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SELECTED PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY HIGHER EDUCATION IN UKRAINE IN THE FACE OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

The Ukrainian nation, which suffered devastating blows in the 20th century, seemed to have had finally gained independence in 1991 at the cost of incredible efforts of previous generations. It began to assert its own statehood, but its largest neighbour (i.e., Russia) still cannot come to terms with the loss of imperial possessions. The war, which began in 2014, took on a new scale in February 2022. The Ukrainian society is going through difficult time of military aggression. The whirlwind of disaster engulfed the entire country, which forced the restructuring of all spheres of economic, social, educational, and scientific life. The war did not spare a single person on the territory of Ukraine and changed everyone's plans.

First of all, the question of physical salvation from danger arose: many became internally displaced persons, other emigrated, while some we lost forever. A significant group of schoolchildren, students, teachers, and scientists found themselves in a new reality, previously unknown for them. Everyone has to live in anticipation of new challenges, but Ukrainian society is gradually beginning to recover, trying to connect new conditions with the old life; a realisation emerges among Ukrainians that much of the was familiar before ceases to be relevant.

The ongoing war has posed many new challenges and problems. We can already discussing what education and science will be like when Ukraine wins the war, what changes and innovations educational institutions should be prepared for now, and how these sectors can change in Ukraine.

It is with faith in the inevitable victory of Ukraine over evil that the Ukrainian educational and scientific elite is already asking the question: What awaits Ukrainian education and science in the near future and how has the war affected their condition?

The ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine has led to massive shifts in the education system – hundreds of thousands of students and teachers have been forced to leave their homes and move to safer areas of Ukraine, or even abroad. In addition, many higher educational institutions were destroyed, together with educational equipment.



According to official state statistics, as of October 20, 2022, 329 educational institutions in Ukraine have been completely destroyed and 2,321 have been damaged. Most of the affected educational institutions are located on the frontline or directly nearby, in the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine. The areas with most pronounced damage are: Donetsk oblast (region) – 725 educational institutions, Kharkiv and Kharkiv oblast – 528 educational institutions, Kyiv and Kyiv oblast – 85 and 191 educational institutions, respectively, and Mykolaiv oblast – 228. As of the end of October 2022, no damage was caused to educational institutions in Volyn, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, and Zakarpattia regions.¹

¹ Russia is destroying Ukrainian education. *Info front*. URL: t.me/uavvarinforgraphics/ Last accessed October 20, 2022.

As of August 2023, Russia has destroyed almost every 10th Ukrainian school. More than 1,500 general secondary education institutions have been significantly damaged or completely destroyed and cannot be repaired.²

At the moment, it is not yet possible to assess all the damage caused by the war to the Ukrainian education system because this havoc means not only the destroyed premises of schools and universities, but also teaching staff who died during shelling or at the front, or emigrated outside Ukraine; it also means millions of pupils and students who were forced to stop their education (for various reasons), and many other problems. However, even today, it is possible to clearly trace the destruction, a sharp reduction in the number of educational institutions (and, as a result, the abandonment of hundreds of thousands of pupils and students outside the educational sphere), the shortage of personnel in the education system, as well as the issues of restoring the educational process after the war. Nowadays, technical solutions such as online learning somewhat solve the problem of providing the students with access to the educational process; however, several shortcomings remain unaddressed.

Against the background of the rapid self-organization of society, the unpreparedness and confusion of official government structures was quite noticeable. Thus, the central authorities in the field of education were actually paralysed for almost 2 weeks after the start of the war, which in turn indicated the lack of a response plan in case of military aggression and of any guidelines for the participants in the educational process.

It is also clear that the work of the government was also hampered by the fact that the first blows of the aggressor were targeted at Kyiv, as a result of which the question arose not only of the physical preservation of educational institution's employees, but also of said institutions' relocation from the capital to the west of the country – in particular, of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Facing direct threat, administrative and management centres were forced to go online in the first months of the war, having the experience of such management thanks to a 2-year quarantine related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, after recovering from the first upheavals, society needed action. The Minister of Education and Science called for a revision of the policy on

² A. Novosad. Four years without education. How Russia is destroying Ukrainian schools and what to do about it. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2023/08/9/7414761/>.

cooperation in the field of education and science with the Russian Federation – namely, to stop granting, research and investment activities with the aggressor.

In Ukraine, there is a rather unique situation: on the one hand, there is a war going on in the country, which hinders the implementation of certain norms in the education system, while on the other hand, the efforts of the public today are aimed at the following factors:

1. Preservation of scientific and scientific-pedagogical staff;
2. Protection of life, health and potential of students;
3. Academic integrity;
4. Implementation of new educational curricula;
5. Reviewing old curricula, such as in history, philology.

Already in the first months, the question arose of revising educational programs in history and Ukrainian literature and language. The public raises the issue of the inadmissibility of further teaching of history using different textbooks for different regions. At the heart of the changes is getting rid of old ideologemes, clichés and Russian and Soviet legacy in general. A question becomes relevant: Is there a need for “education” that does not form a Ukrainian patriot but a “law-abiding citizen” adhering to pseudo-democracy, who is a mere extra in the society?

In particular, on April 20, 2022, the Institute of the Ukrainian Language of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in an open letter to the Minister of Education and Science formulated a firm demand to reconsider the Ministry’s position on preserving Russian language and literature in Ukrainian schooling in the future.


No less dramatic events unfold around teaching of history. At the request of the public, on May 5, 2022, at the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, a seminar-meeting “School history education during the Russian-Ukrainian war” was held. The main issues brought up for discussion were:

- How to tell schoolchildren about the causes, nature and consequences of Russia’s war against Ukraine;
- Key events, phenomena and processes in the history of the 20th century as reflected in modern textbooks in Ukraine and Russia: comparative analysis of content, presented values and methodological approaches to the development of critical thinking in students;
- Reviewing and supplementing school curricula in connection with Russia’s war against Ukraine.

It was recommended to expand the scientific research on European integration through preparation of dissertations and monographs, as well as fundamental and applied research works and projects. In addition, it was proposed to consider publishing special issues of scientific professional journals dedicated to the European integration of Ukraine. For example, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine together with the Helvetica Publishing House launched the project “Thematic Issues of Scientific Journals of Ukraine on European Integration”.


Moreover, it should be noted that during the 1st year of war (2022), Ukrainian scientific community still held various scientific conferences. In particular, only the author of this paper organized 2 conferences in a hybrid format (in-person and online) – one about the formation and development of the third level of education, and the other to public history.

The conference “The 3rd Level of Education in Ukraine: Formation and Trends” was devoted to the problems of higher education development, training of scientific personnel and preservation of science under martial law. In particular, the following issues were discussed (among others): 1) possibility of conducting research activities of graduate students under martial law; 2) priorities for the development of higher education; 3) opportunities for academic mobility; and 4) methods of the process of learning a foreign language by future specialists in wartime.




Всеукраїнське науково-педагогічне підвищення кваліфікації з результативності
02.06.2023

Навчально-реабілітаційний заклад вищої освіти «Кан'янець-Подільський державний інститут» Центр українсько-європейського наукового співробітництва. Всеукраїнське науково-педагогічне підвищення кваліфікації ФОРМУВАННЯ РЕЗУЛЬТЕНТИХ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТЕЙ ЗДОБУВАЧА ОСВІТИ В ПЕРІОД ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЙ, СУЧАСНИХ ВИКЛИКІВ ТА КРИЗОВИХ СТАНІВ СУСПІЛЬСТВА 3 липня...



VII Міжнародна науково-практична конференція «Третій рівень освіти в Україні: становлення та тенденції»
02.06.2023

Міністерство освіти і науки України Волинський національний університет (імені Лесі Українки) Факультет історії, політології та національної безпеки Київський університет у Влоцлавеку Видавничий дім «Гельветика» Центр українсько-європейського наукового співробітництва VII Міжнародна...



Колективна монографія з економічних наук (м. Рига, Латвійська Республіка)
25.05.2023

ISMA University of Applied Sciences Навчально-реабілітаційний заклад вищої освіти «Кан'янець-Подільський державний інститут» Колективна монографія ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ ЕКОНОМІКИ УКРАЇНИ: ФОРМУВАННЯ СИСТЕМИ ІНКЛЮЗИВНОЇ ЕКОНОМІКИ ТА ФАКТОРИЗАЦІЯ ЕКОНОМІКИ ВІЙСЬКОВОГО СТАНУ

