



IMPACT OF WAR ON THE EDUCATION IN UKRAINE

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ABSTRACT

The quality of education is one of the most important and key issues of state policy. It directly affects the dynamics of economic and social development of society, and well-being its citizens. Education is closely related to other social institutions of society and is significantly influenced by global trends, challenges and risks. The pandemic that was announced in March 2020 and the bloody aggression of Russia since February 24, 2022 have been the most dangerous for Ukraine in the last three years. Education in Ukraine has had serious problems for a long time. Among them: low social status and motivation of teachers; lack of objective criteria for evaluating the quality of education; disconnection of specialist training from the needs of society, poor supply of educational institutes with the necessary equipment and facilities, educational materials. Shrinking public finances and cruel policy controls have been pushing teachers to do more work for limited reward. Overworked and underpaid teachers have had to master and comply with centrally imposed learning standards. The negative economic situation, Russia's occupation of Crimea and Donbas also affected education. A significant number of teachers were forced to move to other sectors of the economy, to look for work abroad. With the beginning of Russia's large-scale aggression against Ukraine, these issues became even more acute.

Key words: education, teachers, war, learning process, online learning, distance learning, digital skills.

INTRODUCTION

In Ukraine, the share of GDP spent on education is quite high, over 6%. It is one of the highest rates of public spending on education in the world. As rightly pointed out by S. Kahkonen in 2018, the problems facing the country's education system go deeper – namely outdated teaching methodologies and low morale among teachers. Both the approaches towards teaching and towards learning are out of date, with students practicing rote recitation without knowing how to use this knowledge in everyday life. Lessons are overburdened with theoretical knowledge and lacking in practical application, while textbooks are academically dry and overburdened with secondary factual materials – dampening motivation and curiosity among students [1]. The system of higher education in Ukraine had turbulent changes during 1991-2019, which led to its insufficient competitiveness. For example, only in 1994, in terms of GDP reduction, 73 new universities, academies, and institutes were opened. On the contrary, in 2014, 48 higher education institutions (HEIs) ceased to exist. Since then, the number of HEIs has increased again and remains excessive, and institutions are fragmented [2]. The number of institutions of high education in Ukraine in the 2020-2021 academic year, there were 515. This is significantly more than 363 (Germany), 234 (France), 166 (Great Britain) [3].



As of the end of 2018, in Ukraine 454 (2.9%) schools do not have heating system; in 1,331 schools (8.2%) there is no water at all; in 7,821 schools (48.3%) there is no hot water; in 1,331 school's restrooms are located outdoors [4]. The report under the United Nations Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Program (UN RPP) 2020 "Regional Strategy for Reforming the Vocational Education System in Donetsk Oblast" identifies the following unresolved issues: outdated material and technical base that does not meet today's requirements; unsatisfactory conditions for study, living and recreation of applicants for vocational education in most TVET institutions; reduction of the number of applicants for technical and vocational education and training, increase in the share of understaffed TVET institutions; obsolete content, structure and methods of training workers, the preservation of the actual Soviet system of technical and vocational education and training; the focus of TVET institutions on the training of workers at the end of the twentieth century; discrepancy between the areas of training and the number of graduates of institutions TVET on the needs of the regional labor market. In 2020, before the start of the pandemic, 5.5 million Ukrainians did not have access to high-speed and high-quality Internet. This limited the possibilities of quality online and distance learning [5]. Russia's aggression against Ukraine had catastrophically destructive consequences for the field of education. Ukraine's 7.5 million children face the most extreme disruption to their studies. Since the start of the war, an average of 22 schools a day have come under attack [6].

Analysis of recent research and published papers. The issue of the quality of education in Ukraine even before the start of a full-scale war was considered by N. Arnhold, L. Brajkovic, D. Nikolaev, P. Zavalina [5], S. Babak [4], S. Kahkonen [1], V. Mandragelia [2] and others. Since the beginning of the war, a significant number of analytical and statistical materials have been prepared by Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MoES) [7; 8; 9; 10], International Labour Organization [11], Council of the EU [14], UNESCO [15], OECD and UNICEF [16], European Parliament [19]. Representatives of well-known think tanks, such as Brookings Institution (United States); Chatham House (United Kingdom); French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) (France); Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (United States); Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (United States); Bruegel (Belgium); RAND Corporation (United States) took part in the preparing of reports and overviews.

Result of the research. The first overview of the current state of education and science in Ukraine in terms of Russian aggression was published by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) of Ukraine on March 15, 2022. It was fragmentary and incomplete information. In particular, it was reported about school education. On February 24, 2022 out scheduled vacations were announced in the vast majority of general secondary education institutions, but some institutions continued to work remotely. On March 14, 2022, educational process was resumed in most oblasts after forced vacations. According to information from local education authorities learning have started in 13 oblasts (regions). Regarding Vocational Education and Training current information was, 2 VET institution buildings are destroyed, 27 are damaged [7]. At the beginning of April 2022, information about educational institutions became more complete. In particular, it was reported, that according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as of April 02, 2022, the number of refugees fled from Ukraine for other countries is more than 4,13 million. According to the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine as of April 02, 2022, since the beginning of the war, 158 children have been killed and 254 wounded. As of April 01, 869 education institutions have been damaged from bombing and shelling, and 83 of them have been completely destroyed [8]. A conceptual plan of priority measures in the field of



education in Ukraine during war was developed at the end of March. It included number of key issues that have to be addressed immediately or in the nearest future: threat to life, health, safety of all the educational process participants (students, educators, parents) because of hostilities; forced displacement to regions of Ukraine or countries with better security situation; threat to mental health of children and adults due to the war; catastrophic drop of student enrollment in education, reduced access to education; limited access of students and educators to educational materials and learning tools; lack of safe conditions for teaching and learning; civilian casualties among students, educators, parents; destruction of infrastructure, including educational facilities; drop in education quality as a whole; lack of information about the needs of the education system in wartime, difficulties and or impossibility to collect reliable data; education system overload in more safe regions [9].

The latest official information on the state of education was released by the MoES in mid-November 2022. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as of October 18, 2022 the number of refugees fled Ukraine for other countries since 24.02.2022 is more than 15,59 million persons. According to the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine as of November 24, 2022, since the beginning of the war, 440 children have been killed and 847 wounded. This data does not include data from areas where the active hostilities take place. As of November 28, 2022, 2783 educational institutions have been damaged by bombing and shelling, 337 of them are completely destroyed [10].

Reports and statistics of international organizations also testify to the catastrophic state of education during war in Ukraine. In the monitoring of the International Labor Organization from October 31, 2022, it is noted that although the pace of outflow has slowed in recent months compared to the initial stages of the conflict, the refugee population has grown by 44 per cent in the five months since the ILO's first assessment. In terms of economic activity, some 16% of Ukrainian refugees worked in education and another 7% in health and social services prior to leaving [11].

Assistance to Ukraine from other countries is critically important under these circumstances. In total, the US has made available about 47.8 billion euros (\$50.3bn) of military, financial and humanitarian aid to Kyiv, with almost half coming in the form of military assistance, while EU institutions such as the European Investment Bank, the EU Commission and Council, and the European Peace Facility provided 35 billion euros (\$36.8 bn) in aid to Ukraine, mostly in the form of financial help. The UK was the third-highest contributor of aid to Ukraine with 7.1 billion euros (\$7.5bn) pledged between January 24 and November 20 [12].

Financial assistance to Ukraine increased in December 2022. The giant annual spending bill unveiled by Congress on 20 December contains more than \$44 billion in emergency aid for Ukraine, renewing the U.S. commitment to the country's defense as Russia's invasion grinds toward a second year. Congress is proposing to spend \$12.9 billion to shore up Ukraine's economy and address dire energy shortages caused by Russian attacks [13]. The Council of EU on 10 December reached agreement on a legislative package which will enable the EU to help Ukraine financially throughout 2023 with €18 billion. The aim is to provide short-term financial relief, financing Ukraine's immediate needs, rehabilitation of critical infrastructure and initial support towards sustainable post-war reconstruction, with a view to supporting Ukraine on its path towards European integration [14].

Aid in the field of education is also essential. UNESCO, Google, and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine have established a large cooperation to supply 50,000 computers for



teachers. A first batch of 10,000 computers is currently being distributed to teachers in and around the Dnipro, Chernihiv and Sumy regions. The distribution will be extended to other regions of the country in the weeks ahead [15]. However, this is clearly not enough. EECA countries had an average GDP per-capita of \$ 20 839 purchasing power parity (PPP) in 2018, compared to the OECD average of \$ 44 994. Ukraine had only \$12 629 [16]. According to the trade union of education and science workers, more than half of all higher education institutions indicated that from 1 to 30% of their teachers became internally displaced persons or moved abroad. It is reported that the majority of teachers of higher education institutions have returned to teaching and research duties at their educational institutions in the next academic year. At the same time, for various reasons, about 2000 academic staff could not continue teaching and research after February 24, and 63 educational institutions reported a shortage of teachers [17].

According to estimates by the Center of Economic Strategy and German Economic Team at the end of August 2022, recovery needs of Ukraine in education is \$ 4.8 billion. But total recovery needs of Ukraine were \$ 197 billion [18]. These numbers are not final, as the war continues and Ukraine's economy suffers heavy losses every day. The National Bank of Ukraine projects a loss of economic output of 33.4% in 2022. The EBRD estimates a 30% drop in the Ukrainian economy in 2022, the IMF – 35%, FocusEconomics – 34.5%, the World Bank – 35% [19].

Some factors cannot be clearly taken into account. The terms of the war, the composition of international relations, the level of support from the countries of the West of Ukraine, migration flows, and the demographic situation are characterized by considerable uncertainty. The vast majority of citizens of the EU countries support Ukraine in the war with Russia, but its level, albeit slightly, is steadily decreasing. According to a multi-county survey conducted in Europe, 50% of respondents still say their countries should support Ukraine by providing it with arms shipments. More than three-quarters say they are ready to accept Ukrainian refugees in their own countries [20]. Strikes by missiles and drones on the objects of critical infrastructure of Ukraine have an extremely negative effect on the quality of online and distance learning. The lack of heat, light, and Internet for several hours, and sometimes days, cannot be compensated. Those who have lost their housing, means of communication and communication cause even more concern. Survival during hostilities becomes the most important priority in relation to issues of education, career growth, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Issues of education in Ukraine today are subject to more important topics: preservation of state integrity, sovereignty, return of occupied territories, preservation of life and mental health of citizens. At the same time, purposeful work is carried out, aimed at strengthening the quality of education in mixed forms, returning teachers and students who have gone abroad to the educational process. The educational sector of Ukraine lacks the necessary means to provide online and distance learning. The necessary methodical materials for work in an emergency situation are not actively developed, there is a lack of educational literature, free access to databases of leading universities, libraries and educational platforms. All these issues must be resolved urgently.

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