

SkillLab

Turning skills into careers



Unlocking Veteran Potential

The Power of User-Validated Skill Data in Ukraine

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Executive summary

This white paper is the second in a three-part series exploring the critical role of user-validated skill data in addressing labor market challenges and opportunities in Ukraine. SkillLab collected and analyzed 8,500 user profiles, encompassing 645,000 skills and 30,000 experiences, generated in the Supporting the People and Employers of Ukraine project. The first white paper focused on recognizing skills from informal experiences in ensuring that everyone has a pathway to employment. The second paper focuses on the importance of reintegrating veterans into the civilian workforce to support the rebuilding of a resilient and thriving Ukraine.

Ukraine's labor market faces unprecedented challenges amid the ongoing Russian invasion. The country grapples with high unemployment, critical skills shortages and the mobilization of employees for defense efforts. Simultaneously, the emigration of qualified specialists and regional economic imbalances further complicate the landscape. Despite these hurdles, Ukraine urgently needs to expand its workforce to support national reconstruction efforts.

In the context of Ukraine's ongoing challenges, supporting veterans' reintegration into the civilian workforce is a critical priority, but the transition from military to civilian employment presents unique challenges and opportunities for veterans. User-validated skill data promises to support the recognition of military-acquired skills, address skill gaps and leverage transferable skills to create effective pathways for veteran employment.

During the first 9 months of SkillLab's collaboration with the State Employment Service of Ukraine, SkillLab has collected data from 8,500 skill profiles, encompassing 645,000 skills and 30,000 experiences. Based on this data, we analyze how a skills-first approach can help bridge crucial gaps in the workforce and support the country's resilience and growth.

The data and insights presented in this white paper were generated from the **Supporting the People and Employers of Ukraine** (“SPEU”) project. This initiative is being implemented by SkillLab with the support of the Norwegian Refugee Council and the World Bank, in close collaboration with key Ukrainian government entities including the State Employment Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Digital Transformation.

This collaborative effort aims to deliver a skill profiling and career guidance solution to connect people in need with jobs and education opportunities. By providing a digital and

remote option for the provision of employment services, SkillLab has created a data collection mechanism that allows people, employers and education providers to collect user-validated skill data. At the same time, the project enhances people's independence and access to remote, accessible services - a critical need in the current Ukrainian context.

SkillLab leveraged the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) taxonomy, a comprehensive skill classification system developed by the European Union. The ESCO taxonomy was translated into Ukrainian through the collaborative efforts of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the European Training Foundation. This localization of ESCO enabled the project to capture and analyze skill data in a standardized format that is both internationally recognized and tailored to the Ukrainian context.

As Ukraine continues to defend its sovereignty and plan for post-war recovery, the timely application of these insights is crucial. This skills-first approach offers a pathway to not only address immediate labor market challenges but also to build a more resilient, adaptable and competitive workforce for Ukraine's future. By leveraging user-validated skill data, Ukraine can more effectively mobilize its human capital, driving economic recovery and laying the foundation for sustainable growth in the face of ongoing adversity.

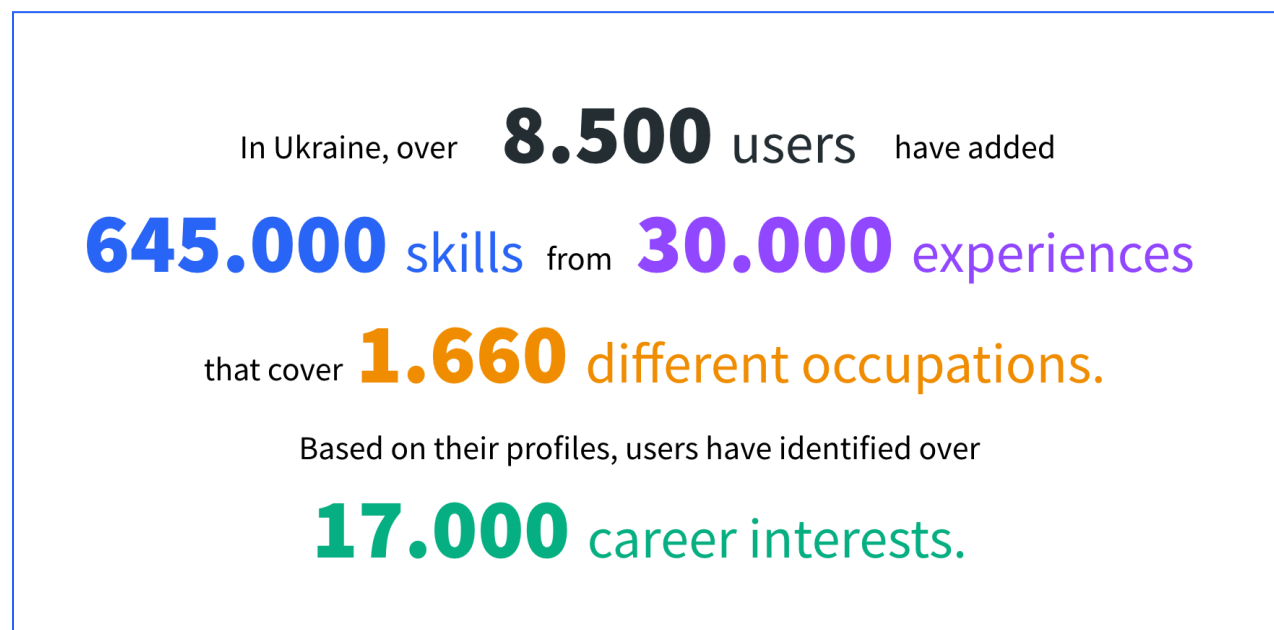


Figure 1 Overview of user-validated skill data¹

¹ All data from SkillLab database, as of September, 2024

The analysis of profiles with military experience provides valuable insights into the skills, career matches and interests of veterans in Ukraine. This data offers a glimpse into the potential career paths and skill sets of veterans transitioning to civilian roles.



Veterans, or users with experiences in the military sector, possess a substantial skills portfolio, having documented thousands of unique skills associated with their military service. The occupations commonly linked to this experience, such as armed forces officer, artillery officer, infantry soldier and army corporal, indicate a diverse range of military specializations. Importantly, the skills reported represent a mix of military-specific competencies and abilities that are transferable to civilian employment, suggesting a broad applicability to various non-military occupations.



Career Matches

Career matches represent specific non-military occupations where a veteran's user-validated skill profile, documented through the platform, significantly overlaps with the skill requirements of the role. Essentially, a career match suggests a potential vocational fit based on a comparison between the individual's abilities and the demands of an occupation, leveraging the standardized ESCO taxonomy.

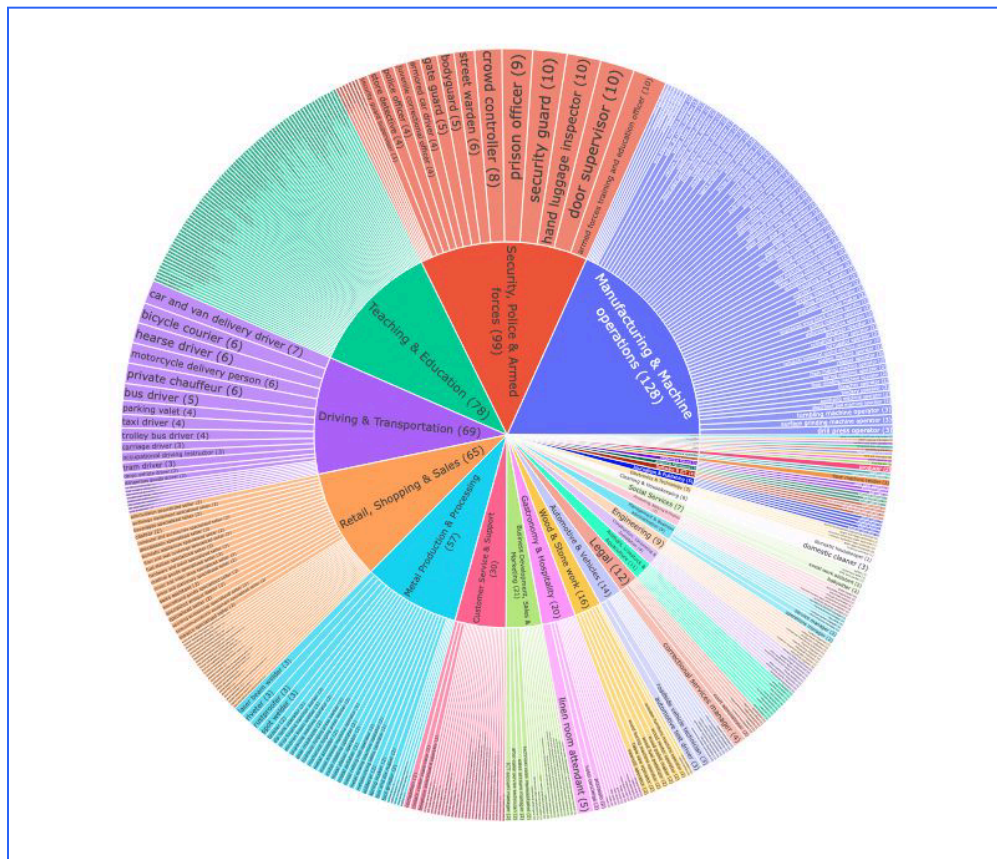


Figure 4 Distribution of the matching occupations by career field

A key finding is the high degree of skill transferability from military service to civilian sectors. Figure 4 illustrates this, showing that a significant majority (74%) of the analyzed veteran profiles matched with potential occupations outside the traditional military sphere.

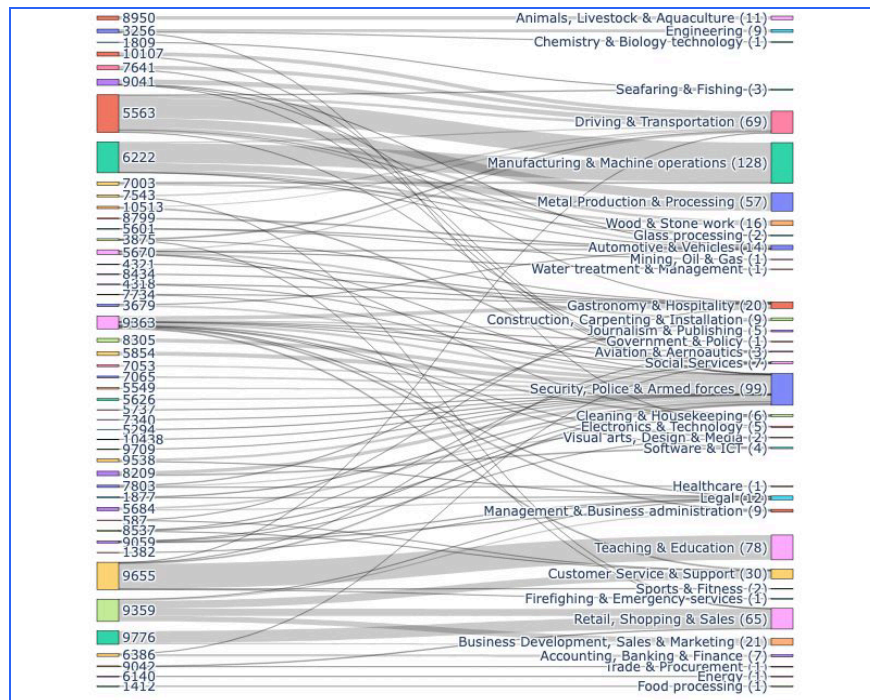


Figure 5 Career matches for users with military experience (excluding military occupations)

Figure 5 further details these connections, revealing strong alignment with fields such as "Manufacturing & Machine Operations", "Driving & Transportation" and non-military roles within "Security, Police & Armed Forces".

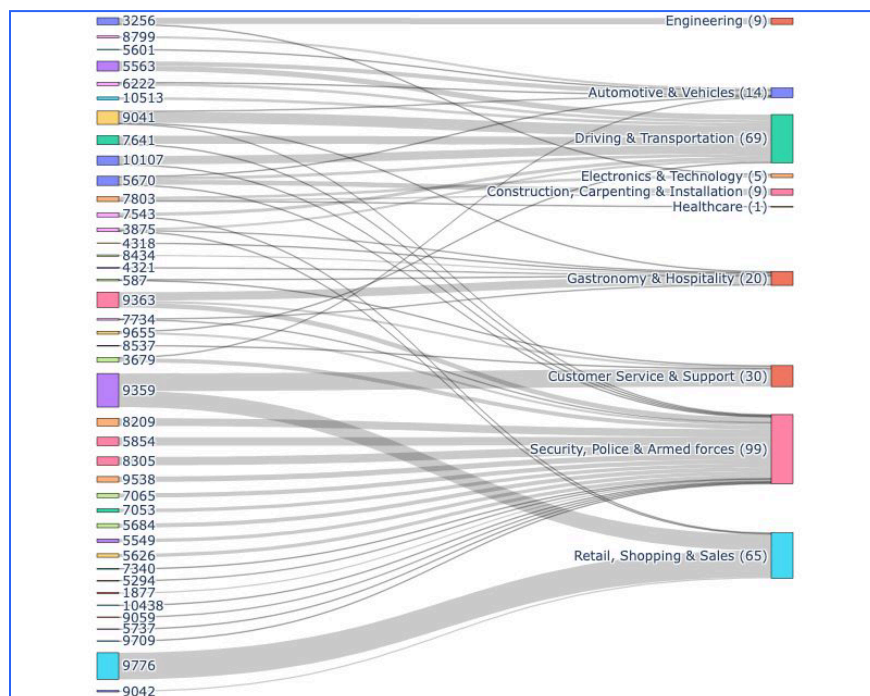


Figure 6 Matches to in-demand careers for profiles with military experience (excluding military occupations)

Crucially, the data demonstrates that these skills are relevant to current labor market needs; Figure 6 confirms that 63% of veteran profiles matched with at least one non-military career classified as "in-demand". This highlights the potential for veterans to fill critical workforce gaps, particularly in transportation and various security-related fields.

Career Interests

The career interests expressed by veterans further reinforce their readiness for diverse civilian roles. Figure 7 presents a word cloud visualizing the wide array of specific occupations veterans are interested in, ranging from driving and logistics roles (e.g., 'moving truck driver', 'cargo vehicle driver') to security ('gate guard') and beyond (e.g., 'human resources officer', 'paramedic').



Figure 7 Identified career interests for users with military experience

In total, users with military experience indicated career interests across 26 unique fields. Figure 8 maps these interests across career fields, showing that while "Driving & Transportation" and "Security, Police & Armed Forces" are prominent, aspirations span widely, including Healthcare, Firefighting & Emergency Services and Logistics. This broad spectrum of interest underscores the need for comprehensive career guidance that looks beyond traditionally assumed veteran transition pathways.

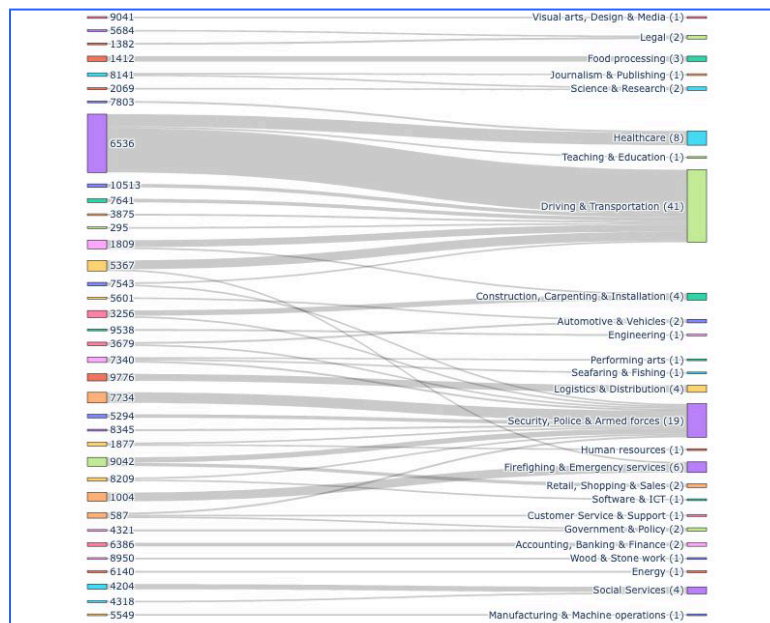


Figure 8 Identified career interests by users with military experience

The user-validated skill data from the Supporting the People and Employers of Ukraine project offers valuable insights for enhancing employment opportunities for veterans. These findings collectively point towards several strategic implications for veteran employment. The demonstrated skill transferability offers a strong foundation for transitioning veterans into civilian roles, especially in high-demand sectors like transportation and security. However, the diversity of veteran career interests suggests that support systems must be broad and adaptable. While many skills translate directly, targeted training programs may be necessary to bridge specific gaps for certain civilian occupations. Furthermore, educating civilian employers on the value and applicability of military-acquired skills will be essential for facilitating successful integration. Leveraging user-validated skill data in this manner allows for the creation of more effective pathways for veterans, benefiting both the individuals and the broader Ukrainian labor market.