

SCHOOLS FOR DEMOCRACY

Supporting Educational Reforms in Ukraine

Narrative report 01.11.2021-31.12.2022



INTRODUCTION

The European Wergeland Centre (EWC), along with many other organisations around the world, has strongly condemned Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine that started on 24 February 2022. This brutal act of military aggression in many ways predetermined the development and activities of the first year of the “Schools for Democracy” (SfD) Programme launched in November 2021.

The current Programme’s cycle aims at facilitating systemic democratic reforms in Ukrainian education and strengthening European cooperation by promoting democratic culture and citizenship in policy and practice. It supports further implementation of the New Ukrainian School reform in Ukraine through participating to policy making, offering various capacity-building activities for educators, promoting professional learning communities, and contributing to awareness-raising on the value of reforms among the wider public. The team continued the work carried out in 2017-2021 and initiated new activities in line with the current Programme strategy (2021-2024).

Russia’s full-scale war on Ukraine has changed political situation in the country and priorities in education drastically. As of February 2023, approximately 17% of Ukraine’s territory remain under Russian occupation¹. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MoES) reports that 3151 educational institutions all over Ukraine were damaged during the year of full-scale war; 440 of them destroyed completely. Almost 8 million Ukrainians have found refuge in Europe; almost 40 percent of those are children. Some 4,4 million have applied for national protection schemes². Ministry of reintegration of Ukraine reported³ that almost 5 million Ukrainians had been officially registered as internally displaced persons (IDP) ; however, in reality, this number is even higher.

During this war, Ukrainian educational system showed unprecedented resilience. In March 2022, two weeks after the start of the full-scale invasion, nearly all schools in 13 out of 24 regions resumed education. Due to broad digitalization, solutions were found and re-invented throughout the first months of the war to safeguard every child’s right to education. While responding to new needs, schools turned into the cites of democratic citizenship hosting internally displaced persons (IDPs), distributing humanitarian help, and running volunteering activities.

The new school year 2022/23 started traditionally on 1 September. Many internally displaced children continued education at their new places of residence. Refugee children were enrolled to schools and kindergartens in the host countries according to the national legislature; many at the same time chose to combine it with remote education in their Ukrainian schools. As for December 2022, only 28% of Ukrainian schools provided learning in classrooms. Most schools worked either fully remotely or alternated between online and face-to-face learning .

The Programme adapted to the new realities of the full-scale war by developing an emergency response to continue supporting the provision of quality education in Ukraine. The team currently provides policy advice to Ukrainian and international actors, sustains close dialogue with partners in and outside of Ukraine, supports inclusion and integration of internally displaced and refugee children at their new schools and communities, builds psychological resilience of Ukrainian teachers, and facilitates their professional development during the war.

1. [A year of war](#): how Russian forces have been pushed back in Ukraine

2. [Ukraine and Refugee Response](#) (UNICEF)

3. [4,8 mln Ukrainians officially registered as internally displaced persons](#)

4. [War and Education. How a Year of the Full-scale Invasion Influenced Ukrainian Schools](#) (Cedos)

2022 IN NUMBERS

Policy support

- **5 policy** documents adopted with the participation of the Programme experts
- Team involved in **5 policy working groups** and **2 communities of practice**

Learning resources developed

- **10 webinars** reaching out to **17 000 viewers**
- **9 videos** reaching out to **10 750 viewers** through the [EWC Youtube channel](#)
- **4 videos** on Outdoor education (under development)
- **3 manuals** for Centers for Professional Development of educators
- **repository of materials** for mobile group work
- **1 digital resource on student self-government** piloted in 2022 (under development)

Online learning opportunities provided

- **6 MOOCs** available on the [Prometheus](#) platform
- **1 new MOOC “School Life Online”** launched in May 2022. 99% of the course participants say they would suggest the course to their peers
- **Over 100 000 course participants** registered for our MOOCs since spring 2021
- **40 940 participants** enrolled in our courses in 2022
- **34 265 participants** enrolled after 24 February 2022, **16 131** of them obtained certificates
- **5 blended learning courses** offered at the [EWC online learning platform](#)
- **1 new blended course** developed in 2022. 100% of the participants say they would recommend our courses to their colleagues
- **1842 teachers** (school and preschool) took part in the blended learning courses, **849** of them were awarded with certificates

Integration activities for IDPs

- **7 575 participants** (4 423 of school and 3 152 of preschool age) took part in the mobile youth work trainings
- Totally **541 trainings** organised (225 at schools and 316 in kindergartens)

Communication

- **34 900 unique visitors** to the [Programme website](#) (including 19 000 Toolbox views)
- **Over 86 000 readers** reached through **14 publications** produced and disseminated on various educational resources
- **10 750 viewers** on the [EWC Youtube channel](#)
- **5300+ followers** on the [Programme Facebook page](#)
- **2500+ subscribers** to the Programme Newsletter

POLICY WORK

The implementation of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) reform at the secondary school level remains one of the main priorities of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MoES) along with the support of Ukrainian education in times of war. Our Programme has established itself among the main international donors supporting the work of MoES. During the reporting period, the Programme has contributed to six policy working groups through expert advice and capacity building of the Ukrainian educators.

The importance of distance learning has increased dramatically in Ukrainian education due to the large number of internally displaced and refugee children. Following the request from the MoES, the Programme contributed to the development of the guidelines for assuring the quality of distance education at wartimes. As a recognition of the Programme's role and input to the implementation of the educational reform in Ukraine, the team has been invited to join the groups drafting recovery plans for education and youth policies.

The table below gives an overview of the working groups that the Programme was a part of in 2022 and the results of their activities:

Working group	Activity period	Programme role	Results
Assessment in grades 5-6 of the New Ukrainian School	11/21 - 03/22	Expert support, technical support	The document Methodological recommendations for students' assessment in grades 5-6 following the national basic secondary education curriculum (adopted in April 2022) guarantees fair, unbiased, objective, independent and non-discriminatory assessment to all students. It resulted in more effective monitoring of the students' progress in developing such civic competences as expressing one's own opinion, critical thinking, problem-solving, cooperation, respect towards human dignity, and social engagement.
Distance education model for Ukrainian schools	05/22 – 08/22	Expert support, moderation of meetings	The models of the educational process in times of war were adopted in August 2022 to assure better access to quality education for all Ukrainian students and present various solutions depending on students' place of residence, family situation, and other factors.
MoES / UIED working group on Centres for Professional Development of educators	01/22 - ongoing	Expert support, technical support	The Program contributed to introducing the concept of professional learning communities (PLC) in Ukraine through co-organising a series of webinars and actively participating in the working group for producing a three-volume manual for different actors involved in work around the Centres of Professional Development of educators.
Recovery working group "Education and Science" (subgroups: "Secondary education", "Preschool", "Extracurricular and Lifelong-learning education")	05/22 - ongoing	Expert support	The recovery plan focuses on implementing civic education through non-formal approaches by means of improving the use of distance learning in preschool, school, extracurricular and inclusive education, and recommends different ways of organising the process of education at wartimes. More details on the general recovery strategy for Ukraine can be found here: https://recovery.gov.ua/en The current draft of the Recovery plan "Education and Science" is in the process of refinement and expert evaluation.

Recovery working group “Youth Policy”	05/22 – ongoing	Expert support	The draft of the recovery plan “Youth policy” is currently being finalized and undergoing expert evaluation.
Methodological recommendations on civic and history education	05/22 – 08/22	Expert support	Programme experts participated in preparing the Methodological recommendations on teaching history & civics in 2022/23 adopted in August 2022.

While the working groups led by MoES are focused on the development of concrete policy documents, there were also established **communities of practice** that include a variety of stakeholders cooperating to offer various solutions to tackle relevant problems in education. The Programme is a member of two such communities of practice. The first one is the **Sectoral Working Group “Education and Science”** that holds monthly meetings to inform about the needs of the MoES as well as plans and activities of various international donors and other institutions supporting education in Ukraine. The second one is the **National Education Cluster Ukraine** organised as a part of the Global Education Cluster aiming at “strengthening capacity for coordinating education in emergencies, improve the quality of education in emergencies response for all affected children and youth, contribute to prepared and resilient education systems, and advocate for the prioritization of education in emergencies”⁵ and staffed by the Cluster lead agencies – UNICEF and Save the Children.

To sustain cooperation between the MoES and Norwegian partners in times of war, the Programme team organized a **visit of the Ukrainian delegation** headed by the Deputy Minister of Education Vira Rohova to Norway. Due to the problems with security situation in Ukraine and inability for the delegation to leave the country, all meetings, including the one with the Norwegian Ministry of Education, were held in a hybrid format with the Programme team participating physically and MoES team joining online. Nevertheless, it was an important occasion to discuss Norway’s support to Ukraine and the value of education for defending Ukrainian democracy.

As a part of the visit, the Programme also organised a **seminar “Lifting up the Ukrainian War Generation: The Future of Ukraine Begins in Schools”** in cooperation with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS). The seminar emphasized the importance to assure democratic future of Ukraine by providing access to quality education for Ukrainian children. Among other things, the seminar participants discussed good practices of integration of Ukrainian refugee children in Norwegian schools, and how this process can yet be generally improved.



Breakfast seminar “Lifting up the Ukrainian War Generation: The Future of Ukraine Begins in Schools”, Oslo, October 2022

⁵ [Global Education Cluster Strategy 2022-2025](#)

The Programme team regularly disseminates Programme results among policymakers in Ukraine and beyond. In August 2022, the Ukrainian field staff presented various **educational resources** developed by the Programme and adjusted for the training of educators at wartimes . Various experiences on working with schools and young people were presented to the international audience during the visits to Czech Republic, Lithuania and Germany. The programme was mentioned as a **good practice on citizenship education for young people** in a Council of Europe publication “*Can citizenship education inspire youth participation in democratic life?*” . It was also referred to in the review of the implementation of the *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education* that will be published in 2023 .

The Programme actively cooperates with international organizations that are well-established in Ukraine, such as UNICEF and Save the Children, in terms of policy work.

The Programme has been available for the Norwegian authorities, research institutions and civil society organisations having **inquiries about Ukraine**, its educational system, integration of Ukrainian refugee children in Norway, and other related questions. Oslo team held **meetings** with the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir), Oslo Municipality, Norwegian Sports Federation, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR-OsloMet), Fafo, Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS), among others and created a [resource page](#) for institutions and educators working with Ukrainian refugee children in Europe.



Webinar on School education in Ukraine with an input from Programme experts and teachers from Ukraine, March 2022

6. Presentation of the educational resources at [the MoE's conference in Aug 2022](#)

7. Council of Europe publication [Can citizenship education inspire youth participation in democratic life?](#)

MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES (MOOCs)

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) have become a popular and powerful educational tool allowing unlimited number of people to benefit from online educational resources without time or geographical restrictions. The Programme has been actively using it for several years for the sake of capacity building of the Ukrainian educators and supporting the implementation of the New Ukrainian School reform. It has proven its effectiveness at wartime when face-to-face trainings had to be significantly restricted due to the current security situation, and online learning opened up good possibilities for professional development of the Ukrainian educators who continuously showed resilience and will to learn.

Our MOOC on digital citizenship “School life online” was released in May 2022, less than three months after the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine. Over **6000 participants** enrolled in it during the **first 3 months**. The course continues the **series of MOOCs “30 Steps towards the New Ukrainian School: Educating a Citizen”** launched on the Prometheus platform in 2021 and including the following courses: “Starting towards a Successful School”, “Secrets of the Successful Principal”, “Everyday Solutions for Teaching”, and “School and Community for Students”.



Course certificate and main poster from the MOOC “School Life Online”

“School life online” is a unique online course in the Ukrainian educational market that aims at explaining the concept of digital citizenship and demonstrate the relationship between digital and civic competences. It motivates teachers and school administration to create and maintain safe digital environment at school and promote the development of social and civic competences at the digital age. The course is in line with the New Ukrainian School reform and is based on the approaches, principles, and materials of the Council of Europe and European Wergeland Centre.

The majority of the participants enrolled in the course are primary (30%) and secondary (51%) school teachers. *Diagram 1* shows a detailed participant profile:

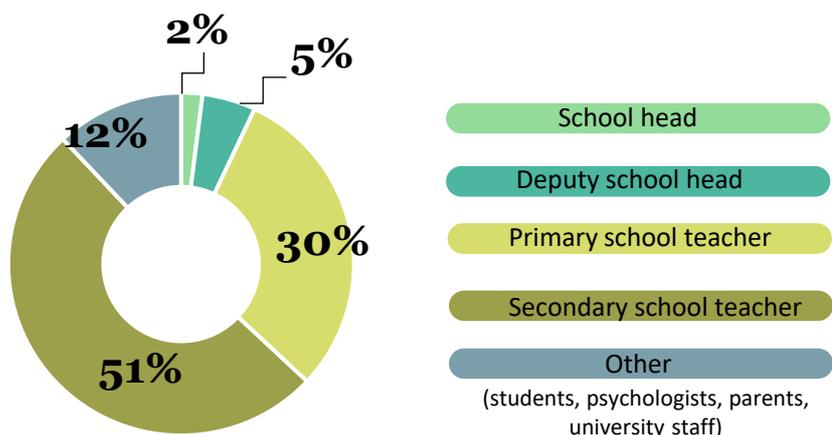


Diagram 1

Ukrainian educators show great interest in continuing their professional development despite the war. By the end of 2022, **more than 100 000 participants** enrolled in the online courses developed by the Programme. **Over 30 000 people** did so after the beginning of the full-scale war on 24 February 2022, prompting the Prometheus platform co-founder Ivan Prymachenko to muse:



“Amidst the shock of warfare and shelling, Ukrainians continue to study successfully, sometimes straight from bomb shelters. I have never felt this emotional over the dry statistics of the platform!”

It is remarkable that the number of participants finishing the courses offered at the Prometheus platform increased in 2022. The participants of our courses represent different regions and types of settlements within Ukraine, showing the importance of professional development both in big cities and small villages as shown on Diagram 2 below:

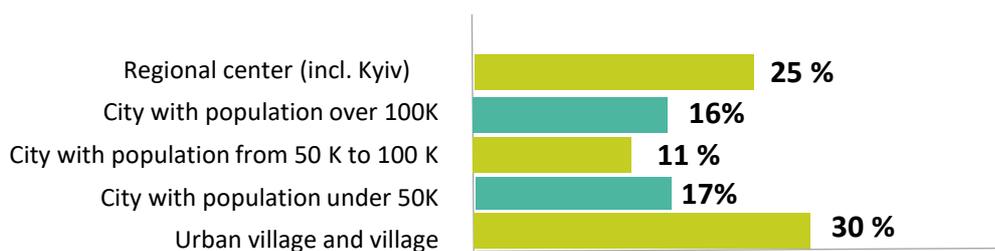


Diagram 2

Many participants gave positive feedback on the course and were highly motivated to learn more about innovative distance learning methods and obtain a certificate. Despite the war going on in the country, many teachers, just like the majority of Ukrainians, are optimists about the future and are concerned about their professional development.

BLENDED COURSES

One of the most popular learning forms among our target group is blended courses. It is a type of the educational programme that combines online learning at the designated digital platforms and live online sessions with the Programme trainers. In other words, these courses comprise both the elements of participants' independent work and direct facilitation by trainers during regular online meetings. Before February 2022, our blended courses also contained face-to-face concluding meetings. However, the offline part had to be omitted due to security reasons with the start of the full-scale war.

In the period June – December 2022, there were **five blended learning courses** available at the EWC online learning platform. Three of them - *“Democratic school governance”*, *“Transversal development of civic competences”*, and *“Development of civic competences through student councils”* – were redesigned from earlier courses and adjusted to the war situation. *“School Life Online”* was a brand-new course developed and launched in August – September 2022 right before the beginning of the school year 2022/23 to help Ukrainian teachers use online learning methods. The last blended course in our list - *“Listening to children’s voices: culture of democracy in preschool education”* – was specifically developed for preschool teachers and is one of the very few resources available at the Ukrainian educational market for this audience.

Online meetings as a part of these courses were facilitated by 30 trainers from our vast trainer network, some of them living and working close to the frontline. **Nearly 2 000 people** took part in the courses in the reporting period and **849** attained certificates. The frequent absence of electricity was no obstacle: people continued to find ways to join online meetings. *“They are unstoppable. Sometimes, course trainers conducted the same meeting twice to make sure that everyone can attend”*, says Andriy Donets, our Programme Coordinator in Ukraine.

Right before the re-launch of the preschool course in autumn 2022, a Russian missile attack took place, and thousands of Ukrainians all over the country were left without electricity, heat and internet. Still, in a couple of weeks, hundreds of preschool teachers joined the blended course. No obstacles can stop those who have a will to learn.

Thanks to these blended courses, the participants improved their knowledge and capacity in several domains including the skills of developing students' civic competences in different subjects, promoting student self-governance, and establishing democratic governance at school. They also learnt how to support students and educators traumatized by war and effectively communicate with internally displaced children and their families.

“Teachers and other educators constitute a second front nowadays,” explains Khrystyna Chushak, our Head Programme Coordinator in Ukraine. ***“They shelter displaced people, coordinate volunteer work, conduct lessons for students in Ukraine and abroad. At the same time, they feel the need to learn, to communicate with their peers, to improve professionally.”***

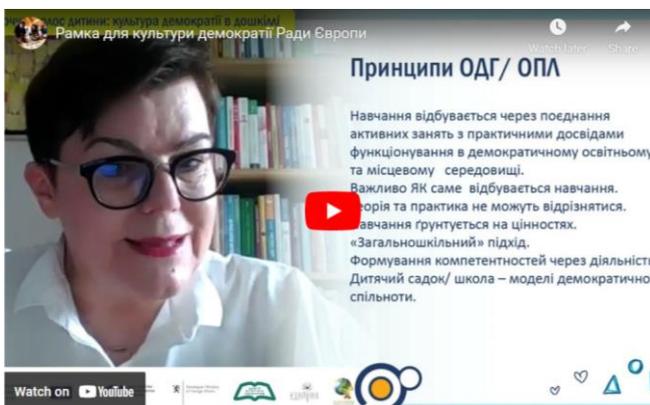
To offer extra support to this "second front", we designed a special educational module where professional psychologists offer advice to help our participants through the hardship. ***“It was important for us to equip teachers with techniques to stabilize themselves before meeting their students, who may also need support,”*** maintains EWC Advisor Marta Melnykevych-Chorna. ***“A teacher holding a lesson brings normalcy to children’s lives.”***

Face-to-face training opportunities were significantly limited for Ukrainian educators in 2022, and the participants value communication with experts and colleagues from different regions. 92% of the participants gave the highest score to our trainers’ work. Months after the courses ended, the participants still communicate in the course chats. One of the participants pointed out the following advantages of the course:



“What really encouraged learning and made it interesting was the best combination of the course elements, friendly atmosphere, and opportunity to immediately apply the acquired knowledge and skills at the lessons.”

The participants emphasized the high relevance of these courses both for the New Ukrainian School reform implementation and the situation of wartime when assuring access to quality education for all students is one of the top priorities:



Video lecture from the blended course *“Listening to children’s voices: culture of democracy in preschool education”*



Screenshot from the EWC's online learning platform

“In such a difficult time, it is very important that every child has access to education. It is now, more than ever, necessary to learn new forms of interaction with students. Thanks to this course, I learned many new forms of interaction that I’ve never heard of before.”

“I finally not only understood, but also tested what a competent approach is, I understood the peculiarities of assessment. In fact, this course should be taken by everyone who starts work at the New Ukrainian School.”

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

UNICEF emphasizes that Russia's full-scale war in Ukraine has a devastating impact on the mental health and well-being of children. About 1.5 million children are at risk of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other mental health issues, with potential long-term effects and implications⁸. Additionally, according to Cedos research⁹, 61% of Ukrainian parents report that their children show stress symptoms, such as insomnia, anxiety, concentration and communication problems. MHPSS issues are of top priority for the MoES and are currently under the patronage of the First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelens'ka. From the very first days of the full-scale invasion, MHPSS measures have also been a part of the emergency response prepared by the Programme team.

The Programme joined the efforts with other relevant actors and produced **materials** to sustain well-being and learning capabilities of the Ukrainian children both inside and outside the country. Among them are the materials to support school and preschool teachers in their everyday work and get them better equipped for providing care and support to students. Involving **leading experts** from the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS), as well as psychologists from Ukraine giving advice on how to deal with difficult questions and reduce stress among children, the Programme produced various **video resources** to support both Ukrainian educators and parents. Among them is a **series of videos and webinars**¹⁰ for building psychological resilience of educators reflecting on the issues of crisis reactions, psychological support, and school adjustment. As a part of the emergency response for preschool education, the Programme produced a series of five videos to guide preschool teachers, parents, and caregivers at wartime¹¹. They provide information on the first psychological aid for children, give advice on how to deal with difficult questions, manifestations of anger, sleeping problems and nightmares, how to reduce stress, etc.



Webinar on psychological first aid conducted by NKVTS experts



Video series "Supporting children at wartime: Tips from a psychologist"

All our blended courses contain a special **MHPSS module** providing course participants with relevant information on the first psychological help. The Programme produces new relevant resources, for example, videos and other learning materials, that are used for updating the content of the blended courses. We continuously monitor the needs of the Ukrainian educators and currently work on expanding our MHPSS package with the new materials produced by professional psychologist on the relevant topics.

On 11 April 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the law stating that at least 10% of the time used on the professional development of educators in Ukraine should deal with providing knowledge and skills on psychological support for students. Hence the Programme is up-to-date and well-prepared to meet both this new requirement and other demands of the wartime in Ukraine.

8. [War in Ukraine pushes generation of children to the brink](#) (UNICEF)
9. [War and Education. How a Year of the Full-scale Invasion Influenced Ukrainian Schools](#) (Cedos)
10. [Psychological first aid materials](#) by NKVTS experts
11. Video series "[Supporting children at wartime: Tips from a psychologist](#)"

RESEARCH

From the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine, the role of schools in local communities has changed. To document this change and assess its meaning for democratic citizenship and human rights, the Programme conducted a study **“Ukraine’s Fight for Democracy: The Role of Schools at Wartime”** in collaboration with NIBR-OsloMet, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Research Bureau Sociologist (Kharkiv, Ukraine) and Lviv In-Service Teacher Training Institute (Ukraine). Based on 30 in-depth and 3 focus group interviews with Ukrainian teachers, school principals, and high school students, conducted between May – June 2022, the study documented witness stories on civic action of educators and students opposing Russian aggression in Ukraine.



Working meeting on research project “Ukraine’s Fight for Democracy: The Role of Schools at Wartime”

Preliminary results of the project show that in addition to playing the traditional role of an educational institution providing the space for learning, Ukrainian schools have acquired at least four new roles.

They became (1) humanitarian hubs, offering localized support to vulnerable groups, primarily IDPs; (2) actors of civil resistance, providing urgent help to the Ukrainian Armed Forces; (3) spaces for trauma healing and psychological support; (4) meeting places for the local community.

These new roles have highlighted the civic mission of schools, which was necessitated by the unfolding situation. Expanding their engagement in social life, Ukraine’s schools are helping students acquire the experience of democratic participation, which is the key purpose of education in democracy.

Educational institutions demonstrated remarkable self-efficacy under unfavourable conditions, managing to adjust to the volatile circumstances and coordinate volunteering activities. In particular, several of our informants mentioned that partnership and cooperation of all school stakeholders helped them through the hardest period, and many reported an enhanced trust between teachers, parents, and students at their schools. The informants also pointed to democratic leadership as a factor that strongly contributed to school resilience.

At the same time, schools face multiple challenges caused by the ongoing war. These include, but are not limited to, integrating IDPs in their new places of residence, addressing the lack of teaching and learning resources on how to speak about the war in the classroom, as well as providing continuous psychological rehabilitation and support. Research findings reveal the importance of a democratic school culture for civic resilience in times of deep and disruptive crises.

Our research exposed changes in education for democratic citizenship and human rights during the war. Many informants, including high school students, emphasized the enhanced meaning of value-based education. Democratic values have become more tangible, as both educators and students view the Russian-Ukrainian war as a clash of values, where Ukraine stands for democracy, human dignity, human rights, and freedom.

Moreover, research revealed dramatic shift towards the development of democratic competences through practice (service learning). Civic action, volunteering and community engagement lay at the core of education for democracy and human rights in schools during the research period, sometimes at the cost of the regular lessons. Young people found practical and

meaningful ways to show their allegiance: they engaged in fundraising or helped make trench candles, camo netting, food preserves, etc. Student responders stressed the need for hands-on knowledge and skills at wartime. Many mentioned that schools should work more on developing empathy, cooperation skills, and critical thinking.

The research findings have shown that the resilient response of Ukrainian schools during the first months of the war played an important role not only in the country's resistance against the aggressor, but also in educating its children for living in a democracy. At the same time, damages caused by the war – topped by the psychological fatigue of educators, parents, and students – constitute a tremendous challenge for the Ukrainian education system. Finding the right solutions might become yet another test for its democracy.

In December 2022, the Programme launched a **new study** under the working title ***“Democratization of preschool education in Ukraine”*** that will explore how democratic values are implemented in Ukrainian kindergartens. This will be done through

(1) exploring the practices used by the Ukrainian preschool teachers to develop democratic values among children, in other words, to what extent a kindergarten helps children develop democratic competences);

(2) analyzing the professional development needs of the preschool staff regarding forming democratic competences and values among preschool children.

The study will be carried out in 2023.



INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES FOR IDPs

Another activity that popped up as a part of the emergency response scheme was the so-called mobile youth work, or mobile activities organised by the Programme trainers and aiming at integrating the internally displaced children and their families into the local communities. Organised in a form of face-to-face meetings at schools and kindergartens in relatively safe regions of Ukraine that have become a destination for millions of IDPs, the events managed to unite both local and displaced children, teachers, and parents. Our pool of trainers used a variety of pedagogical and psychological techniques, including, for example, team building and stress management. The youngest participants were under three years old, and the oldest were their grandmothers.

“I realised once again how important it is for children to have an emotionally stable adult around,” said Liudmyla Negrash, our trainer. - *“An adult who can create a psychologically safe space, where every child can be a child.”*

Our trainers have become “safe adults” for the displaced and traumatised children. Additionally, by involving and encouraging local teachers to participate, we strengthened their capacity to shape an inclusive and safe environment at schools. They learned how to deal with crisis reactions, focusing on the children’s well-being and psychological health.

Our trainer Vladyslav Kachur explained: *“When we held our activities out on the street, kids from all over the area hurried to join us. This is when the internally displaced children were truly integrated into the community.”*

“At the same time, parents joined us as well – both to enjoy their children’s playful creativity and to share their struggles”, noted trainer Oksana Bondar. She added: *“We learn about the needs of such families and try to help.”*

Often slightly reluctant at first, parents quickly became involved and active. As for the children themselves, they have shown an overwhelmingly positive response, looking forward to each activity. **More than 500 meetings** have been organised as a part of these efforts, reaching to **nearly 8000 participants**. These events created a new routine for the IDPs, helping them to alleviate the longing for home by focusing on new connections and activities. As they formed new friendships and communicated with the locals, they returned to a certain degree of a sense of normalcy – which is particularly important at wartime.



Mobile youth work meetings with preschool and school age children for both local and internally displaced children, teachers and parents in relatively safe regions of Ukraine

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLC)

Strong professional learning communities (PLC) play an important role in the professional development of educators. They allow the latter to share and discuss their pedagogical practices in a collaborative and growth-oriented way. Moreover, for Ukrainian educators PLC have become a space to share experiences on how to support student well-being and manage distance learning in unpredictable conditions, as well as an important resource for resilience in a situation when a professional group as a whole faces common difficulties. Strengthening PLC has been one of the key aims of the Programme, and after the beginning of the full-scale war this work, has gained even more significance.

Since 2016, **more than 300 Centres for Professional Development (CPD) of teachers** have been established in Ukraine. One of the main tasks of CPD is to organize learning communities on the local level to facilitate teachers' further professional development. Their role in the implementation of the democratic education reform in Ukraine is fundamental. Therefore, the Programme systematically works on the capacity-building of CPD staff. A series of **six webinars** under a common title **“Building Learning Communities: Best International Practices”** was carried for the CPD in April – June 2022. 162 educators who represented 42 institutions took part in the webinars. The leading PLC experts from France, Finland, Georgia, Norway, Slovenia, Moldova and Croatia shared their ideas on strengthening PLC both in online and offline settings. The cases presented at the webinars are reflected in a handbook for the CPD.



“Many of the needed competences for the improvement of education cannot be acquired through formal training alone. Online professional learning communities can serve the process of lifelong learning and support stakeholders’ individual responsibility towards improvement of their practice.”

Dr Pascale Mompoin-Gaillard, France
(Programme expert and webinar speaker)

The handbook consists of three volumes and responds to the most common questions on the main goals of CPD, their establishment and strategic development to strengthen local learning communities of educators. In 2023, the Programme has plans to develop and launch a special course on PLC for Ukrainian CPD in a close cooperation with our long-term partner Ukrainian Institute for Education Development (UIED).



The handbook for CPD in 3 volumes developed in cooperation with UIED

NETWORKING

The war has affected all people in Ukraine, including educators, Programme staff and network of trainers. For many years, the trainer network has been the foundation of the Programme expertise. When the full-scale war broke out, the training pool members actively supported each other both psychologically and practically. Some helped colleagues to escape from dangerous areas and collected funds for humanitarian support in the most precarious cases. Seven members of the trainer's network are currently registered as refugees, while six have IDP status and reside in relatively safe regions of Ukraine. Some trainers have shared their perspectives on the war and its effect on students and education in Ukraine in public media.

Despite the challenges of war, many trainers are still actively involved in the Programme activities. They conduct meetings and workshops at schools and kindergartens to support both educators, children, and parents in the new circumstances, contribute to developing our online and blended courses, and make an enormous contribution to their local communities.

In addition, some of the members of the trainer pool were involved in our study *“Ukraine’s Fight for Democracy: The Role of Schools at Wartime”* and acquired new skills as interviewers conducting and transcribing both in-depth and focus group interviews with teachers, school principals and high-school students.

Currently the Programme trainer network consists of **55 active members**. Networking in the Programme occurs at different levels: through conferences and other face-to-face gatherings, Centres of Professional Development of educators, and among the individual members participating in different activities together.

All conferences and other face-to-face events in 2022 had to be cancelled due to the security reasons. Thousands of educators associated with the Centres of Professional Development participated in our webinars on professional learning communities in Spring 2022 and got necessary knowledge to establish both online and offline networks. For example, a completely **new network** has crystalised and united the members conducting **integration activities with IDP children** as a part of the mobile youth work. Another example is our **preschool network** that unites **189 preschool professionals** from all over Ukraine who share useful information and resources and promote relevant learning materials.

The Programme also sees a significant potential in developing **online learning communities** and, therefore, plans various networking events and workshops on professional development using the opportunities provided due to digital resources.



COMMUNICATION

The Programme actively works with raising awareness among Ukrainian educators and parents about the value and approaches to democratic education. That's why it was essential for us to establish cooperation with two most popular educational platforms in the country - [New Ukrainian school reform portal](#) and website [Osvita.ua](#) - covering news in the field of education in Ukraine and being the main source of information for the majority of educators, teachers, and parents.

Using these platforms, the team promotes Programme products, particularly MOOCs and blended learning opportunities for a wider audience. The team also shares good practices, success stories and experiences from educators across Europe. **More than 86 000 readers** were reached through the published articles and over **10 000 viewers** watched our learning and promotion videos.



Не вчать читати й писати, а розвивають самостійність і соціальність. Як працює дошкілля в Норвегії

Тема статті: #Бельжик, #вчителька, #робочий день

8 грудня 2021



Illustration from the article on the [New Ukrainian School Reform portal](#)

2022 IN NUMBERS



Over **86 000 readers** reached with articles published on the [New Ukrainian School Reform portal](#) and [Osvita.ua](#) website



[1 promotion video](#) of the new MOOC “*School life online*” produced and disseminated reaching **8600 views**



Webinars on Ukrainian school education, PLC and first psychological help reaching to **17 000 viewers**.



5300+ followers on the [Schools for Democracy Facebook page](#)
2500+ subscribers to the Programme Newsletter



2200 views of different videos



34 900 visitors on the [Programme website](#) (including **19 000 Toolbox views**). The website was completely shut down in March –April 2022 for security reasons.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

From the beginning of Russian full-scale war on Ukraine, the issue of risk assessment and mitigation became an important concern for the Programme administration. In 2022, the following topics were of the highest priority:

Team Safety

Team safety has been a major concern of the EWC since the beginning of the war. Some members of the field staff and trainer network had to relocate to the safer regions of Ukraine for periods of time or permanently. Some needed help to leave occupied areas or territories with military activities.

While travelling to Ukraine has been completely suspended, intercity travel within Ukraine and face-to-face meetings have been postponed to safer times. For instance, mobile youth work activities mentioned above were carried out in the cities, towns, or villages where trainers resided.

The Programme management thoroughly monitored security situation throughout the year. In addition to staff meetings, various chats were in use to keep track of the rapidly changing situation. Communication with the network of trainers via Facebook and other channels was ongoing. The information on the trainers' whereabouts was updated several times since the escalation of the war.

The Programme field staff was actively involved in volunteer work and thus gathered information about the situation in Ukraine and its most urgent needs. The Programme was also in contact with other international organizations in Ukraine and well updated about the various reactions to the current situation.

Policy level

The Programme has been active in the field of school and preschool education, and, therefore, established good contacts with resource persons from various educational institutions and the MoES. Even though many left Kyiv and were banned from using official emails during the first months after the war escalated, the contact was maintained via personal emails, phone calls, and online meetings. All policy group meetings have been held online.

Cybersecurity /Personal data security

The Programme took necessary security measures related to personal data immediately after 24 February. The access to the Programme website was restricted for some time. It was reopened, but all information containing personal data or other information allowing for personal identification was removed. All sensitive data was stored on the EWC drive, and operational documents had limited access only.

Finance

Due to the financial risks related to currency exchange fluctuations in 2022, the Programme implementation partners in Ukraine sold smaller amounts of currency at the time in to mitigate this risk.

Workflow

The Programme administration did its best to follow the Implementation plan for 2022, and, as this report shows, much of what had been planned was carried out. During the first months after the full-scale invasion, we used to review our planned activities for 1-3 months ahead, carefully monitoring them and then either deciding to continue as previously planned or adjusting them to both fulfil the overall goal of the Programme and to be practical and useful under the current circumstances (i.e., launching integration activities for IDPs, introducing MHPSS measures, adjusting course content, etc.).

Russian military attacks on the Ukrainian energy infrastructure that intensified in autumn 2022, left most part of Ukraine with sporadic access to electricity, heat, and Internet access. To ensure the possibility for continuous and effective work, the Programme purchased power generators for the field staff in Ukraine after the consultations with the donor.

Psychological support to staff

From the very first weeks of Russian aggression, the EWC offered its staff a possibility to receive psychological counselling in Norway. Following that, the Ukrainian team contacted several Ukrainian psychologists specialising in war trauma and loss. The Programme trainers had the possibility to receive psychological counselling on an anonymous basis.

Remote communication and operational management

All current documentation was stored online; documents that needed to be signed were scanned and uploaded. All trainers joined the service allowing for electronic signatures of documents.

Routine procedures for internal communication have been in place a long time before 24 February and proven to be efficient.

OUR PARTNERS

Implementing partners

Center for Educational Initiatives (Lviv)



Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation (Kyiv)

Other partners in Ukraine

- Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)



- Ukrainian Institute of Education Development

- Lviv In-Service Teacher Training Institute



- Prometheus (online courses provider)

- Smart Osvita NGO



- Research Bureau Sociologist

- Step by Step Foundation International



- SavED

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

The beginning of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine has brought significant changes to Ukrainian education and uncovered new challenges and urgent demands. While the long-term priorities of the New Ukrainian School reform implementation remain the same, the reform itself was slightly slowed down due to the war situation. Ukrainian education ended up in a critical situation that required support and involvement from all stakeholders within this sector.

In addition to introducing the emergency measures, the Programme continues providing comprehensive support to various actors of the educational process in Ukraine, including policy makers, educators, students, and parents, at both school and preschool level. Following these trajectories, in the reporting period of November 2021 - December 2022, the Programme team organized events, disseminated relevant information, conducted courses, developed resources, and contributed to drafting several policy instruments in accordance with the original implementation as well as emergency plan.

During 2022, the Programme has proven its flexibility in terms of reaction to rapid changes and strengthened its role as an important actor both in Ukraine and Norway contributing, among other things, to producing relevant knowledge about Ukraine. Our research revealing the changing role of Ukrainian schools at wartime was well received by various actors in Ukraine, Norway and beyond, and provided a valuable input to better understanding of the Ukrainian educational system and its needs.

The Programme will continue working with knowledge production in 2023. A new research project on democratisation of preschool education in Ukraine was launched at the end of 2022 and will be carried out throughout 2023. It will be an important contribution to mapping the needs of Ukrainian preschool education and developing the concept of the democratic kindergarten in Ukraine.

In 2023, the Programme will continue to support capacity building of Ukrainian educators concentrating primarily on online and blended learning that, due to the war situation, will remain the main teaching-learning format in Ukraine in the near future. The Programme staff and trainers currently have a number of courses under development. Two of them – a new course on promoting democratic culture in kindergartens and the one on professional learning communities for the staff of the Centres of Professional Development of educators – are no-analogue at the Ukrainian educational market.

Finally, to assure the right to education for all Ukrainian children, the Programme sees the necessity to give special attention to de-occupied areas of Ukraine that experienced dramatic educational losses in 2022. To initiate the work in this direction, the Programme signed a memorandum of cooperation with a Ukrainian charity foundation SavED that from 2023 will pursue the work in the newly liberated areas of Ukraine concentrating primarily on teacher training, development of resources, and school-community projects in education for democracy and human rights.

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