

NARRATIVE REPORT 2024

SCHOOLS FOR DEMOCRACY: Supporting Educational Reforms in Ukraine

January - July 2024



List of abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|---|
| CoE | Council of Europe |
| EWC | European Wergeland Centre |
| MoES | Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine |
| MOOC | Massive Open Online Course |
| NUS | New Ukrainian School |
| UIED | Ukrainian Institute for Education Development |

BACKGROUND

The EWC has been actively working in Ukraine since 2013, focusing its efforts on promoting democracy and human rights in education and having implemented the Schools for Democracy: Educational Reforms in Ukraine Programme in 2015 – 2024.

The European Wergeland Centre (EWC) has been a valued strategic partner of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MoES) in implementing these reforms, strengthening the culture of democracy in education. Key policy documents that were adopted to facilitate this reform were drafted with the EWC support, involving the EWC and Norwegian expertise (e.g. new National Curriculum for primary and secondary education, National Preschool Curriculum, Quality Standards for Schools, Concept for Civic Education in Ukraine). EWC's Schools for Democracy Programme, supported by the Norwegian MFA, has worked towards implementation of the reforms in schools and kindergartens since 2015, until the full scale invasion of the Russian Federation. Over 135 000 teachers have been trained in face-to-face and online training programs, over 300 schools strengthened democratic governance, and more than 15 online courses have been developed to equip educators with more democratic and inclusive teaching skills.

Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine has changed the political situation in the country and priorities in education drastically. As of May 2024, approximately 18 percent of Ukraine's territory [remained](#) under Russian occupation. According to the [MoES](#), 3798 education institutions all over Ukraine were damaged after February 2022; 365 of them destroyed completely.

The year 2024 started with one of the most massive combined strikes Russia had against Ukraine since the beginning of the full scale war, involving 99 different types of missiles and drones against Ukraine's civil and energy infrastructure. During the first half of 2024, the humanitarian situation in Ukraine in general [continued to deteriorate](#) and had its toll on the education system as well.

According to the [MoES](#), almost 4 mln pupils are currently completing general secondary education in Ukraine, with only one third of them having a possibility to attend schools physically all the time.

The State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine [reports](#) that the educational losses that are often caused by changes in the form of education, shifting from face-to-face to remote or blended learning, air raid alarms, electricity and internet disruptions, significantly influenced the learning results of the Ukrainian pupils.

In 2024, the Programme entered the final year of the current three-year cycle that sets focus on facilitating systemic democratic reforms in Ukrainian education and strengthening European cooperation by promoting democratic culture and citizenship in policy and practice. The team continued the work carried out in 2017-2021 and initiated new activities in line with the current Programme strategy (2021-2024).

Ukrainian educators show enormous resilience at wartime and are willing to work hard, get new knowledge, adopt new approaches, and offer the best education possible for the Ukrainian children. Current report elaborates on the main trends and activities characterising Schools for Democracy: Supporting Education Reforms in Ukraine Programme in January - July 2024.



2024 IN NUMBERS

POLICY SUPPORT

- Programme experts contributed to **1** policy document that was adopted
- Programme experts involved in **4** policy working groups and **2** communities of practice

ONLINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- **1** new MOOC launched on the EWC online learning platform
- **1** new blended course for preschool teachers developed and launched
- **135 000+** course participants registered for our MOOCs since spring 2021
- **7385** new participants enrolled in our MOOCs in 2024
- **6** online blended courses offered at the [EWC online learning platform](#) in January - July 2024 (**3** for school and **3** for preschool teachers)
- **2155** educators (school and preschool) took part in the online blended courses



SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROJECTS

- **6** school - community projects in the liberated areas of Ukraine followed up and finalised

COMMUNICATION

- **34 454** readers reached through **13** publications produced and disseminated on various online educational resources
- **26 742** unique visitors to the [Programme website](#)
- **3438** unique users accessing the [Toolbox](#)
- **1127** unique users visiting the [library](#) at the [Programme website](#)
- **6900+** followers on the [Programme Facebook page](#)
- **1300+** course alumni actively participating in the online professional learning community Democratic Kindergarten Network

POLICY WORK

“Preparation to the NUS starts already in kindergarten. This is what the continuity between preschool and primary school is about.”

- Programme trainer

Despite the ongoing war, education remains one of the top priority spheres for the Ukrainian Government. Last year saw fundamental changes in the staffing and organisation structures within the MoES. Among other things, the importance of the Ukrainian Institute of Education Development (UIED), the Programme’s strategic partner since the time of the institution’s establishment in 2019, has increased significantly, covering many new areas of responsibility.

The [Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine until 2027. Education for the Winners](#) was published in March 2024. The Programme experts participated in public consultations that shaped this document. It was developed amidst Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, yet it underlines the fulfilment of the country’s commitments in the sphere of European integration, and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This key document outlines **nine strategic priorities** and the goals of the Ministry for the coming years:

1. Early childhood and preschool education
2. New Ukrainian School Reform
3. Concept of extracurricular education
4. Transformation of vocational education
5. Quality higher education
6. Development of science and innovation
7. European integration of Ukraine in the fields of education and science
8. Digital transformation of education and science
9. Support and assistance for individuals with special educational needs and those who require support in the educational process.

In the reported period the Programme contributed to **5** of the priorities defined by the MoES.

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

In 2020, a reform of early childhood education and care was launched, aiming at: reconceptualising the role of preschool institutions as education rather than childcare bodies, improving accessibility of preschool education (including rural areas), and renewing preschool curriculum. In June 2024, the new **Law on Preschool Education** was adopted. Programme preschool team is actively involved in the relevant communities of practice and a number of working groups in order to support the idea of children's participation, free play and the development of democratic competences as an indispensable part of the preschool education.

In addition, the Programme is a front-runner in capacity development of preschool teachers, offering a variety of courses that help educators to reorient their methods in alignment with the new policy developments and recommendations.

NEW UKRAINIAN SCHOOL REFORM

In respect to the NUS reform, in 2024 the MoES works in two main areas: building up to the introduction of the three-year high school in Ukraine (scheduled for 2027) and giving a fresh drive to the NUS-related changes in upper secondary education.

In July 2024, the Ukrainian Government adopted the long-awaited [National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Education](#), drafting of which was supported by the Programme throughout 2022-2023. In the beginning of the year the Programme experts participated in the working group meetings to introduce changes into the documents, which were called for by the ongoing war (including introducing civic resilience concept, as aligned to the recent legislation changes in Ukraine).

The Programme remains committed to supporting the MoES in enhancing the professional capacity of upper secondary school teachers building on the previous years efforts of collaboration with other international partners, including the Reform Support Team (RST) and the Lego Foundation, to train trainers from

regional In-service Teacher Training Institutions in charge of providing trainings to teachers working in grades 5-6 in 2023-2024. Our work has further advanced through the Programme's MOOCs and blended learning courses, providing teachers with the necessary tools to strengthen their professional skills (details below, see pp. 8-11).

CONCEPT OF EXTRACURRICULAR EDUCATION

In the process of integration with the EU education space significant attention is given to reforming post-Soviet extracurricular education to be in line with the concepts of life-long learning and non-formal education. The Programme was contacted by the [Ukrainian State Centre for the Extracurricular Education](#) to provide expert feedback on the document they were working on - template *Regulations on Student Self-Government Bodies*, and provide training for their staff and regional representatives in charge of Student Councils.

Continuing last year's efforts, the Programme staff and experts work towards strengthening non-formal education approaches in youth work in close cooperation with the Council of Europe (CoE) office in Ukraine and its project '[Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase III](#)'. The Programme has supported Compass national training course on human rights education (details below, see p. 15) aimed at bringing together formal and non-formal education. The event was preceded by stakeholders meetings with participation of the representative of the MoES, the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine, the CoE Youth Department, the EWC and its Ukrainian partner, the Centre for Educational Initiatives.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Digital transformation of Ukraine's education is one of the big priorities for the current Government. Previously, the Programme's expertise and capacity was used in a number of working groups. This year the Programme's expert Oksana Pasichnyk was invited to be a part of a working group producing recommendations on using artificial intelligence in secondary schools. As of now, [the draft of recommendations](#) has been published for public discussion.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In July 2024, the Ukrainian Government approved the *National Strategy for the Development of Inclusive Education* until 2029. In accordance with it, the MoES will continue to develop the *School of Superheroes*, a public institution established in 2021 in order to provide education to children in the hospitals. The School contacted the EWC with a request to train its staff in psycho-emotional support. The training is planned for August 2024.

To sum up, in the reported period the Programme staff and experts participated in **four MoES working groups** as shown in the table on p. 7.

One policy document of national importance, to which Programme contributed, was adopted, two more policy documents are soon to be adopted.

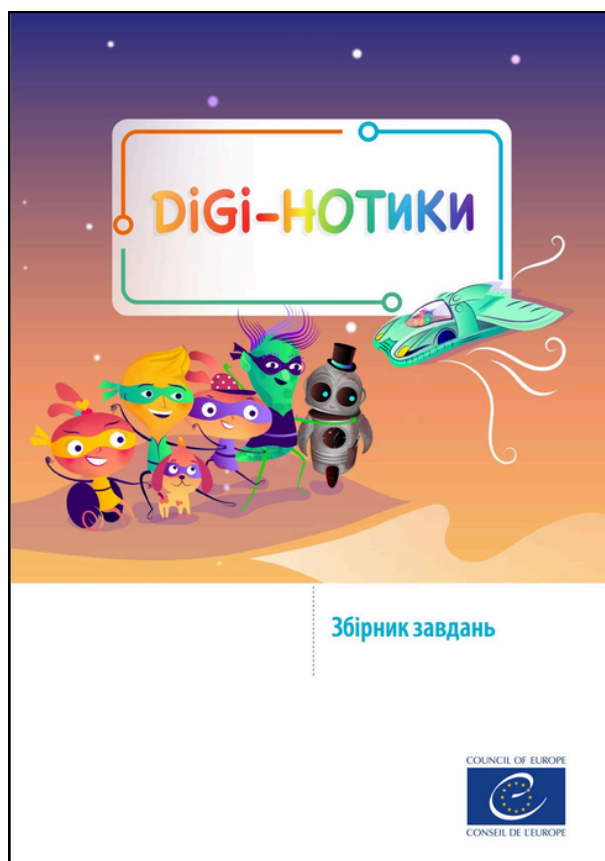
While the working groups led by MoES are focused on the development of concrete policy documents, there were also established communities of practice that include a variety of stakeholders cooperating to offer various solutions to tackle relevant problems in Ukrainian education. In 2024, the Programme has been participating in two such **communities of practice**:

- **Ukraine Education Cluster (school education):** 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 prioritisation of education in emergencies" and staffed by the Cluster lead agencies – UNICEF and Save the Children.
- **Ukraine Education Cluster (preschool education):** regular meetings organised for donors, partners, organisations working with the preschool education, and representatives of the MoES aimed at sharing information about implemented initiatives, providing updates about current situation in the regions, and disseminating relevant information. The working group is co-led by NGO Montessori UA and World Vision International Ukraine Crisis Response.

| WORKING GROUP | ACTIVITY PERIOD | ROLE | RESULT |
|--|-----------------|---------------|---|
| MoES working group drafting the National Curriculum for Upper Secondary School | Until July 2024 | Expert member | The National Curriculum for Upper Secondary School adopted by the Government |
| MoES and Ministry of Digital Transformation WG on recommendations how to use AI in secondary schools | 03/24 - ongoing | Expert member | The draft of the recommendations published for public discussion; to be approved by the MoES subsequently. |
| WG for updating the MoES platform for development of the preschoolers www.numo.mon.gov.ua | 05/24 - ongoing | Expert member | The Programme expert participated in the WG aiming to add materials and resources and make a website better accessible for preschool educators and parents. |
| MoES WG on alternative forms of the preschool education | 05/24 - ongoing | Expert member | The Programme expert has contributed to the development of the concept of mini-kindergartens. |

In the project period, the team has conducted **13** meetings with the policy makers at different levels, including the MoES, other relevant ministries, UIED, policy-makers associated with developing university programmes for teacher training, Embassy of Ukraine in Norway, CoE, etc.

In addition, the Programme team has participated in **eight** dissemination and **seven** networking meetings in Ukraine, Norway and internationally, which were directed at a wider audience, including policy-makers, representatives of the civil society sector, and other actors actively working in Ukraine.



CAPACITY BUILDING: Massive Open Online Courses

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) have become a popular and powerful educational tool allowing an unlimited number of people to benefit from online educational resources without time or geographical restrictions. The Programme has been actively developing in this field since 2021 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 training is significantly restricted due to the current security situation, and online learning opens up good possibilities for professional development of the Ukrainian educators who continuously show resilience and will to learn.

The following MOOCs have been developed by the Programme experts and are currently available at Prometheus and [EWC online learning platform](#):



Ukrainian educators show great interest in continuing their professional development despite the war. Per 31 July 2024, **over 135 000** participants enrolled in the online courses offered by the Programme since 2021. **7385** new users did so in January - July 2024. Diagram 1 shows the increase of the number of MOOC participants in the Programme period so far.

| Launched in | Course title | Hours | ECTS |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------|------|
| 2021 | Starting towards a successful school | 30 | 1 |
| | Secrets of the successful principal | 28 | 0,8 |
| | Everyday solutions for teaching | 30 | 1 |
| | School and community for students | 18 | 0,6 |
| 2022 | School life online | 30 | 1 |
| 2024 | Centres in the centre | 30 | 1 |

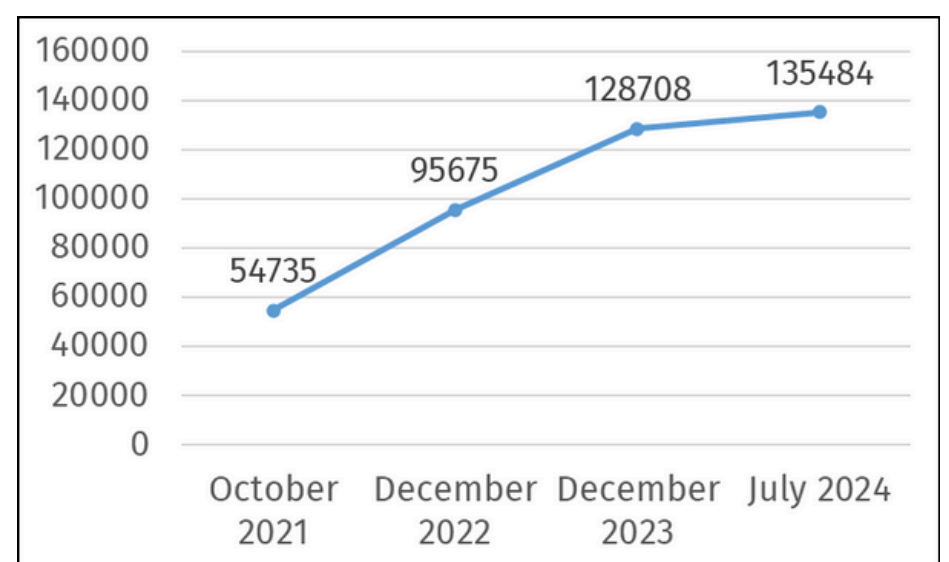


Table 1: Programme MOOCs

Diagram 1: Increase in the number of MOOC participants, 2021-2024



Since 2023, the Programme experts have been working on developing a new MOOC for the Teaching Staff Professional Development Centres in partnership with the Ukrainian Institute for Education Development. The course was released in April 2024 on the [EWC e-learning platform](#).

The course with a symbolic title “Centres in the centre” is the response to the ongoing education reform that foresees the establishment of the consultative structures to support hands-on and tailor-made professional development of teachers and coordinate pedagogical communities of practice at local level. More than 300 Teaching Staff Professional Development Centres have been established in Ukraine since 2016. One of the main tasks of this institution is to organise learning communities on the local level to facilitate teachers’ further professional development. The Centres are decentralised entities established by the local authorities and have a wide autonomy. They are entitled to play a significant role in the practical implementation of the democratic education reform in Ukraine. While the legal provisions offer a general guidance for the purpose of the Centres and expected outcomes of their activities, this course provides

detailed step-by-step instructions on how the centres work with teachers in local educational institutions, including supervision and facilitation of teachers’ professional development.

The course consists of two main parts:

1. Institutional development of the Centres and strategic planning,
2. Development of the basic competences of the Centres’ staff.

As of the beginning of August 2024, **609** participants are enrolled in the course (out of almost 3000 educators working for the Centres all over Ukraine). **354** participants (more than a half of the enrolled learners) have completed the course and received a certificate for 1 ECTS. The course has a good potential and demonstrates a positive dynamic of enrolments and finalising the course. We expect more active enrollments after the end of summer period.

A new MOOC “Online pedagogy” designed to respond to the changing needs of teachers in carrying out the blended learning is currently under construction and is supposed to be launched at the Prometheus online platform before the end of the Programme period.

Центри в центрі

Онлайн-курс для директорів, консультантів та психологів центрів професійного розвитку педагогічних працівників

Norway

CAPACITY BUILDING:

Online blended courses

“I am constantly improving my knowledge to support teachers and students in developing formative assessment skills. I try to provide information that helps teachers and students understand and implement the concepts of the New Ukrainian School in their educational process. However, it is important to understand that the successful implementation of the concept of the New Ukrainian School requires the joint efforts of many participants in the educational process - teachers, students, parents, school administration, as well as support from the state and the public.”

- Course participant
(from the course evaluation form)

| Programme component | Course developed in | Course title | Hours | ECTS |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---|-------|------|
| School | 2021, updated in 2022 | Development of civic competences through student governance | 45 | 1,5 |
| | 2021, updated in 2022 | Transversal development of civic competences | 45 | 1,5 |
| | 2021, updated in 2022 | Democratic school governance | 32 | 1,1 |
| | 2022 | School life online | 30 | 1 |
| | 2023 | How to support without disrupting: preparing student council mentors | 45 | 1,5 |
| | 2023 | Formative assessment | 45 | 1,5 |
| | 2023 | School administration and formative assessment | 45 | 1,5 |
| | 2023 | Team leadership for developing democratic culture at school | 30 | 1 |
| Preschool | 2021, updated in 2022 | Listening to children's voices: culture of democracy in preschool education | 30 | 1 |
| | 2023 | Democratic kindergarten: Comfortable psychosocial environment for everyone | 30 | 1 |

Table 2: Programme online blended courses

One of the most popular learning forms among our target group is online blended courses. They combine self-paced / independent online learning (asynchronous learning) and synchronous online sessions facilitated by the Programme trainers. All Programme’s online blended courses for school and preschool educators developed in 2021 were updated, adjusted to the war situation, and made available at the [EWC online learning platform](#) after the start of Russia’s full scale on Ukraine. A complete list of online blended courses developed in the current Programme cycle can be found in the Table 2.

All courses in the school component included a revised module on **psychological support** based on the Council of Europe materials. All trainers developing and teaching Programme online blended courses have received specially tailored training in using new materials and approaches as a part of their individual capacity building.

During January - July 2024, the Programme opened enrollment for six courses in total. These included *Formative assessment*, *School administration and formative assessment*, and *Development of civic competences through student governance* for school educators, and all three courses from the preschool component, including the newly developed *Democratic kindergarten: Psychosocial support* that first launched in 2024. Online meetings as a part of these courses were facilitated by **34** trainers from our vast trainer network, some of them living and working close to the frontline or being internally displaced. **2155** educators took part in the reporting period and **1285** obtained certificates.

The majority (71 percent) of the participants of the **courses from the school component** come from the cities with more than 10 000 inhabitants, while approximately 24 percent come from the rural areas (Diagram 1), representing all macroregions of Ukraine.

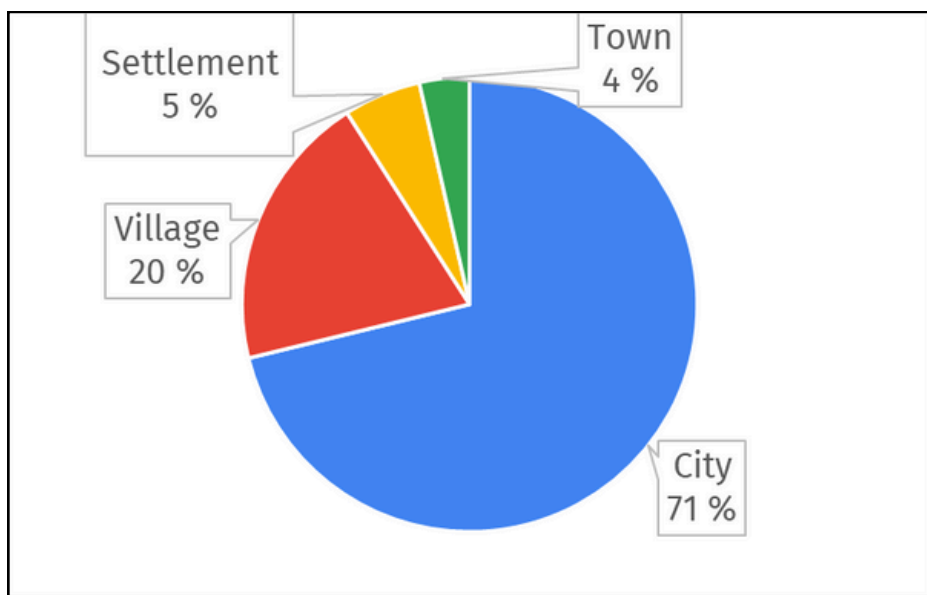


Diagram 1: Type of settlement (N=309)

29 percent of the course participants come from the macroregion West, and another 26 percent represent macroregion East despite the fact that the latter has been heavily impacted by the full scale war (Diagram 2).

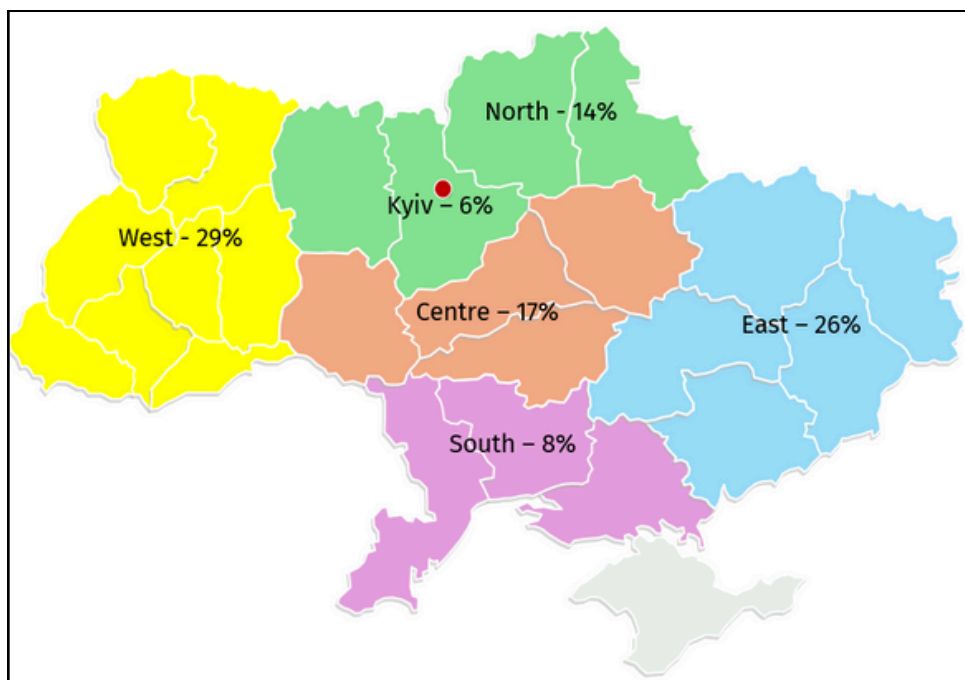


Diagram 2: Macroregions for school courses (N=309)

85 percent of the participants claim in the evaluation survey that they live in the same region of Ukraine where they lived and worked before the beginning of Russia's full scale invasion, while a little over 13 percent have become internally displaced.

Among course participants of 2024, 52 percent work as school teachers, while 42 percent are school principals and vice principals. The vast majority (99 percent) claim that the training has been useful for their institutions. As many would recommend the course they have taken to their colleagues.

The courses have received very positive feedback, and 97 percent of the participants of the school courses claim that they have strengthened their capacity to implement the New Ukrainian School concept.

Final evaluation for the **preschool courses** shows that 67 percent of the participants are highly experienced preschool educators. 32 percent have been in the profession for over 20 years, and 35 percent for 10-20 years (Diagram 3). At the same time, 90 percent of them claim that they have never taken any training in education for democratic citizenship or human rights before.

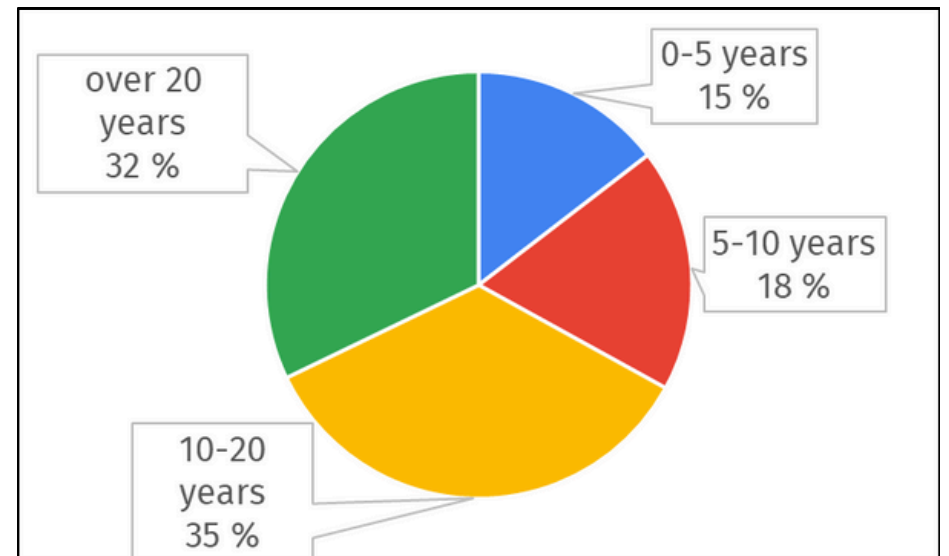


Diagram 3: Years in profession (N=933)

83 percent of all course participants work as preschool teachers, some of them also carrying out supervisor functions. They represent different macroregions of Ukraine; however, the entire 36 percent come from the East, the region that considerably suffered under the full scale war (Diagram 4).

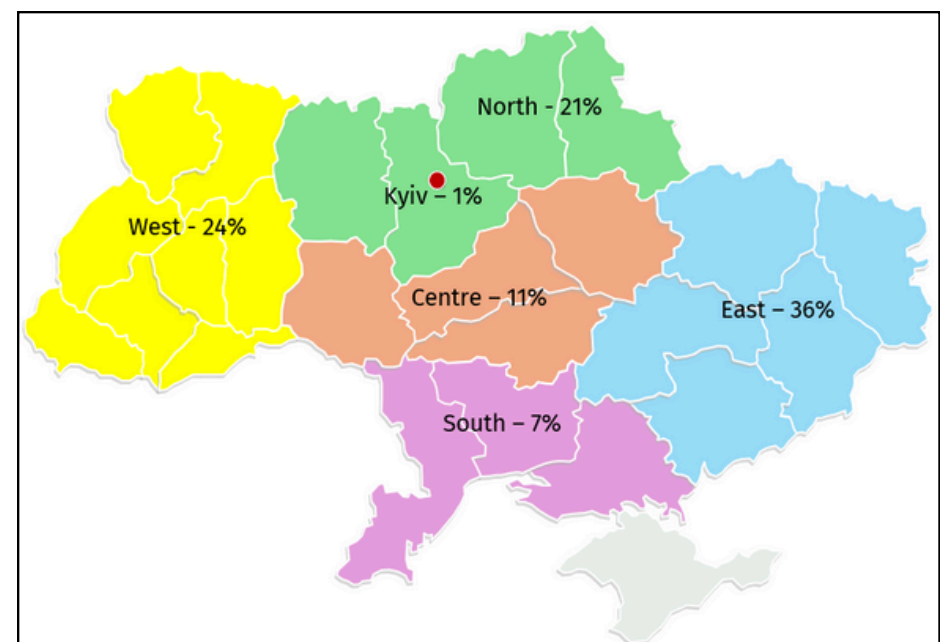


Diagram 4: Macroregions for preschool courses (N=929)

All courses traditionally receive positive feedback from the participants and are an important step in their professional development. Among preschool educators who have taken the course *Listening to children's voices: culture of democracy in preschool education*, 88 percent claim that they have learnt how to develop children's social and civic competences from an early age.

NETWORKING

“Such an interesting meeting! My internet stopped working at the end, so I did not manage to thank you. More educators should have a possibility to join in. Thank you for providing relevant and practical recommendations.”

- Kindergarten network participant
(Commentary in a chat)

Networking in the Programme occurs at different levels:

- networking of **trainers**,
- networking of **schools** (Schools for Democracy network),
- networking of **educators** (graduates of the Programme courses),
- networking for **Teaching Staff Professional Development Centres** supported by the Programme.

In the times of ongoing war networks are maintained predominantly online (including Facebook groups for trainers, schools, and preschool educators), through online working meetings and conferences. A vivid example of this is an online professional learning community established on the basis of the Programme Facebook Network of Democratic Kindergartens. It consists of the Programme course alumni and has grown from **189** members in 2022 to over **1300** in July 2024. It unites preschool professionals from all over Ukraine who share useful

information and resources and promote relevant teaching and learning materials.

The Programme sees a significant potential in developing online learning communities and plans various networking events and workshops on professional development using the opportunities provided through digital resources. In January - July 2024, the Programme continued a series of online meetings for preschool educators Let's talk about kindergarten. Eight online meetings gathered 265 participants from different parts of Ukraine who were particularly interested in peer learning and new working methods. They spoke, among other things, about conflicts among preschoolers and adults' role, project work in early childhood education, partnership pedagogy, observation and evaluation, democratic approaches in creating play-based learning environments for preschoolers, etc.

The Programme staff constantly monitors the effectiveness of different communication channels for reaching the target audience. In 2024, new chats in social media were launched to interact more actively, exchange ideas and relevant materials among the members of the online professional learning community for preschool educators. At the moment, the social media chat includes 570 followers. A variety of communication means used to connect the participants led to more active sharing of relevant pedagogical materials and technical solutions. Participants give feedback and empower each other.



YOUTH WORK

In 2023, the Programme signed a partnership agreement with an additional implementation partner – **international charitable foundation savED**. The organisation’s primary mandate is to restore access to education in Ukrainian communities that suffered from the Russian war against Ukraine.

The Schools for Democracy Programme supported the second wave of their **UActive project** that is designed for students in grades 8-11 who are offered a specially tailored civic education program in order to learn skills that would help them launch social projects for recovery of their local communities. In line with the EWC-promoted whole-school approach, the students participating in the programme learn to analyse social challenges, propose solutions, and implement them in practice in partnership with school, parents, and other community representatives.



In 2023, **ten schools** from the liberated areas of Kyiv and Chernihiv regions were selected to participate in UActive and develop their own school-community projects. In January - May 2024, **six school teams** finalised their projects:

- A gym at the old House of Culture in Myrcha village (Kyiv region)
- “Space without age”: A shelter turning into a space for self-discovery and reflection in Shkarivka village (Kyiv region)
- A green stage in Anysiv village (Chernihiv region)
- A creative youth space in Kaharlyk (Kyiv region)
- A playground and active corridors in Baryshivka (Kyiv region)
- A bomb shelter in Nove Zalissia village (Kyiv region)

In April - July 2024, UActive team summarised their experiences with school - community projects in the regions that were under Russian occupation at the beginning of the full scale invasion in a newly updated **guidebook** providing a 15-week program outline according to the main blocks of the programme:

- Principles of social entrepreneurship
- Design thinking stages
- Budgeting and project management fundamentals
- Civic education (local, national, and global levels)
- Emergency preparedness
- Public speaking basics
- Fundraising

An important advantage of this guide is that any school and teacher in Ukraine will be able to use this educational material for teaching students to create socially significant community projects. The team will launch an active communication campaign to promote the guide in autumn 2024 and will submit it for approval and recommendation from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

UActive team also works on designing a **sociological study** in cooperation with a team of sociologists in order to collect relevant data to assess impact and qualitative transformations of participants after completing the UActive program.



INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

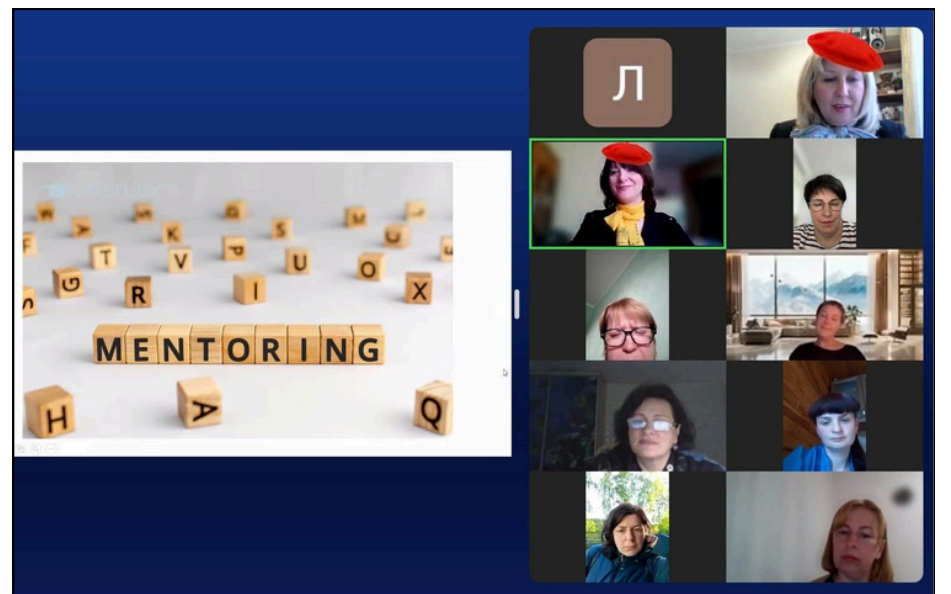
“Our teachers are a bit cautious and sceptical at first, but they soon understand the value of lifelong learning. They are delighted to work together with their colleagues from all over Ukraine and see the true value of creating a community that learns together.”

- Programme trainer

In order to facilitate institutional capacity building of the selected Ukrainian kindergartens and support the democratisation of the preschool education in Ukraine, the Programme has launched a pilot **Mentorship project developing democratic values among preschoolers** in 2023.

While mentorship is a widespread pedagogical practice in Ukrainian schools, it remains quite an unknown concept at the preschool level. Our mentorship project helps kindergarten staff assess governance and teaching practices and incorporate democratic approaches into the everyday life of their kindergartens. All mentors get a specially tailored training that makes them well prepared for managing changes, sharing their knowledge with colleagues and learning together.

In 2024, the Programme continued a successful pilot project that in 2023 included **20** kindergartens from 7 regions in Ukraine and expanded it to **31** new preschool institutions (21 of them meeting face-to-face and 10 online).



Participation in the Mentorship project developed by the Programme lasts for 16 weeks and provides necessary professional support to preschool teachers when trainers and teachers work jointly and offer activities to preschoolers based on the Activity Cards developed by the Programme experts.

These cards are meant to help preschoolers foster such values as equality, freedom, participation, respect for diversity, partnership, regard for children’s interests and needs, respect for and protection of rights, etc. The cards teach children to make their own choices, understand and identify their own emotions and emotions of other people, resolve conflicts, protect natural resources, take care of plants and animals, and many other important competences.

Importance of preschool education is often overseen in Ukraine. Giving children their first experience of social life, kindergarten is a place where children learn to interact with peers and develop the skills needed for living in a democratic society. Our mentors visit their colleagues in other kindergartens, give them advice, and help planning activities for children. Mentorship is always a cooperation based on reflections. It also has a multiplier effect engaging the entire teaching staff of the preschool institution and inviting other kindergartens to join the project.

COMBINING FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

In July 2024, the Programme supported the effort of its implementation partner Centre for Educational Initiatives and contributed to creating an important synergy between formal, non-formal and informal education in Ukraine - **Compass national training course on human rights education**.

The aim of the training course was to train youth workers, teachers, and educators to be able to implement education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in formal, non-formal, and informal educational settings. They will also disseminate the educational approaches outlined in the Compass manual.

Development of civic competencies, human rights education, and education for democratic citizenship are priorities of the education and youth policies in Ukraine. They are implemented through formal and non-formal education by educators, youth workers, and other professionals working with young people.

Establishing cooperation and mutual learning for

specialists working in formal and non-formal education will lead to better learning outcomes and provide better support to young people.

During the training course, **25** practitioners gained necessary competences to conduct education for democratic citizenship and human rights education activities in their communities in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings based on the Compass approach.

The national training course particularly emphasised the cooperation between various stakeholders in human rights education aiming at making human rights education and Compass manual available to young people in schools, youth centres, youth spaces, and through various activities of the civil society organisations.

During the training course, the participants developed several educational initiatives focused on using the Compass manual, which are going to be implemented during July - September 2024.



MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME

In February - June 2024, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) at Oslo Metropolitan University carried out a mid-term evaluation of the Schools for Democracy Programme (covering the period 2021 - mid-2023).

The [report](#) emphasises that the Schools for Democracy Programme has successfully met its objectives, even amidst the significant disruption caused by Russia's full scale war on Ukraine in February 2022, just a few months after the start of the current Programme cycle. The Programme has proven its relevance and effectiveness, stayed closely aligned with Ukraine's reform policies, and produced visible results.

The Programme team managed to implement most of the planned activities, as well as introduced and carried out an emergency plan consisting of the additional activities getting high relevance at wartime. The activities touched upon both policy and capacity level, and engaged a number of different stakeholders.

Key **recommendations** include:

- Developing “the geographical dimension of the Programme”
- Building linkages between the Programme results and statistical data
- Having a stronger focus on strengthening learning communities and educators
- Maintaining the research component as a part of the Programme
- Expanding the scope of the Programme to contribute to democratic changes at all levels of education
- Clarifying new (old) target groups, e.g., parents
- Maintaining sustainability over time



Full text of the report is available at <https://oda.oslomet.no/oda-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/3145857/2024-4-Alex.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

From the beginning of the Russian full-scale war on Ukraine, the issue of risk assessment and mitigation became an important concern for the Programme administration. In 2024, the following topics were of the highest priority:

TEAM SAFETY

Team safety has been a major concern of the EWC since the beginning of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine. 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.

The Programme management has been monitoring the security situation thoroughly throughout 2023. In addition to staff meetings, we have been using various chats to keep track of the rapidly changing situation. The Programme has also been in contact with other international organisations in Ukraine and well updated about the various reactions to the current situation.

FINANCE

Due to the financial risks related to currency exchange fluctuations in times of war, the Programme implementation partners in Ukraine have chosen to exchange smaller amounts of currency at the time in order to mitigate this risk in 2024.

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 2022 and have proven to be efficient.:

PARTICIPANTS' SAFETY

Having monitored the safety situation in Ukraine, the Programme team decided to open for carrying out face-to-face meetings in Ukraine in March 2023. However, it has been agreed on the following regulations:

- The EWC highly recommends that face-to-face events preferably involve participants at the local level. The limit for such events is 70 persons.
- Face-to-face events that gather participants from different parts of Ukraine can be conducted in safer parts of the country (Western Ukraine). According to the [statistics](#) of air strike alarms, these are four regions: Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi and Zakarpattia as per January 2024.
- Venues have bomb shelters big enough to fit all event participants.
- Venues for the events are most accessible logistically (less travel & transfers).
- Training/meeting halls are located on the lower floors with easy access to the bomb shelters.
- Face-to-face events involving participants from different regions (oblasts) should be an exception based upon special consideration and discussion between the field staff and Oslo office. The limit for such events is 40 people.
- Information about events will be disseminated post factum; there will be no announcements disclosing precise time & location of the events in social media or other channels of information.
- When booking hotels/venues, it will be agreed on last minute cancellation procedures.
- Facilitators of the event are obliged to stop work in training halls during alarms and direct participants to shelter.
- In case of rapid deterioration of the safety situation where the face-to-face event is held, organisers will discontinue all the activities.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER PLANS

“Do not stop! Create! And give us wings!”

- Course participant
(from the course evaluation form)

The year 2024 is the final year of the current cycle of the Programme. Understanding the importance of supporting Ukraine’s education at wartime and during the period of reconstruction and seeing high demand for the teaching and learning resources, the team has mobilised its forces to effectively use and promote numerous materials produced by the Programme experts in 2021-2023.

A limited number of teaching and learning resources are still about to be finalised and released in 2024. These include:

- A new **MOOC** on online pedagogy
- A set of **videos** for preschool teachers
- **Activity cards** for preschoolers and a **brochure** explaining their use
- An official **translation** of the *Descriptors of Competences for Democratic Culture for Young Learners into Ukrainian* (CoE publication)

Implementation partners work a lot on networking as an important means of recruiting new participants of the Programme and ensuring its sustainability over time. Over the past year, the Programme team has closely studied the emerging needs and developed a **project proposal** for the next three-year cycle taking into account the recommendations outlined in mid-term evaluation, expert consultations and feedback from the programme participants.

One of the key challenges for Ukraine in the nearest future is strengthening democratic resilience of Ukrainian society and its capacity to provide democratic response to challenges during the war and the post-war recovery. The new proposal seeks to address these challenges through systemic work in education and youth sectors.

As mentioned in the recent White Paper for Nansen Programme in Norway (St.Melding 8, 2023- 2024), EWC has built a strong competence needed to help Ukrainian education deal with challenges posed by the war. Leveraging the EWC's extensive experience in Ukraine and robust partnerships forged with governmental bodies and civil society organisations, we see the **need** to:

- expand the Schools for Democracy efforts to target and bind development of democratic competences in three key sectors in Ukraine: kindergartens, schools and youth work;
- step up systemic and sustainable contribution to youth and educational policy, professional development of educators, strengthening institutional capacity and fostering democratic governance of educational institutions, as well as promoting increased participation of young people in democratic processes in local communities;
- foster social cohesion, inclusion and participation of all through support for professional learning communities and networking in local communities and across Ukraine.



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Implementing partners



Center for Educational Initiatives



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Project manager

Nataliya Yeremeyeva

n.yeremeyeva@theewc.org

+47 400 81 298

The European Wergeland Centre

Karl Johans gate 2

0154 Oslo

Visit us at

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