

## UKRAINIAN EDUCATION DURING WAR: A SCOPING REVIEW

EDUCAÇÃO UCRANIANA DURANTE A GUERRA: UMA REVISÃO DE ESCOPO

EDUCACIÓN UCRANIANA DURANTE LA GUERRA: UNA REVISIÓN DE ALCANCE

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### RESUMO:

Em 24 de fevereiro de 2022, a Federação Russa lançou uma invasão militar indefinida da Ucrânia. As ações militares têm um impacto catastroficamente negativo no setor educacional: mortes, ferimentos e traumas psicológicos para educadores, escolares e estudantes, danos às instalações educacionais. Fatores indiretos, como a diminuição do acesso à educação e o consequente êxodo de profissionais qualificados do país, também contribuem. Esses fatores indiretos são exacerbados pelo aumento da violência dirigida a educadores pró-ucranianos; redução ou cessação completa da educação; e degradação da infra-estrutura nos territórios ocupados. O objetivo desta revisão de escopo é descrever o escopo das barreiras e esboçar a escala e a natureza dos desafios para o setor educacional durante a guerra. Nosso objetivo é registrar as decisões mais importantes e intervenções direcionadas para manter a educação. Para monitoramento, usamos documentos normativos publicados, dados secundários, mensagens informativas da mídia estrangeira e ucraniana, bem como representantes do estado ucraniano e autoridades locais.

**Palavras-chave:** impacto da guerra; educação; Ucrânia; warzone.

### ABSTRACT:

On February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation launched an open-ended military invasion of Ukraine. Military actions have a catastrophically negative impact on the education sector: deaths, injuries, and psychological trauma to educators, schoolchildren, and students, damage to educational facilities. Indirect factors, such as diminished access to education and the subsequent exodus of qualified professionals from the country, are other contributors. These indirect factors are exacerbated by increasing violence directed toward pro-Ukrainian educators; reduction or complete cessation of education; and infrastructure degradation in the occupied territories. The purpose of this scoping review is to describe the scope of barriers and to sketch the scale and nature of challenges for the educational sector during war. We aim to record the most important decisions and targeted interventions to maintain education. For monitoring, we use published normative documents, secondary data, information messages

from foreign and Ukrainian media, as well as representatives of Ukrainian state and local authorities.

**Keywords:** war impact; education; Ukraine; warzone.

**RESUMEN:**

El 24 de febrero de 2022, la Federación Rusa lanzó una invasión militar indefinida de Ucrania. Las acciones militares tienen un impacto catastróficamente negativo en el sector educativo: muertes, lesiones y traumas psicológicos para educadores, escolares y estudiantes, daños a las instalaciones educativas. Factores indirectos, como la disminución del acceso a la educación y el posterior éxodo de profesionales calificados del país, son otros contribuyentes. Estos factores indirectos se ven exacerbados por la creciente violencia dirigida hacia los educadores pro-ucranianos; reducción o cese total de la educación; y la degradación de la infraestructura en los territorios ocupados. El propósito de esta revisión de alcance es describir el alcance de las barreras y esbozar la escala y la naturaleza de los desafíos para el sector educativo durante la guerra. Nuestro objetivo es registrar las decisiones más importantes y las intervenciones específicas para mantener la educación. Para el monitoreo, utilizamos documentos normativos publicados, datos secundarios, mensajes de información de medios extranjeros y ucranianos, así como representantes de las autoridades estatales y locales de Ucrania.

**Palabras clave:** impacto de la guerra; educación; Ucrania; zona de guerra.

## Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 stunned the world and marked the beginning of a new bloody period of confrontation between states. Almost 15 million people were forced to leave their homes: 7.0 million within the country; 7.4 million went abroad (UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, 2022). The majority of these people are women and children. The war led to one of the most rapid and extensive displacements of children since World War II (UNICEF UKRAINE, 2022). The first months of war in Ukraine caused the displacement of 4.3 million children, which is more than half of the country's child population (7.5 million). This data includes more than 1.8 million children who moved to neighboring countries as refugees, and another 2.5 million who are now internally displaced within Ukraine (UNICEF UKRAINE, 2022).

Due to the full-scale attack by Russia, the right of Ukrainian children to education is under threat. 2.461 attacks on educational facilities have been verified (UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, 2022). During almost eleven months of the war, 3.469 educational institutions were damaged or destroyed. The conditions within which education is being implemented are extremely difficult in the context of war. Besides the fact that communities in "warzones" are exposed to increased insecurity and frequent displacement, the conduct of war poses an increasing demand for human

resources (DENG, 2003), particularly educators. Approximately 11.000 teachers suffer in the occupied territories, and almost 26.000 educators fled abroad. 3.3 million school-age children need educational assistance. The war changed the plans of the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian schoolchildren, students, and education workers. Everyone had to save themselves from physical danger, and after that, to recover and try to connect new realities with the old life. Many of the usual things stopped working. Some teachers could not or did not want to resume the distance learning process because they changed their place of residence. 26.000 teachers left abroad. Some of them were unable to conduct online classes with students and found work in their new country of residence. A significant number of schoolchildren started attending educational institutions in European countries and switched to adapting to life there. 670.000 students left Ukraine because of the war. And for many of them, their priorities have changed.

As of the morning of January 16, 2023, more than 897 children were injured in Ukraine as a result of the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation. According to the official information from juvenile prosecutors, 455 children died. The data is without full consideration of places of active hostilities. Children were most affected in the Donetsk region, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporizhia (OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL, 2023). However, these figures only reflect officially confirmed cases, so the true death toll is likely to be much higher.

The fight for freedom in Ukraine has expanded to include the educational system since the beginning of Russia's extensive invasion. Some educators opted to enlist in the military so they could defend Ukraine and continue giving lectures from the front lines. Others keep up their efforts to help children and their parents, maintain optimism and hope, and give the next generation of Ukrainians access to school regardless of where they are.

In numerous Ukrainian cities, hundreds of colleges and universities have become volunteer centers, humanitarian headquarters or transitory housing for the internally displaced people. School buses are being used for evacuation while volunteers are gathering, sorting, and delivering humanitarian aid at kindergartens and schools. Teachers, students, and their parents volunteered their time to weave camouflage nets for the military, raise money, and bring victory closer.

As the invasion is still ongoing and since heavy fighting is still predicted to occur, it is currently impossible to assess all of the consequences, both for Ukraine and for the world. However, it is already abundantly clear that these actions are deeply destructive for many spheres of life in Ukraine and beyond (NAZAROVETS; TEIXEIRA DA SILVA, 2022).

Given that the focus of this paper is on education, science, and academia, we outline some of the most obvious consequences of this invasion on the Ukrainian education sector.

## Methods

A comprehensive range of databases, organizational websites, overviews, summaries, and policy briefs were investigated based upon predetermined inclusion criteria and 416 relevant sources of evidence were identified, mainly addressing the Ukrainian educational sector during war time. Based on the results of the review, the authors concluded that while there is a large body of evidence in the field, issues with its generalizability and validity are as yet largely unknown.

## Findings

### Infrastructure

Russia has a long tradition of weaponizing education. In cities like Mariupol and Kharkiv, schools and universities were physically destroyed by Russian missiles (UKRAINE CRISIS MEDIA CENTER, 2022). A significant number of educational institutions were damaged or completely destroyed, mainly in the zones of active hostilities (Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Sumy, Donetsk, Mykolaiv regions and Kyiv).

The status of education in Ukraine during the current war will be better understood against the background of infrastructural destruction data. On March 10, 2022, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine unveiled an interactive map showing the educational institutions that Russia's actions had destroyed or damaged in Ukraine. 3.045 educational institutions had suffered bombing and shelling damage as of January 16, 2023. According to the official data, 424 of them were totally destroyed (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE, 2022b).

The Donetsk region, where 69 educational institutions were totally destroyed and 691 suffered damage, was the most severely affected, per the data. 572 institutions were damaged and 52 was completely destroyed in the Kharkiv region. In the Mykolaiv region, 240 institutions suffered damage, with 33 entirely demolished. 180 institutions were damaged and 13 were destroyed in the Kyiv region. In Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, 99 educational institutions were damaged. Table 1 clearly shows the considerable destruction inflicted on educational facilities during the current war.

**Table 1** - Statistical data on destruction and damage of educational institutions

Type of institution	Destroyed	Damaged
kindergarten	96	876
school	147	1054
out-of-school education	43	676
professional education	52	195
vocational pre-higher education	43	148
higher education	31	37
specialized education	12	55
<b>total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>3045</b>

Source: Prepared by the authors

## Education

On February 25, the day after the launch of the full-scale invasion of Russian forces into Ukraine, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine advocated suspending the teaching process in educational institutions of all levels and sending students, educators, and staff on a two-week holiday. At this point, a portion of Ukraine's land has been temporarily occupied, and various towns and cities (such as Mariupol, Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, and others) have endured violent combat.

In the regions where the security situation permitted it, education resumed on March 14, 2022. Regional authorities and educational institutions' management decided on the format of the classes (GALYNSKA; BILOUS, 2022).

While the deteriorating status of education in the war-torn Ukraine is convincingly understandable, unprecedented numbers of migrants and refugees, including students, were given the right to education in any format as long as it was safe for the participants. The average salary and job security of educational institution employees were guaranteed. The March 15 modifications to the educational legislation provided the relevant guarantees. The latter indicates that pupils and students who traveled away from home were permitted to continue their education both within Ukraine and overseas. Teachers who are able to work may do so from anywhere in Ukraine or abroad (VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE, 2022d).

Children who have been internally displaced can continue their education in the schools at their temporary residence. The right to enroll in educational institutions at the location of temporary residence without documents or on the basis of copies is provided by an Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (2022h).

## **Pre-school education**

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine's advice, kindergartens suspended their work under the conditions of war as soon as the full-scale invasion began. Within three to four weeks, classes started to resume in certain areas. Some kindergartens followed their regular schedules, while others included elements of online learning. Education is not now taking place in areas where the security situation is still tight.

An online kindergarten featuring educational video sessions for kids ages 3-6 began on March 14 through the efforts of UNICEF and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The goal of the project is to assist parents in getting their kids involved in cognitive activities.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine provided an explanation regarding the enrollment of children who have temporarily left their homes in kindergartens within Ukraine. Local self-government entities are responsible for ensuring that kids are enrolled in preschool and general secondary schools in conformity with the current regulatory framework (VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE, 2022b).

## **Secondary education**

Schools also took a two-week break starting on February 24, 2022, just like kindergartens did. Unlike usual, teaching personnel were not expected to show up to work during this break and carry out their assigned duties.

Distance education resumed in the areas under Ukrainian control on March 14, 2022. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, along with Ukrainian television networks and online resources, launched the "Education without Borders" program. For students in grades 5 through 11, video lessons have been aired as part of the initiative. Every day was given over to a different discipline (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE, 2022c.). Both private and public institutions joined the remote learning movement and made their educational materials available for free.

As of March 28, 2022, general secondary school institutions in 13 regions of Ukraine had started their remote teaching, according to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Nine regions either had a partially organized education system or still had schools on break. For the remaining 2, school instruction has been halted for security reasons. Almost 3 million schoolchildren returned to school. 5.000 children joined education from a place of temporary residence after being forced to leave their homes.

## **End of the school year**

The Verkhovna Rada passed a law on March 24 that abolished state final certification for pupils who have finished general secondary school in 2022 (VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE, 2022a). “All children who are now studying outside of their own schools, as well as abroad,” according to the Minister of Education and Science, “shall receive a document on the conclusion of the school year. Any other school where the child is currently enrolled that offers face-to-face, blended, distance, or externship learning will also count all of their grades” (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE, 2022a, p.1).

General secondary educational institutions were encouraged to independently decide the date of the end of the school year and to assemble all instructional resources to ensure the implementation of educational and training programs (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE, 2022f). Final assessment was recommended to be carried out using distance learning technologies.

## **Working conditions of educators**

The law governing state guarantees during martial law was established on March 15. It ensures that teachers will keep their positions, receive an average salary, and have the flexibility to work from wherever they may temporarily reside, including abroad (VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE, 2022d). According to labor law, teachers who are unable to teach lessons still keep their wages. An employee’s inability to do remote work owing to improper communication cannot be considered a breach of labor discipline. Education administrators shouldn’t encourage staff members to take leave for the period of martial law (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE, 2022d).

However, despite the Ministry’s of Education and Science Order (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE, 2022h), it is unclear how to declare layoffs and make the proper payments to employees who reside in occupied territory or a hostility zone. Pro-Ukrainian educational administrators and executives of educational institutions are either dismissed from their jobs or have left the seized territory. As a result, they are unable to issue layoff orders and have lost access to software billing systems, treasury accounts, tokens, and seals that are used to calculate compensation for workers in the education industry. Teachers who reject the demands of the invaders are consequently left without a source of income.

Cases of abductions of employees of the education system who refuse to cooperate have also been recorded (for example, on March 29, the head of the education department was

kidnapped in Melitopol). According to Fedorov (the mayor of occupied Melitopol), the reason for the abduction was that none of the directors of schools and kindergartens agreed to interact with the occupation authorities and did not agree to begin training “according to some incomprehensible Russian program” (NOVA UKRAYINS’KA SHKOLA, 2022, p. 1).

## **Higher education**

### **Entry campaign**

The unified professional entrance test and the unified entrance exam in a foreign language for master’s degrees have been abolished in 2022, according to a March 8 announcement by Serhiy Shkarlet, Minister of Education and Science. He suggested, instead, employing an electronic method to run an admissions campaign without the actual participation of applicants. The proposal to eliminate the state final certification, external independent evaluation, and optimize the master’s degree admissions processes was approved by the Union of Rectors of Ukraine.

The relevant law was approved by the Verkhovna Rada on March 24, 2022. It calls for the elimination of the unified entrance exam, the unified professional entrance test, and external independent assessment in 2022 (VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE, 2022a).

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine implemented a multi-subject test for admission to the bachelor’s program on the budget. It comprises questions on the Ukrainian language (without literature), mathematics, and the history of Ukraine, as well as a motivation letter. Those applying for a contract will only have to submit an application and a letter of motivation, except for medical and conjunctural (humanities and social sciences, law, journalism, etc.) specialties, where they will also have to complete a multi-subject test. For creative specialties, students need to pass a creative competition and submit a motivation letter.

It is essential to pass a professional exam at the higher education institution and to submit a motivation letter in order to be admitted to the master’s program on the budgetary form of study in all specialties, with the exception of law. For enrollment in the contract form of education, only the latter is acceptable. The master’s comprehensive test in law and a foreign language, as well as the submission of a letter of motivation, are requirements for admission to the “Law” and “International Law” specializations.

Alternative testing was conducted within 10–15 days and lasted 80 minutes. As a result, applicants spent less time at the test location because they could visit just once rather



than four times and spend only 80 minutes there as opposed to several hours. The testing locations have shelters that participants might enter in the event of a siren. The adoption of an alternate examination also considerably decreased the time and expense of checking assignments because the exam was given online at designated testing locations, which did not require scanning papers or checking open-ended questions.

Despite its obvious benefits, the multi-subject test currently includes three subjects: Ukrainian language, mathematics, and Ukrainian history. Accordingly, those who were studying for other subjects (like biology) instead of Ukrainian history would not have had the chance or time to adequately prepare for it. In addition, a number of specializations require students to take courses in biology, chemistry, or physics. They might fare poorly on the third subject as a result. Only 20 tasks are offered for each subject, which raises the danger of the adverse effects of guessing or writing off: due to the limited number of questions, each response is given more weight during evaluation.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine advised utilizing a motivation letter for ranking candidates who received the same competition score. Because the evaluation of motivation letters can be subjective and lack transparent mechanisms, accepting applicants for a contract form of education solely on the basis of a letter of motivation without considering their knowledge increases the risk of increasing inequalities in access to higher education.

### **End of the academic year**

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine issued a decree on March 21 allowing institutions of higher and professional pre-higher education to autonomously decide on the final assessment's format (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE, 2022g).

### **Educational process**

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine recommended that higher education institutions, after the end of the holidays, resume studies in a distance or hybrid format, if there are safe conditions (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE, 2022e). Additionally, it was suggested that specific study conditions (individual timetable, academic leave) be established for students who are involved in territorial defense or the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

At the end of March, education was resumed in most regions of Ukraine. At the same time, students and teachers in the territories of hostilities or temporarily occupied territories were not able to participate in the studies (LAVRYSH; LYTOVCHENKO; LUKIANENKO; GOLUB, 2022).

Students or teachers who are relatively safe may not have access to internet coverage or may not have the technical means. An air raid alert is announced in most regions of Ukraine (in many of them several times a day). This can directly affect the educational process and cause it to be interrupted.

Universities in safer parts of Ukraine, such as Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Volyn, Rivne, Khmelnytskyi, and Dnipropetrovsk, have made announcements about accepting students who have been internally displaced. Currently, such training is only accessible within the framework of academic mobility, i.e., students can take part in auditions for courses related to their majors and get a certificate of completion for the courses upon graduation. Students can only partially transfer across universities, though. As a result, a longer-term integration strategy and transfer process are required for students whose universities won't be able to continue their courses soon. Teachers who were evacuated from conflict areas are also welcome to participate in the educational process at several universities.

### **Start of the 2022/2023 academic year**

The academic year 2022/2023 began on September 1 and will last through June 30, 2023, in accordance with a resolution made by Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers. The length of the school year might vary from 175 days to beyond. The law has been amended to reflect these changes. The length and organization of the academic year, including the academic week (five or six days), the number of classes, etc., shall be decided separately by the pedagogical council of each educational institution.

The structure of the educational process is decided by the military-civilian administrations and is based on the level of security in each town. Parents of the pupils are involved in decision-making. If parents disagree with the offline schooling, they can choose a distance learning program or a personalized timetable, or they can move their child to a family or extracurricular program.

The "Safe Educational Environment" project was initiated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Several initiatives were planned within its framework, including: the development of the "Safety Alphabet for High School Students" and the corresponding mobile application; the

placement of warning signs in high school campuses; and inspections of educational institutions by representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Emergency Service, and educators to ensure that safe conditions are provided for education (STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE OF UKRAINE, 2022).

Schools that do not meet security requirements were not able to start the school year offline. In the case of face-to-face training, methods of evacuation, provision of shelter, and everything necessary in it, trainings with participants of the educational process on actions in the event of an air alarm were developed. The State Emergency Service of Ukraine also published information on the actions of teachers in the event of an air raid during face-to-face education.

Schools were not allowed to begin the school year offline unless they meet the security criteria. Face-to-face training involved developing evacuation procedures, sheltering procedures, and other relevant training with educators on what to do in the event of an air alarm. The State Emergency Service of Ukraine also made instruction about teachers' responses to an air raid during face-to-face schooling available.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine advised professional pre-higher and higher education institutions to take into account the possibility of beginning the educational process for senior students in the 2022/2023 academic year approximately on August 15, 2022, and to use Saturdays for training during the warm months. It was advised that first-year students begin their academic careers around August 15, but no later than October 1. The above-mentioned dates had to be taken into consideration while modifying curricula and the distribution of educational components, credits, and hours between semesters.

### **Relocation and evacuation of universities**

Ukraine has prior experience with university evacuations. The universities in Donetsk, Luhansk, and Crimea were consequently relocated after 2014 to safer areas either inside these territories or in other regions. As an illustration, Donetsk National University started operations in Vinnytsia. For example, the Donetsk National University began working in Vinnytsia.

This process happens again. In particular, the State University of Biotechnology moved from Kharkiv to Transcarpathia. Part of the property of educational institutions in Uzhhorod and Mukachevo was transferred to him. The Eastern Ukrainian National University named after Volodymyr Dal was also evacuated from Severodonetsk to Kamianets-Podilskyi and Luhansk Medical University from Rubizhne to Rivne (both were previously evacuated from

Luhansk). National University of Civil Defence of Ukraine from Kharkiv is now sharing the premises with Cherkasy Institute of Fire Safety named after Chernobyl Heroes. A mechanism for university relocation is now required due to the growing number of institutions that need to be evacuated and relocated.

The exact number of students and instructors who have been injured or killed is currently unknown. More than 2.000 foreign students were reported in the temporarily occupied territories and in the areas of active fighting on March 6 (UKRAINIAN PRAVDA, 2022c). Examples of targeted evacuation of students and teachers from the zone of active hostilities are known. For instance, on March 7, a train evacuation from Kharkiv to the Ternopil region was planned for 486 people, including both students and faculty from higher and vocational educational institutions.

According to the head of the regional administration in Sumy, almost 1.700 foreign students were evacuated from Sumy on March 8 (SLOVO I DILO, 2022). The head of the Kharkiv regional administration also reported that almost all foreign students were evacuated from Kharkiv but did not specify their number (SUSPIL'NE NOVYNY, 2022). It is currently unknown how many international students still reside in areas experiencing active hostilities or in areas that are temporarily occupied and whether they had the chance to leave.

## **Education in Ukraine's occupied territories**

As a result of the full-scale invasion of Russian troops on the territory of Ukraine, a number of Ukrainian settlements were occupied (in particular, in the Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Sumy, and Kharkiv regions). Some of these territories have been de-occupied; others continue to be under the occupation of the Russian invaders.

Given that Ukrainian villages and towns were or are currently under Russian occupation for varying lengths of time and under varying circumstances, the situation in the field of education developed according to a number of possible alternative or coexisting scenarios.

1. Educational institutions continue to work according to Ukrainian standards and programs in remote mode – children study, and teachers work from home or from places of temporary stay; local education management bodies work remotely. In some cases, the Ukrainian authorities and educational institutions have opted to end the 2021/2022 academic year earlier.

2. In the Ukrainian territories occupied in 2022, the occupying authorities are forcing students and instructors into classrooms while holding them at gunpoint in an effort to portray the educational process as having been restored. In some territories, with the aim of de-Ukrainization, the occupiers even prolonged the school year in some areas to learn Russian language, Russian literature, and Russian history. The Russian occupiers try to organize the educational process in Russian according to the educational standards and curricula of the so-called “LNR” (Luhansk People’s Republic) and “DPR” (Donetsk People’s Republic), with the exclusion from the educational process of all educational disciplines defined by the State Standards, in particular: Ukrainian language, Ukrainian literature, history of Ukraine, etc. Instead, they introduce disciplines that encourage Ukraine-hatred and aggressiveness. In some cases, the management of the educational system or specific schools works with the occupiers; in other cases, the principals and instructors flee the occupied areas or remain in hiding, and the Russians appoint new employees to fill their posts.

3. The educational process does not take place at all due to intense hostilities and the absence of participants in the educational process who were evacuated from the settlement.

Despite the unreliability of information coming from the occupied territories, it can be fairly confidently assumed that Russia’s policy in the field of education is to quickly restore education with its transition into the Russian language and Russian standards.

The Education Ombudsman Service receives reports from educators who remained in the occupied territories about the compulsion to write applications for dismissal from Ukrainian educational institutions and the compulsion to submit applications for employment in educational institutions of the so-called “LNR” and “DNR”. And the occupational authorities make the proper records of termination in the labor books of academic staff. All records in the labor books of employees, made by occupiers and collaborators, or by other employees under duress, are recognized as invalid, and the teaching experience of the pedagogic worker is considered continuous.

Meanwhile, in the occupied territories, Moscow is doing everything possible to integrate Ukraine’s education system into the Russian context. Following the Nazi practice, the occupiers destroy libraries and burn school textbooks on Ukraine’s history and literature, replacing them with Russian ones (UKRAINE CRISIS MEDIA CENTER, 2022). Workers face threats to their safety and wellbeing as well as coercion, aggression, and pressure. For their pro-Ukrainian position, refusal to work for the occupation authorities, and refusal to begin the

educational process in Russian, according to nonsensical curricula, instructors have been the target of intimidation and kidnapping.

In some towns (evidence reported from Starobilsk, Volnovakha, and Mariupol), a few educators obey the demands of the occupiers. In such schools, new disciplines appear: Russian language and literature, social studies, and history, which are studied using Russian textbooks and in the Russian language. According to Russian mass media, in Mariupol, in the only school that opened after the occupation of most of the city by the Russian army, classes began with the Russian national anthem.

In addition to the forced conversion of the school system to the Russian curriculum, authorities estimate that children under 18 years of age have been conscripted into the army in the occupied territories in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

A significant number of children who were unable to evacuate from areas of intense hostilities or temporarily occupied areas did not attend school at all during the occupation. These are residents of Kyiv Oblast, Sumy Oblast, Chernihiv Oblast, Donetsk Oblast, and the Luhansk region. There, the educational process did not take place at all due to the danger to the lives and health of students and educators and to the lack of technical conditions for education (electricity, mobile communication, the Internet).

Children who were trapped in areas of strong warfare or temporarily occupied territories and were unable to flee did not attend school at all throughout the occupation. These are residents of Luhansk region, Donetsk Oblast, Chernihiv Oblast, Sumy Oblast, and Kyiv Oblast. Due to the risk to students' and teachers' lives and health, as well as the lack of technical educational settings (electricity, mobile communication, the Internet), the educational process was completely abandoned there.

### **Working conditions of educators**

Employees at educational institutions are expressly prohibited from cooperating with the occupation authorities by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. According to the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Education Ombudsman, using the Russian curriculum constitutes a kind of collaborationism that can result in a teacher's bearing criminal responsibility (UKRAINIAN PRAVDA, 2022a).

Amendments were made to the Criminal Code of Ukraine – collaborative activity was added. This article states that the implementation of propaganda by a citizen of Ukraine in educational institutions, regardless of the types and forms of ownership, with the aim of

facilitating the implementation of armed aggression against Ukraine, establishing and confirming the temporary occupation of part of the territory of Ukraine, avoiding responsibility for the implementation of armed aggression against Ukraine by the aggressor state, and also, the actions of citizens of Ukraine aimed at implementing the standards of education of the aggressor state in educational institutions, are punishable by correctional labor for a term of up to two years; arrest for a term of up to six months, or imprisonment for a term of up to three years with deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or engage in a certain activity for a period of ten to fifteen years.

There is proof that teachers who were exiled to the Crimean peninsula and Russia were forced to retrain so they could teach in Russian in the future (UKRAINIAN PRAVDA. 2022b). The so-called Crimean authorities set up “retraining camps” for teachers. Teachers from the Kherson, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhia areas are compelled to follow Russian education standards. The tactic of forced russification is also applied by the invaders to kidnapped Ukrainian youngsters, who are made to take Russian language classes. The head of the Committee on Science, Education, and Culture of the Council of the Federation of Russia, Liliya Gumerova, called the problem that the deported Ukrainian children may not be able to learn in the Russian educational system since they do not know the language sufficiently.

The occupants are making educational leaders and workers labour for wages that may include Russian rubles, humanitarian aid, or food (EDUCATIONAL OMBUDSMAN OF UKRAINE, 2022).

## Conclusions

The losses Ukraine’s educational sphere has faced are colossal. As of January 16, 2023, 3.045 educational institutions had suffered bombing and shelling damage. 424 of them were totally destroyed. Approximately 11.000 teachers suffer in the occupied territories, and almost 26.000 educators fled abroad. More than 767 children were injured in Ukraine, and 391 children died. The data is without full consideration of places of active hostilities. Alerts about the threat of missile strikes or artillery fire can be heard throughout the country every day and night.

Although the schools and colleges were hit by the bombs of the aggressor countries, the education system as a whole managed to rebuild for the needs of wartime. Even while it is unfortunate to hear about such devastation, there is a bright side to this situation: the Ukrainian educational system will need to be rebuilt, modernized, and have many innovations

implemented. Therefore, it should flourish in some way after the battle. With everyone fighting on their front, no weapon could break Ukrainian resilience.

However, there is an urgent need for actionable advice on how to encourage students to study despite anxiety and frustration, how to work with students who have experienced significant trauma, how to design crisis-sensitive curricula, and how to establish a stimulating and secure environment despite resource constraints.

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