

BALTIC RIM ECONOMIES

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Education in Ukraine during the war

Expert article • 3592

The classic scheme of obtaining secondary and higher education in Ukraine was destroyed in 2014 after the beginning of Russia's annexation of Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Some educational institutions stopped working, some were moved to other regions controlled by Ukraine.

Even more, the education system in Ukraine was destroyed in February 2022. The first two weeks after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, people were in a state of shock, so no one even thought about education. The majority of people were forced to relocate to secure cities, which included emigrating abroad. Many educational institutions were destroyed. However, the education process began online in many educational institutions and general secondary educational institutions in the second half of March 2022. The educational process in educational institutions was quickly restored and improved by the distance learning format that had already been implemented during the pandemic. There were a lot of people displaced in Ukraine, both inside and outside the country. At the same time, educational institutions that were still functioning were evacuated. According to Ukraine's Ministry of Science and Education for 2022, there were 3,593 educational institutions damaged by bombing and shelling, and 365 were destroyed completely. 34 educational institutions have been moved or are in the process of moving. Mostly these are institutions from the Lugansk and Donetsk regions.

Students from universities who remained in the occupied territories were accepted by a number of universities. Almost all higher education institutions from the occupied territories opened branches in other cities of Ukraine. The learning process gradually began to improve. Children were able to more easily perceive all the hardships associated with the war, so the training was restored more fully. It was more difficult for students to psychologically tune in to study, so teachers often worked in the classroom as psychologists, and then they taught their subject. The establishment of the educational process in all educational institutions was greatly aided by the mutual support of each other. As of the end of 2022, more than half of secondary schools have switched to a mixed and full-time education format. A feature of full-time education was the presence of a shelter in the school. In July 2022, only 13% of higher education institutions had protective shelters that were minimally usable. By the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year, half of the educational institutions had protective shelters that were more suitable for use. All teachers have undergone training on ensuring the safety of students during the educational process. In 2022, there was a decrease in the number of students, in particular, in the city of Kyiv by 6.36% and an increase in local budget expenditures for ensuring the educational process in secondary schools. Significant amounts of expenditures from the local budget of the city of Kyiv were directed to the restoration of damaged school buildings and the purchase of computer equipment for conducting classes in the online format.

Universities remained in the online education format for longer. They switched to full-time education only in September 2023. During the war, many educational institutions suffered significant destruction, also some of them were completely destroyed. However, people restored damaged educational institutions, equipped shelters, and did everything to continue the educational process.

Taking into account the state of war, educational institutions made changes to educational programs and training courses.

In the training courses of social disciplines, topics on European integration of Ukraine, the study of European experience in different directions were added. In 2022, the academic mobility of applicants for education of Ukrainian educational institutions, in particular, to European countries, has increased significantly. Many European educational institutions accepted Ukrainian students to study.

Under the conditions of martial law, funding for educational institutions at the expense of budget funds decreased, which negatively affected the level of wages of teachers. Lower wages lead to a decrease in the prestige of teaching, which is mainly intellectual. Under martial law, many institutions of higher education were forced to optimize the level of wages by reducing various surcharges. Lower wages encourage teachers to leave their professional activities and transition to more paid areas of the economy or switch to work in foreign educational institutions. This trend reduces the intellectual potential of the country.

Another negative feature of Ukrainian education during the war is the outflow of foreign students, most of whom left the country and switched to an online learning format.

The positive aspects of Ukrainian education during the war include the fact that educational institutions, both secondary and higher, adapted to such difficult working conditions. Most educational institutions, up to 80% equipped with shelters for classes in full-time format. In educational institutions there are processes of accreditation of educational programs, and new educational programs are being developed that correspond to the direction of European integration of Ukraine. ■

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