MNBC

RESEARCH

SECONDARY ANALYSIS

Ukrainians returning from abroad

Language, employment, housing, and families' plans

DATA: CES / INFO SAPIENS

SAMPLE: N = 1,173

DECEMBER 2025 – JANUARY 2026

Key findings in 30 seconds

Share of respondents who plan to return

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

27% рівень B2–C2

55% ≤ A1

EMPLOYMENT

34%

Employed locally or run their own business

54%

Did not report either

HOUSING

36%

A separate apartment or house

56%

Other living arrangements

FAMILY PLANS

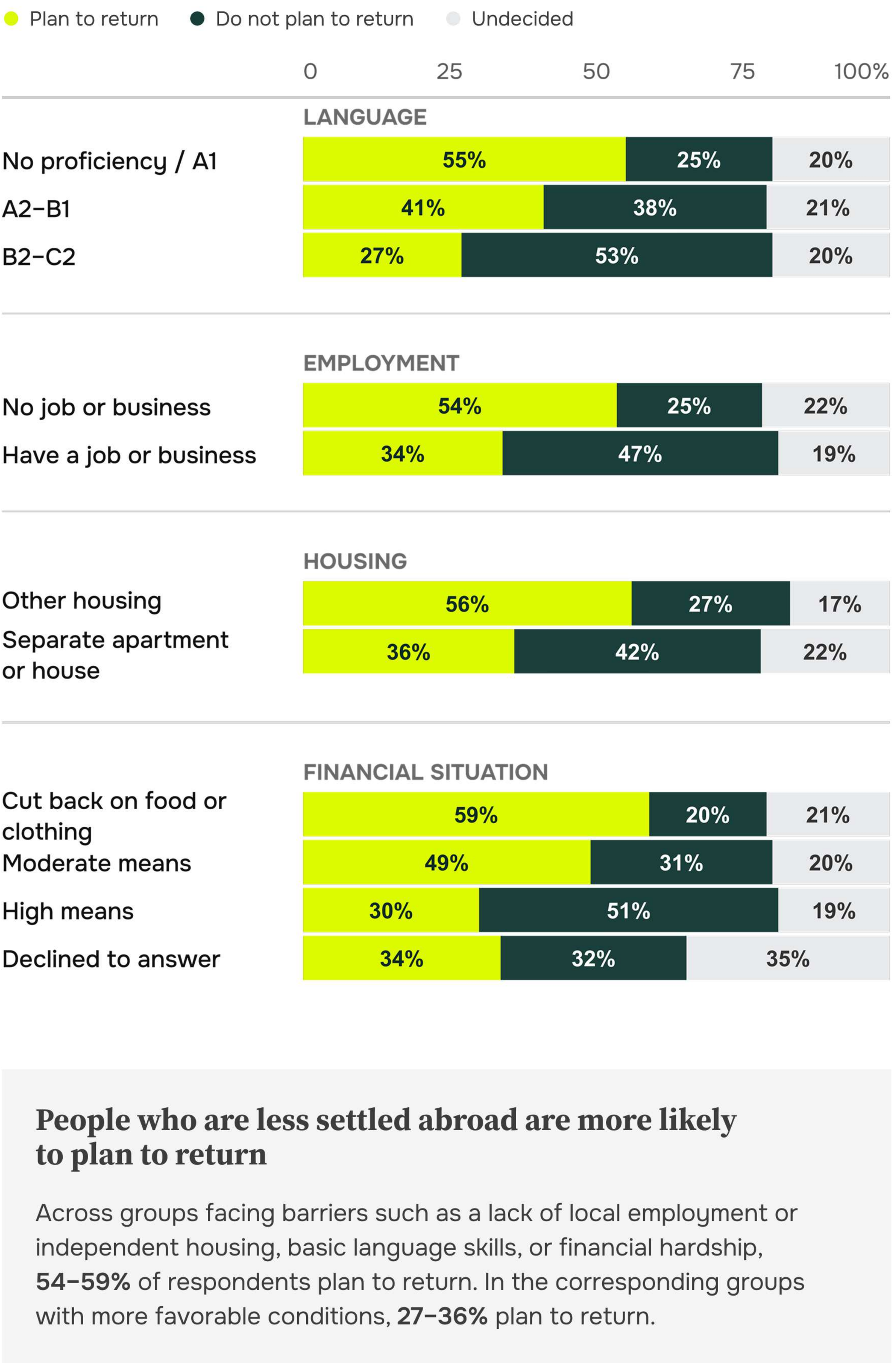
17%

of surveyed parents said their plans differed from what at least one of their children wanted. This additional finding is based on parents' reports and carries greater uncertainty.

- Higher language proficiency, local employment, and living in a separate home are associated with a lower likelihood of planning to return.

LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES

Living conditions abroad and plans to return

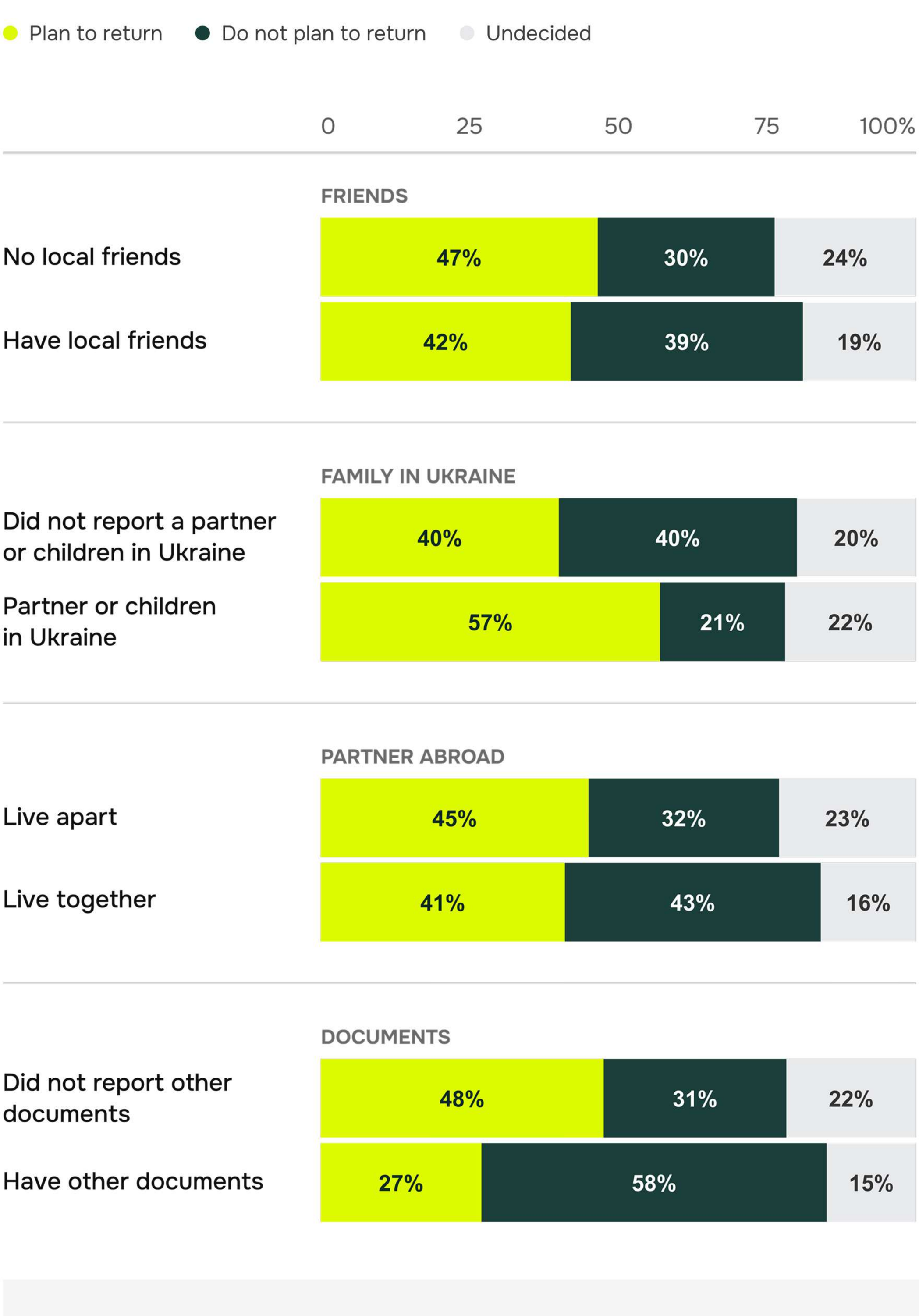


People who are less settled abroad are more likely to plan to return

Across groups facing barriers such as a lack of local employment or independent housing, basic language skills, or financial hardship, **54–59%** of respondents plan to return. In the corresponding groups with more favorable conditions, **27–36%** plan to return.

SOCIAL TIES

Family, documents, and plans to return

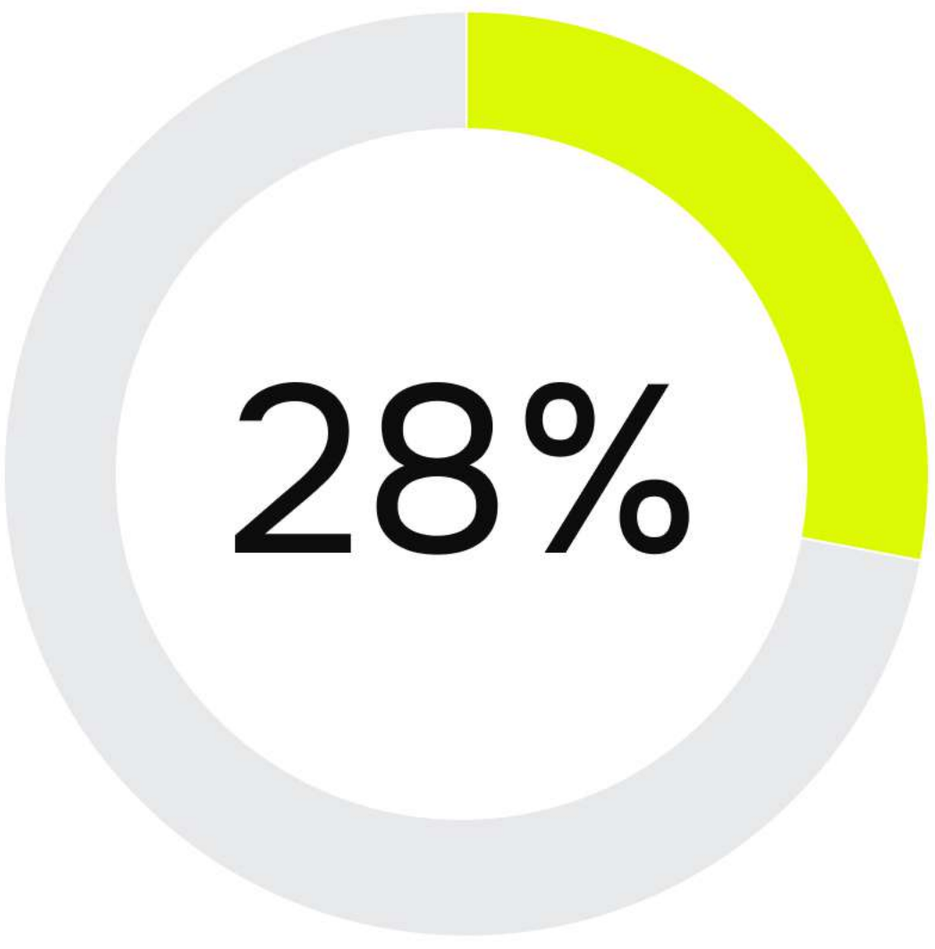


57% of respondents whose partner or children stayed in Ukraine plan to return.

FAMILY

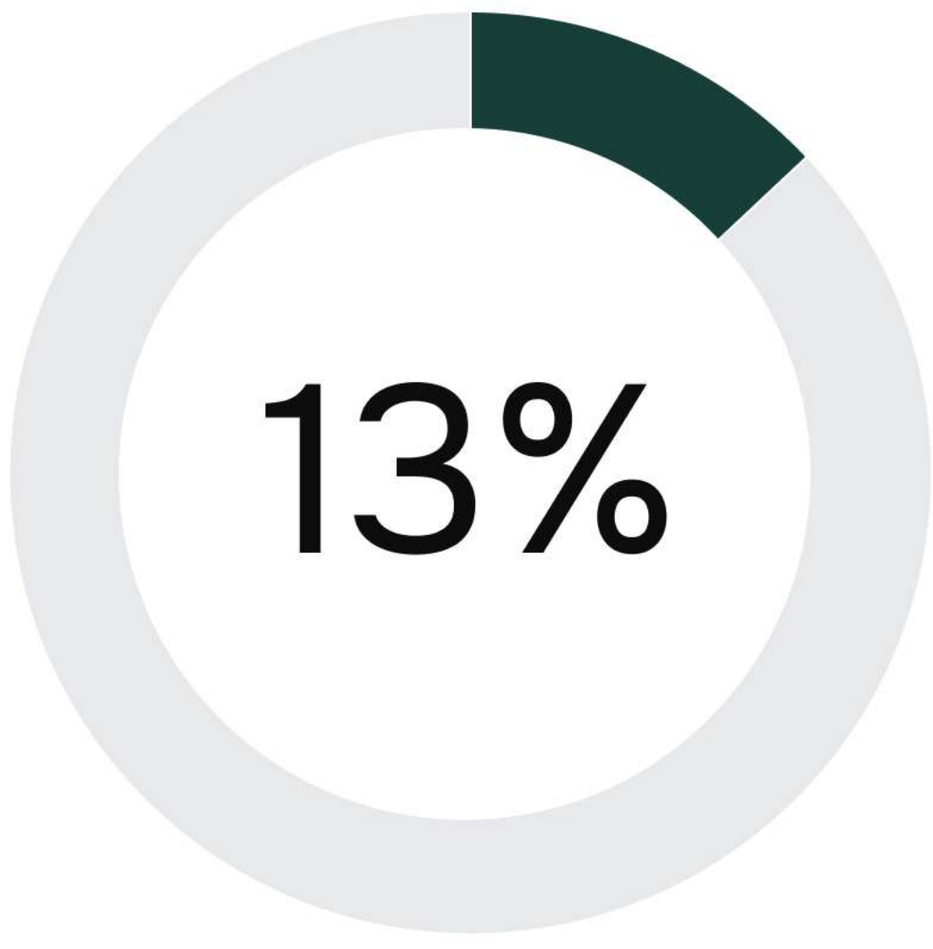
Return plans can differ within the same family

Children's preferences were reported by the adult respondent



The adult plans to return, but at least one child wants to stay abroad.

n = 176



The adult does not plan to return, but at least one child wants to return.

n = 189



The adult and at least one child have opposing preferences about returning.

n = 442

- In about one in six families, the adult and at least one child disagree on whether to return.

BARRIERS

Barriers to returning by return intention

	Plan to return	Do not plan to return	Undecided
War and safety concerns	54%	59%	66%
Occupation of home region	18%	13%	19%
Home or region close to the fighting	26%	19%	26%
Infrastructure problems	35%	45%	45%
Settled abroad	12%	44%	27%
Better jobs, higher income abroad	11%	30%	19%
Better quality of life abroad	12%	44%	29%
Better social support abroad	13%	30%	22%
Better prospects for children abroad	9%	38%	21%
Family or relatives abroad	15%	14%	21%
See no future in Ukraine	7%	48%	26%
Home damaged or destroyed	10%	8%	7%
Fear of not finding a good job	16%	29%	23%
Fear of being judged	6%	19%	12%
Limited Ukrainian language skills	3%	7%	4%
Lack of information about returning	8%	9%	15%
Military mobilization of men	18%	47%	20%

Safety is the main barrier

54–66% of respondents across the three groups cite the war and safety concerns, making this the most common barrier to returning.

35–45% cite infrastructure problems.

48% of those who do not plan to return say they see no future in Ukraine, compared with 7% of those who plan to return.

CONCLUSIONS

War and safety concerns are the main barrier to returning

SAFETY

54–66%

of respondents across the three groups cite war and safety concerns as a barrier to returning. The share is highest among undecided respondents (66%).

SETTLING IN ABROAD

27–36%

plan to return across groups with B2–C2 proficiency in the local language, a local job or business, or independent housing.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

17%

of surveyed parents say their plans about returning to Ukraine differ from what at least one of their children wants.