

**Dual Intent as Policy Logic: Balancing
Return, Mobility, and Integration in
Response to Ukrainian Displacement**

What is Dual Intent?

Dual intent is a migration policy framework that allows displaced people to integrate in host countries (education, work, health) without losing the right or possibility to return voluntarily when conditions improve. (OECD, 2023)

Main principles of dual intent

- 1. Clear legal status (certainty)**
- 2. Job opportunities in Ukraine/host countries**
- 3. Cultural ties**
- 4. Qualification recognition**
- 5. Investment in skills**

Why Now – What’s Changed Since 2023

- 1. TPD expiration looms (2026) → Legal limbo approaching**
 - Return remains aspirational but unrealistic
 - 91% want to return, only 15% can plan to (MPI, IOM, 2024)
 - Ukraine still economically fragile, housing shortfall, 2.5M homes destroyed, infrastructure under attack
 - Results from the return project of Opora
- 2. Rising pressure in host countries**
- 3. Ukraine’s human capital needs**
- 4. Active work towards the EU Accession of Ukraine**

Implementation

How to turn brain drain into brain gain?

- 1. Creating opportunities for hybrid working**
- 2. Focusing on upskilling of Ukrainians in host countries (with simultaneous involvement in the recovery projects back home)**
- 3. Sector alignment and qualification alignment (mutual)**
- 4. Creating common labor framework, addressing tax regulations**
- 5. Invest in student hubs for recovery**
- 6. Create exchange programs per sector**
- 7. Invest in collaborative recovery projects**

How to Make It Work – Lessons from Practice

Several existing programs already implement dual intent principles, even if not labelled as such:

- 1. Empatia Program**
 - Psychosocial support + capacity building for Ukrainian psychologists in NL
 - 60+ integrated into Dutch system, 30,000+ refugees reached
 - “Invests in transnational professional capacity”
 - 2. Stichting Ondernemend Oekraïne: trains Ukrainian entrepreneurs**
 - 3. UNUN (Urban Network)**
 - Dutch & Ukrainian architects co-developing urban recovery plans
 - Uses displaced talent now, prepares them for future return
- These are powerful, but fragmented. “Programs exist, but they lack unified objectives, shared metrics, or sustained coordination.” (Tasori, 2025)

The Gap – Fragmentation & Lack of Coordination

- Despite promising examples:
 - Initiatives are scattered, short-term, underfunded
 - No shared legal framework, metrics, or communication structure
 - Result: Missed opportunities for scaling or replication
- “Without an overarching framework... these pioneering initiatives may remain isolated case studies rather than scalable solutions.” (Opora, 2025).

Implementation struggles (lessons from Empatia)

- **Policy initiatives alone are insufficient; clear and targeted programmes for upskilling and alignment with EU labour standards are needed.**
- **Robust infrastructure must be established for the recognition and validation of diplomas and professional qualifications.**
- **Tailored employment assistance should be provided, with a focus on vulnerable groups and displaced populations.**
- **Stronger collaboration with entrepreneurs and small businesses is essential to create sustainable and inclusive job opportunities.**

What Can be Done?

Dual intent implementation

- Build a coordination platform for stakeholders already working on dual intent principles
- Act as “real-time laboratory” for testing and scaling dual intent models
- “Skills Alliance can document and disseminate effective dual-intent schemes”

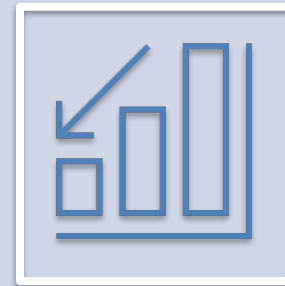
Three roles to play:

- Convene – bring together ministries, VET actors, NGOs, diaspora organizations
- Coordinate – reduce duplication, map priorities, define scalable models
- Capture – track outcomes, share best practices, align with Ukraine’s recovery goals

Final Message

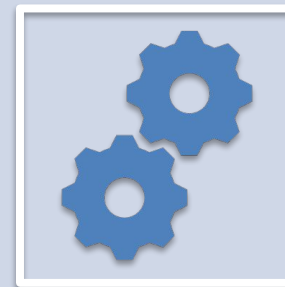


Dual intent is not theory. It's already happening.



But without structure, legal backing, or coordination, we risk:

Wasting investments
Losing human capital
Undermining recovery



By embedding dual intent into programmatic frameworks, we can move from crisis response to a durable migration governance model.