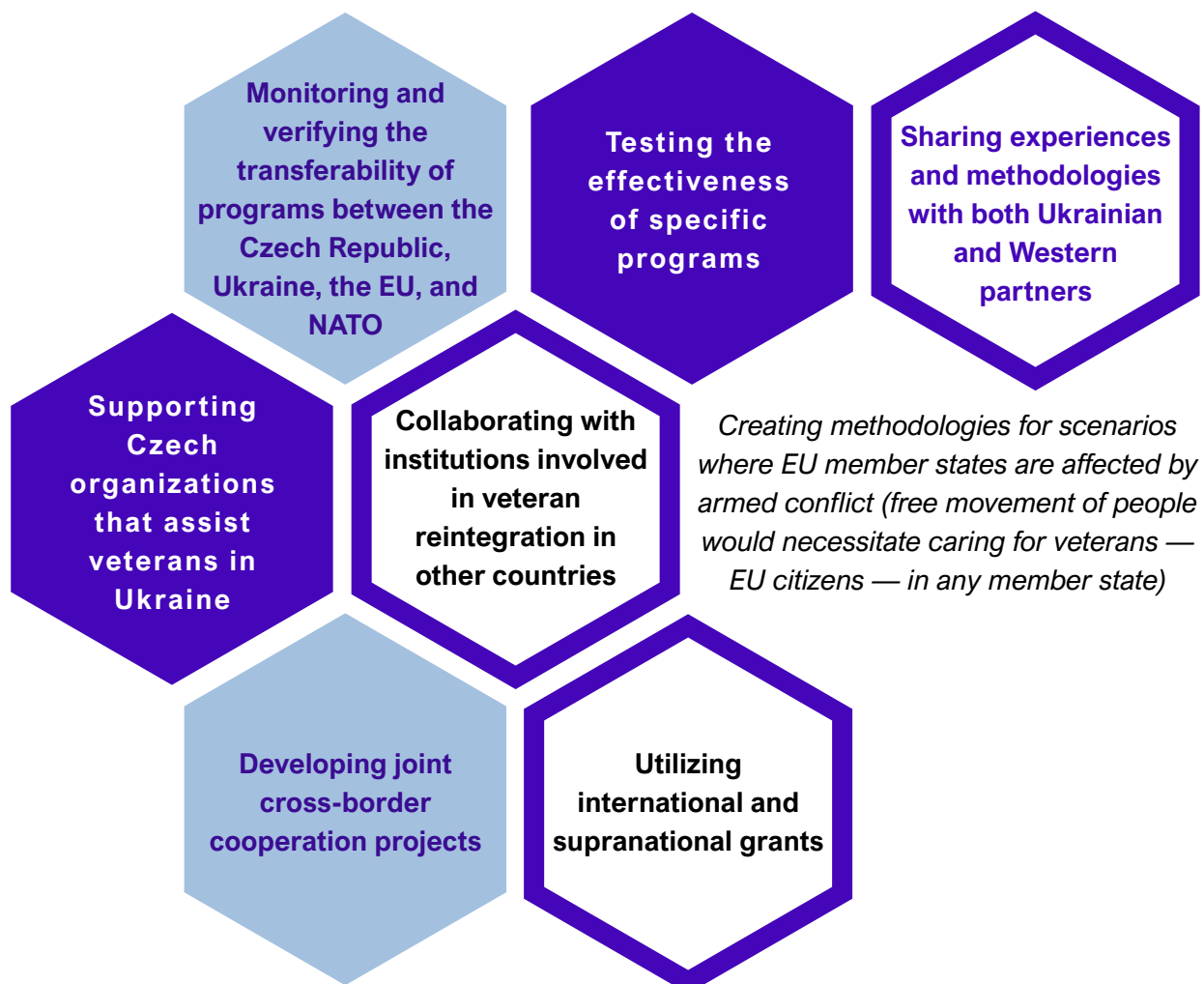
REVECA is based on leveraging existing structures, redirecting their capacity, and strengthening their competencies to support veterans. The diagram outlines key stakeholders and is not exhaustive.





INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

REVECA promotes the direct relationship between veterans' access to care in Ukraine and their decision to seek assistance in EU countries. It is necessary to think transnationally — to support Czech projects operating in Ukraine, to engage in joint European programs, and to offer our geographic and cultural proximity in support of overseas initiatives — establishing a “Czech bridge” to Ukraine.



NEXT STEPS

In practical terms, Czech Poppies Organization is already implementing REVECA — by adapting transferable aspects into its existing programs and providing consulting support to charities working with Ukraine. As a bare minimum, the operations of Regional Assistance Centers for Helping Ukraine and community centers must be preserved, urgently trained, and organizationally prepared for social work with veterans.

1. Connecting and Training Stakeholders

Building a network of cooperating organizations.
Providing professional training for nonprofit and public sector personnel — including social service workers, community center staff, healthcare professionals, and legal experts.
We are working toward organizing a thematic conference.

2. Pilot Testing of Methodology

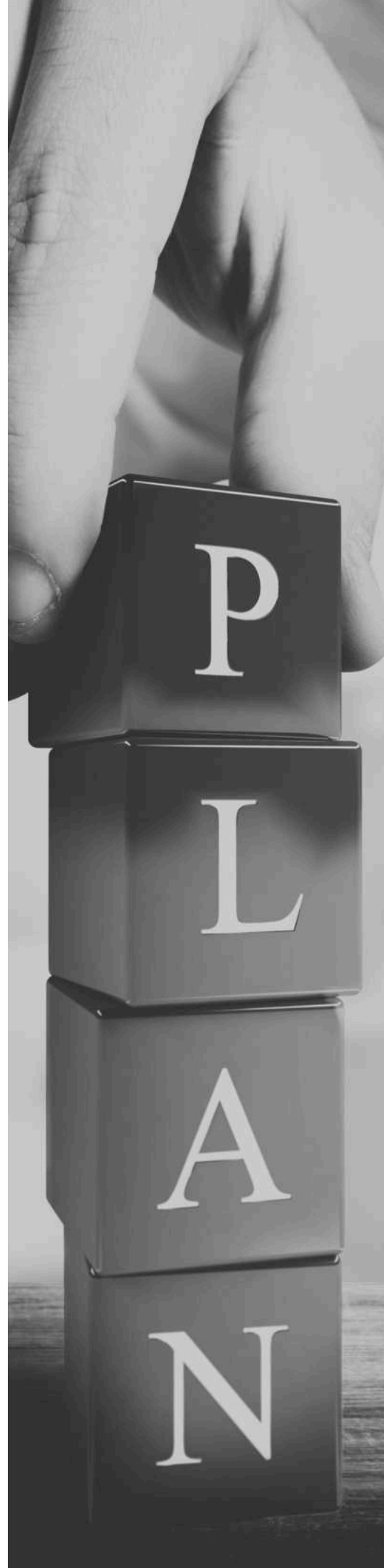
Testing specific procedures and tools for working with veterans.
These are being applied in practice through community centers and humanitarian organizations, with our methodological support.
We are seeking grant support for pilot projects.

3. Sharing Experience and Scaling Best Practices

The results of pilot activities are shared with organizations, regions, and international partners.
We refine a unified methodology that will enable the safe and effective reintegration of veterans into society. Developing a national level tool for program coordination and funding.

4. System Integration and Long-Term Sustainability

Embedding proven tools into the Czech social, health, and integration systems.
All levels of public administration and local government, the nonprofit sector, and international donors must be involved to ensure the long-term stability of the program.



CONCLUSION

Czech Poppies Organization presents REVECA as an independent actor that has delivered bold, innovative solutions in the Czech Republic for 12 years — not only for Czech veterans but also for immigrants (e.g., Afghan interpreters for the Czech Army), as well as through the side initiative Project Hemingway.

No other organization in the Czech Republic offers this unique and much-needed mix of experience. We are the ones with a hands-on approach.

In the interest of Czech society — and its own veterans — we now offer our expertise, know-how, and the commitment of our team to ensure timely preparedness and successful reintegration of Ukrainian veterans.

We specifically offer:

- Project coordination
- Analysis and “best practices” recommendations
- Methodology development and training
- Sharing of experience and case studies
- Development of current model case studies
- Bridging stakeholders across sectors

To ensure REVECA functions effectively the state should:

- Acknowledge the specific needs of Ukrainian veterans as a distinct target group
- Establish an inter-ministerial framework (especially involving the Interior, Health, Social Affairs, and Foreign Ministries)
- Enable service funding via grants and dedicated funds
- Integrate REVECA into the national immigration strategy and other relevant policies

Only a joint effort by the public, nonprofit, and international sectors prevents undesirable social outcomes while strengthening societal resilience and security.



Ukrainian veterans are already returning to their families — and a mass demobilization is a matter of time.

Let's be ready. REVECA is not about providing benefits — it is about preventing future problems that could negatively affect society as a whole.

What we create for Ukrainian veterans will help Czech veterans — and prepare us for the future.

CONTACT

www.czechpoppies.org

SPOLEK VLČÍ MÁKY 

Miroslava Paskova
president
podpora@spolekvlcimaky.cz
+420 606 417 628