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Abstract

On February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, causing one of the largest humanitarian crises in Europe in recent history. The war has impacted every aspect of life in Ukraine, most notably the education sector. Families who remained in Ukraine have had to adapt to a new education routine under wartime conditions, and those who evacuated abroad have had to navigate an unfamiliar learning environment. Prior to the invasion, the Ukrainian education system was undergoing transformation through government-sponsored reforms. Even though these reforms were in their early stages, they showed positive results within the schools that were selected to participate. But due to the full-scale war, government workers and education specialists have shifted their priorities to more urgent matters, such as supporting humanitarian efforts. As a result of the war's impact on Ukraine's education sector, many Ukrainian families abroad have chosen to integrate their children into schools within their host countries. The experiences of Ukrainian pupils in their host countries' schools vary greatly, but exposure to new education practices within EU countries such as Germany could be beneficial and help to further develop Ukraine's education sector in the post-war period.

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List of Acronyms

EU	European Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
LAMSA	Landesnetzwerk Migrantenorganisationen Sachsen-Anhalt
UCC	Ukrainian Cultural Community
CEPR	Center for Economic and Policy Research

Acknowledgments

1.   Introduction

1.1.   Overview

After declaring independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine has undergone a period of political and social transformation that strives to distance itself from Russia's sphere of influence in favor of a future that aligns with European goals and values. Like other former Soviet republics, Ukraine has struggled to maintain social cohesion and develop its local institutions as a result of high levels of corruption and political instability. Efforts in positive reform and institutional development have also been further exacerbated by civil unrest and conflicts over the future of Ukraine and what direction the country should move towards. Ukraine's future came into question with the Orange Revolution in 2004, and subsequently with the Euromaidan Revolution in 2014 (Friedman and Trines, 2019, Introduction section, para. 1). The Euromaidan Revolution was immediately followed by a continuous state of armed conflict starting with the Russian annexation of Crimea and the hybrid war in Donbas, Ukraine's easternmost region, and set the stage for the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

In recent years, one of the main sectors the Ukrainian government has focused its reform efforts on has been education, which had previously carried over practices from the Soviet system. Despite its merits and longstanding tradition, the Ukrainian education system has suffered from a significant lack of quality and other challenges which stem from Soviet rule and the problems that came about after the collapse of communism (Friedman and Trines, 2019, Introduction section, para. 2). The economic crisis in the post-Soviet era led to a decrease in financing education, which in turn led to other problems such as the mass migration of many educated Ukrainians abroad and the marketization of higher education (Friedman and Trines, 2019). Other factors such as high levels of corruption in Ukrainian society, the outdated system of Soviet-style higher education, and a lack of transparency mechanisms in Ukraine's higher education have significantly hindered any attempts at modernizing and improving the quality of education. Ever since Russia annexed Crimea and the conflict in Ukraine began, the Ukrainian government has made considerable efforts to implement new education reforms that seek to modernize the outdated school system and reflect the national sentiment of pursuing a European future.

Though progress has been gradual, government-funded education reforms started to show some positive results in recent years, but the focus on public issues such as education reform has been severely disrupted following the Russian military's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Millions of Ukrainian children and teachers have been forced to flee their homes, and as the war continues to destroy the social institutions of the country, education has been one of the major casualties (Specia and Varenikova, 2022, para. 2). Schools are vital in times of conflict, as they should provide a lifeline for children and offer safe spaces, a sense of normalcy, routine, and protection from harm (UNICEF, 2024, Education disrupted section). Ukrainian children have been deprived of their basic rights to education in a safe, stable, and structured environment, and have dealt with many challenges with access to quality education after evacuating from their home communities. In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, families from all

regions of Ukraine evacuated to countries across Europe, seeking refuge from the hazards of war and trying to establish a sense of stability and normalcy in the process.

In recent years, Germany has become a leading nation for refugees escaping from war-torn countries, and as of November 2022, over a million Ukrainian refugees had registered with German authorities (Kinkartz, 2022, A growing number of Ukrainians section, para. 3). Germany has developed one of the strongest refugee support programs in the European Union, offering benefits such as money for food, shelter, clothing, healthcare and household items (InfoMigrants, 2022, para. 4). Ukrainian children residing in Germany have a right to quality education, and while many Ukrainian families have had positive experiences with the German education system, there have also been certain challenges with integrating Ukrainian children into schools across the country. Since women and children comprise up to ninety percent of Ukrainian refugees across Europe, education has become one of the main issues for refugees integrating into host countries such as Germany, along with other necessary services for families such as childcare, jobs for caretakers, and emotional and psychological support (Karasapan, 2022, para. 6). Even though Germany stands out as one of the leading nations of the EU in regard to refugee support programs, the influx of refugees from Ukraine has put a strain on German schools.

Germany has provided a substantial amount of aid to Ukrainians who have fled from the war; however, many German cities and public institutions were not prepared for the large number of refugees evacuating from Ukraine. Shortly after the invasion began, the European Union enacted the Temporary Protection Directive, a policy that grants immediate and temporary protection to refugees fleeing from non-EU countries due to armed conflict or human rights violations (Lehrer, 2022, para. 1). This EU directive allows Ukrainians to bypass certain obstacles that asylum seekers would usually have to deal with, such as long application processes in EU member states and the right to year-long residence permits in their respective EU host countries (Lehrer, 2022, para. 1). Overall, this policy has been successful in its efforts to support Ukrainian civilians fleeing from armed conflict. Millions of Ukrainians have registered in EU countries since the invasion began, with Germany and Poland taking in the largest numbers of Ukrainian refugees. As a country with years of experience providing support to refugees, Germany has demonstrated its capability in supporting Ukrainian refugees throughout the full-scale war, despite any challenges.

The primary goal of this report is to understand how German education fosters a stable learning environment for Ukrainian refugee children, and how it could have a positive impact on future development in education in post-war Ukraine. Since the war is still ongoing at the time this report was written, it is important to understand that the prospect of refugees returning to Ukraine would be based on the premise that Ukraine achieves a complete victory by liberation of all occupied territories. Since many Ukrainian children living in Germany still maintain some form of Ukrainian education, this report will also assess the state of Ukrainian schools and how it contributes to the learning process of Ukrainian children while they are integrating into life in Germany. Even though many Ukrainians currently living in Germany have already decided to stay permanently, a large

percentage hope to return to their country once the war ends. Since the Ukrainian education system was undergoing reforms before the invasion, greater exposure to education systems in countries with strong democracies like Germany could have a positive influence on future reform efforts in Ukrainian schools, and best practices from German schools could be applied to Ukraine's education sector in the post-war era.

1.2.   Methodology

The main purpose of this report is to understand the impact of German education on Ukrainian children who have resided in Germany since the start of the 2022 invasion, and how it can benefit future developments in the Ukrainian education system. Additionally, this report also gives an assessment of how Ukrainian education has changed since the invasion began, addresses the key benefits and challenges of the German education system for Ukrainian families, and understands how the education process is carried out in German schools from the perspectives of both Ukrainian families and German educational institutions. While many EU countries hosting Ukrainian refugees share similar practices and challenges in addressing the education needs of refugee children, Germany was selected as the primary case study for this report due to their strong refugee support programs, access to high-quality education, and the fact that a large number of Ukrainian refugees fled to Germany after the invasion began. Even though Germany is a leading EU member in humanitarian action and refugee support, the German education system, like many other countries, was left in a weakened state in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even before the onset of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, German schools were already under pressure because of a shortage of teachers and space (Kinkartz, 2022, 'Welcome classes' section, para. 3).

Due to the ongoing war in Ukraine and its impact on the Ukrainian education system, research for this report was conducted in real time through a series of qualitative methods. The qualitative research methods incorporated into this report include record keeping, interviews, and open-ended surveys of key stakeholders, followed by an analysis of interview and survey responses. The record-keeping component consists of articles collected from various scholarly journals, news outlets, and international NGOs. The primary stakeholders in this research include Ukrainian families residing in Germany, teachers from German education institutions, and volunteers from local organizations that support the education and integration of Ukrainian children, as well as Ukrainian families, teachers, and policymakers that have remained in Ukraine since the start of the invasion. Structured interviews were conducted with four educators who work with Ukrainian children in schools across Germany. Half of the interviews were conducted virtually, while the other half were conducted in person. Interview participants were sent an electronic consent form which provided details of this research, the significance of their interviews, and the right for them to maintain their privacy and withdrawal their participation at any time.

These participants were also asked to provide oral consent before the start of their interviews and were given the option to answer the questions anonymously. Surveys

designed in the form of open-ended questionnaires were also distributed to approximately thirty Ukrainian parents whose children have experiences with the German education system. By agreeing to fill out these survey forms, participants also gave their consent to let their responses be analyzed and included in this report. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the current state of Ukrainian education, additional interviews were also conducted remotely with participants in Ukraine where the same rules of consent applied. Interview participants from Ukraine consisted of a parent from one of the formerly occupied territories and three specialists who work in the field of education. The responses to these surveys and interviews were evaluated through a thematic analysis and they provide crucial firsthand experiences and insight that the record-keeping component alone could not provide.

The methods implemented in this report give a detailed overview of the state of Ukrainian education, how it has changed over the course of the conflict, the effects of German education on Ukrainian children through a comprehensive analysis of firsthand experiences, and the implications of how Germany's education system could influence future reform efforts in Ukraine in the post-war era. In order to address the complex questions presented in this report, the report consists of six key sections: Background on Ukrainian education, maintaining Ukraine's education in a state of armed conflict, accommodating Ukrainian children in German schools, the role of non-profit organizations in refugee education, promoting Ukrainian identity while integrating into German society, and the implications of Ukrainian refugees returning to Ukraine in the post-war era. As the war in Ukraine continues and a resolution is yet to be seen, providing a safe and stable education environment for Ukraine's children must remain a top priority for the Ukrainian government and its allies. As one of the top European providers of refugee support, Germany plays a significant role in providing quality education to Ukrainian refugee children. This project focuses on the significance of Germany's education system and its impact on Ukrainian families, therefore both the German and Ukrainian perspectives were essential for carrying out this research.

1.3. Project Revision Due to the 2022 Invasion of Ukraine

This project was originally designed as part of a research grant for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program to Ukraine, an international exchange program for students and scholars which is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State and funded through the U.S. Congress. This research was to be conducted in Kyiv, Ukraine during the 2022 – 2023 academic year with the support of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and the Ukrainian Parliament's subcommittee on lifelong learning and extracurricular education. The shift to the Fulbright U.S. Student Program in Germany was made possible as a result of the full-scale war in Ukraine, which in turn shut down the Fulbright U.S. Student Program to Ukraine. The initial concept for this research was to design a "policy scape" which was intended to trace the development of the New Ukrainian School education reform initiative, determine the factors that called for such a reform, identify key stakeholders who were involved in this initiative, and

understand the significance of human rights in this new education program, which has remained a critical component of this research given the context of the full-scale war and the refugee crisis.

In January 2022, the Fulbright U.S. Student Program to Ukraine was shut down and has remained suspended due to the ongoing war. As a result of these extraordinary circumstances, this project could not be carried out as originally intended and was revised for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program to Germany. Germany was selected as an alternative country for this project because of the large number of Ukrainian refugees that have registered in this country, its strong benefits program for refugees and asylum seekers, my extensive background in the German language, and personal contact with different German organizations and educational institutions. Since the Fulbright U.S. Student Program to Ukraine was shut down, this project was alternatively carried out in Bochum, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, with the support of Ruhr University Bochum's Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict. While Ukrainian education remains one of the key focal points of this research, its focus has shifted to the role of German education in supporting Ukrainian refugees as the war continues. As one of the leading EU members, Germany plays a key role in humanitarian aid for Ukraine, and its educational institutions have the potential to provide quality education and other vital resources to Ukrainian families.

2.   Background on Ukrainian Education

2.1.   State of Ukrainian Education Prior to the 2022 Invasion

The collapse of the Soviet Union saw a turning point in the development of Ukraine's national identity, and Ukrainian independence was followed by a series of reforms throughout different sectors of Ukrainian society. In the post-Soviet era, the Ukrainian government aspired to remove itself from the former, Soviet-style centralized command system in favor of a more free, democratic system and introduce market reforms that would encourage economic growth and help the country integrate into the global economy. In order to adapt to these new realities, the Ukrainian education system had to undergo significant reforms in the post-Soviet era. Although the downfall of the Soviet regime in 1991 presented new opportunities for the newly independent Ukraine, it faced new challenges which were also prevalent in other post-Soviet republics. In his article "Education in the Period of Post-Soviet Transition in Ukraine," Benjamin Kutsyubura (2011) stated that reforms in the political arena, the decline in demographics, a rising cost of healthcare, growing unemployment, and environmental damage were among the key issues that Ukraine had to face following independence (p. 288).

These challenges also had a negative impact on Ukrainian education, and problems such as academic corruption and a shrinking education system became widespread throughout the country (Friedman and Trines, 2019, Challenges and Problems in Education section, para. 1). As these new challenges emerged in the post-Soviet era, it became necessary for the Ukrainian government to reform its education system. Education reforms in Ukraine have been carried out by the Ministerstvo osviti i nauki, or the Ministry of Education and Science, which currently oversees education throughout the country (Johnson, 2024, Education section). Ukraine's education system was among the first social spheres that saw major reforms after gaining independence, and it has been undergoing a period of transformation ever since. According to Kutsyubura (2011), education, like Ukrainian society in general, was caught amid a transition from totalitarian Marxist-Leninist ideology to democracy and pluralism (p. 288).

In order to adapt to the new realities in the post-Soviet era, the Ukrainian education system required significant educational reforms, including new structural organizations within secondary schools, universities, curricula, and teacher and educational administrator training at all levels (Kutsyubura, 2011, p. 288). Even though the necessity of these new reforms was realized and understood by many experts within Ukrainian civil society, the transitional process has been slow, and many reform efforts have had modest results at best. In spite of the initial education reforms implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science, education practices and institutional cultures of post-communism have remained fairly unchanged since Soviet times and have created a greater disparity between education-policy declarations and actual practical changes (Kutsyubura, 2011, p. 288). One of the main goals of updating Ukrainian schools was to create an education system that reflected changing political and social realities and would emphasize individuality, nationality, and morality among students and teachers (Kutsyubura, 2011, p. 292). However, progress has been slow due to budget constraints

and a lack of political commitment, expertise, and overall strategy (Kutsyubura, 2011, p. 293).

Education reform has been a slow and arduous process, but Ukrainian policymakers and professionals in the education sector remain determined and have continued to develop new policies to support them. In their article "Ukrainian educational reforms: brief history overview," Professors M. Ia. Kichula and K. B. Oleksii (2018) gave the following statements regarding the significance of educational reform, especially for a nation like Ukraine in the midst of a transitional period: "The educational sector is a strategically important area of development of society and the state; it must provide such a level of human capital development that will meet the needs and challenges of a post-industrial society and a knowledge economy based on high-tech technologies. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the development of education is a matter of national security" (p. 32).

The first significant education reforms in Ukraine were developed as part of the transitional process from a former communist, post-Soviet state to a functioning, independent democracy. The restructuring of education began at the end of the Cold War prior to the Soviet collapse, starting with the announcement from "the above" on the background of the union reform of general and professional schools in 1984, and the Ministry of National Education of the Ukrainian SSR officially began reconstruction of school education in the context of the Law on languages in the Ukrainian SSR in 1989 (Kichula and Oleksii, 2018, p. 32). In 1990, the Declaration on the State Sovereignty proposed the creation of the national education system in the following areas: the development of national education legislation, the revival of the Ukrainian school, and the restoration of the national component in the content of education (Kichula and Oleksii, 2018, p. 32).

The next step of the reform process came in May 1999 when the Law "On general secondary education" was passed by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. New amendments were added to this law in 2010, which established the eleven-year term of education for obtaining a general secondary education, allowed distance learning, and the opening of special classes for teaching students with special needs (Kichula and Oleksii, 2018, p. 33). In 2014, the Euromaidan Revolution and the Russian annexation of Crimea further motivated the Ukrainian government to pursue a European future and reform its institutions, which at the time still had a significant Russian influence. Shortly after the revolution and the conflict with Russia began, the Ministry of Education and Science established the Institute of Educational Analytics in 2015, which was responsible for the organization and coordination of the studies and development on the issues of studying the qualitative and quantitative state of the education system (Kichula and Oleksii, 2018, p. 33). However, in the post-Euromaidan era, the most significant new additions to the education reform process have come about under a program called the New Ukrainian School.

2.2. New Law on Education and the New Ukrainian School

As part of the education reform process, the Ukrainian government adopted the new Law on Education in 2017, which was intended to regulate the basic principles of the new education system. The next goal following the adoption of this education law was the adoption of the Law on "General Secondary Education," along with the approval of the new National Primary Education Standard (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2019, para. 3). These laws and new standards for education came about as part of a greater initiative in education reform called the New Ukrainian School, which was launched by the Ukrainian government in 2016. As a key reform of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, the main objective of the New Ukrainian School was to develop a modern school for Ukrainian students that will not only provide them with knowledge, but also with the ability to apply that knowledge in real life. While it would take years for the policies of the New Ukrainian School initiative to take full effect within all areas of the Ukrainian education system, there have already been some positive outcomes as a result of the reform. Positive outcomes include the introduction of modern pedagogical approaches to teaching in Ukrainian schools, the development of critical thinking skills, and supporting the individual needs and interests of students (American International School and University, 2023, Advantages section). Since the New Ukrainian School program was first launched, the Ukrainian education system was brought closer to European standards and created better opportunities for young Ukrainians (Hrynevych and Koberynk, 2020, para. 1).

Although the New Ukrainian School has shown positive results, students and parents have expressed criticisms for the program such as a heavy workload for high school students, insufficient teacher training, a lack of necessary material resources and modern equipment, large class size, and a general uncertainty as a result of the reform (American International School and University, 2023, Reviews section). Despite these criticisms, education sector reform has been widely seen as one of the most successful transformations in Ukraine since the 2014 Euromaidan Revolution (Hrynevych and Koberynk, 2020, para. 1). Given the historic and cultural significance of Euromaidan, it became clear that the development of new education reforms that favored a modern, pro-European curriculum over the outdated, authoritarian style of education reflected the national sentiments of pro-Western Ukrainian leaders and civil society members. According to Olga Mezentseva (2018), one of the main goals of the New Ukrainian School, as outlined in the new Law on Education, is the decentralization and effective management that will provide schools with real autonomy (p. 69). The structure of Ukrainian education was also changed; elementary education was changed to last for four years, basic education (gymnasium) would last for five years, and high school (which includes academic high school, vocational lyceum or college) would last for three years (Mezentseva, 2018, p. 69-70). Furthermore, teachers were also granted a lot more freedom and autonomy, so that they could master new methods and approaches to teaching. The New Ukrainian School aims to create the school where "individualization of the learning process is realized, continuity throughout life is fostered, and education is oriented towards personal development" (Mezentseva, 2018, p. 70).

Mezentseva (2018) further stated that the New Ukrainian School was designed to educate an innovator and a citizen that can make responsible decisions and adhere to human rights (p. 70). The shift from a strict, teacher-centered approach to teaching, which was a mainstay of the Soviet education structure, to a more student-centered, decentralized approach demonstrated that the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science was committed to bringing the quality of national education in line with EU standards. In his article "Ukrainian Education in the New Era," Anton Filippov (2018) mentioned that in addition to the knowledge pupils gain from their main academic subjects, the new curriculum was also designed to promote other practical skills, such as critical and pattern thinking, creativity, as well as the ability to control emotions in a constructive way, evaluate risks, make decisions, and solve problems (What is Planned for Implementation section, para. 6). This reform initiative also sought to address the issue of corruption in Ukraine's schools by implementing a transparent system of school funding. Every educational institution would be required to disclose information about their budgetary receipts and their purpose, and parents could see how much money is spent by the state on school-related expenses so that they could effectively control the use of their contributions (Filippov, 2018, What is Planned for Implementation section, para. 7).

2.2.1.   Focusing on Human Rights in Ukrainian Schools

While the concepts of the New Ukrainian School have only been put into practice in recent years, there have been some noteworthy successes in education reform since the new Law on Education was adopted. Some of these accomplishments include updates to the curriculum for 1st – 9th grade Ukrainian pupils, the implementation of a new standard of elementary education into a hundred schools across Ukraine as part of a trial period, the development of an action plan for the full implementation of the New Ukrainian School across all schools, and higher qualifications obtained by licensed elementary school teachers (Filippov, 2018, What's Been Done section). However, one key area that the New Ukrainian School hopes to improve on is human rights, which has only become a priority in the last few years. In order to modernize the Ukrainian education system, which has traditionally followed a more authoritarian teacher-based approach to learning, the New Ukrainian School aims to introduce new practices that promote human rights and human rights education, which is a cornerstone of modern teaching practices. In his article, Anton Filippov (2018) stated the following: "The New Ukrainian School is, according to the plan, a place where a child would like to go with enthusiasm" (Secondary Education as the Key Area of Reform section, para. 5).

Filippov (2018) also noted one comment made by the principal of an experimental school in the city of Dnipro: "The principal of the experiment says that the new standard of education envisages "child-centrism," in which the child, instead of the subject, is the top priority" (Dnipro's First Attempts section, para. 3). By employing student-centered approaches to education, the school reaffirms the rights and dignity of the individual student, characteristics that traditional forms of education in post-Soviet countries such as Ukraine are not known for. The New Ukrainian School was designed to work on the

principles of the learner-centered model of education. Under this model, the school takes into account the rights of the child, the child's abilities, needs and interests, thus implementing a principle of child-centrism in practice, to the maximum possible extent (Mezentseva, 2018, p. 71). Implementing human rights practices has begun to take precedence in recent years as it not only reflects the standards of modern teaching practices within the European Union but addresses the issue of human rights violations committed in Russian or separatist-controlled territories since the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict in 2014.

As human rights becomes an increasingly important topic for Ukrainian policymakers, competencies in this field have also begun to be developed. In a 2021 OSCE report titled "Current State and Prospects of Teaching Human Rights in Ukraine's Schools," Serhii Burov, director of the Educational House of Human Rights in Chernihiv, and Oleksandra Kozoroh, a human rights education expert and OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine (2021) stated the following in regards to the formal inclusion of human rights practices in Ukrainian schools: "On November 23, 2015, under the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 501/2015, the National Strategy in the field of human rights and the Action Plan for it was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, which aims to develop competencies in the field of human rights" (p. 7). However, the implementation of human rights practices in the national curriculum has been slow and challenging. According to Burov and Kozoroh (2021), it was determined that many goals of the Action Plan for the National Human Rights Strategy remain fully or partially unfulfilled (p. 7).

In late 2020, a public discussion was held by state institutions and public organizations on addressing the challenges of the National Strategy in the field of human rights and how the content should be updated. The revised content of the National Strategy no longer requires the approval and implementation of the developed National Strategy program, but instead, it calls for the need to provide content at all levels of education that promotes awareness of human dignity and a strengthening respect for human and fundamental rights (Burov and Kozoroh, 2021, p. 7). While the implementation of human rights practices in the new education curriculum may present new challenges to the New Ukrainian School, Ukrainian authorities and civil society members understand the significance of human rights and its role in the education process. By employing student-centered approaches to education, the school reaffirms the rights and dignity of the individual student, which in turn will bring the Ukrainian education system closer to the modern practices and education standards in EU countries.

2.3.   Long-term Challenges

While recent education reforms have yielded some positive results within the Ukrainian school system, many of the challenges Ukrainian schools have faced for decades hinder future chances of success. Some of the key problems that continue to interfere with education reform include a lack of resources and poor infrastructure, corruption, outdated methodologies and teaching materials, and low morale among educators. In his article "Why Ukraine's Education System is Not Sustainable," Satu

Kakhnonen (2018), the World Bank Country Director for Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine, stated the following in regards to the state of Ukrainian schools:

"While visiting schools in Ukraine, especially village schools, it is hard to believe that the state spends 6 percent of GDP on education - one of the highest rates of public spending on education in the world. Ukrainian schools often lack adequate facilities, modern equipment or quality textbooks. Rural schools may sometimes lack indoor restrooms, to speak nothing of their outdated classrooms. But this is only the tip of the iceberg; crumbling infrastructure is just the most obvious challenge" (para. 1).

Even though education is generally held in high regards in Ukrainian society, a lack of education resources, outdated facilities, and poor infrastructure are the biproduct of a more serious underlying issue. Corruption is a systemic issue that affects every level of Ukrainian society, and even in the post-Euromaidan era, it continues to have a negative impact on education. Rampant government corruption was one of the main causes of the Euromaidan Revolution, the level of tolerance for corruption in Ukraine remains high, and as in several other post-communist countries, Ukraine's education system is among the sectors most affected by corruption (Friedman and Trines, 2019, Academic Corruption section, para. 2).

2.3.1.   Dealing With Corruption

Corruption takes many forms in Ukraine's schools and academic institutions, with some of the most prevalent forms being bribery in admissions to examinations fraud, the misallocation of funds, extortion, ghost teachers, and dissertation plagiarism (Friedman and Trines, 2019, Academic Corruption section, para. 2). Additionally, unofficial payments are commonplace throughout Ukrainian schools. It is socially acceptable for schools to collect money from parents for classroom remodeling and gifts for teachers, and some parents also pay bribes to get their children accepted into a prestigious school, for better grades, or for mandatory tutoring (Kakhnonen, 2018, para. 3). Such practices adversely affect students' desire to learn and their understanding of fair competition. While corruption is believed to be most rampant and quickly spreading in tertiary education, particularly in the competitive medical universities, the OECD recently detailed similarly endemic problems across the Ukrainian school system, from preschool to upper-secondary levels (Friedman and Trines, 2019, Academic Corruption section, para. 2). Besides having an adverse impact on academic integrity and a student's desire to learn, corruption also leads to a loss of educational quality, the misallocation and outright theft of critical resources, low public trust in the school system, and a negative reputation among the international community.

2.3.2.   Adapting to New Methodologies and Equipment

Outdated methodologies and teaching materials are also another significant challenge in the education reform process. According to Kakhnonen (2018), both the approaches towards teaching and towards learning are out of date, with students practicing rote citation without knowing how to use this knowledge in everyday life (para.

2). One of the traditional approaches that continues to dominate Ukrainian education is an emphasis on theory and the use of outdated textbooks to conduct rigid lessons with no practical application. In his article, Kakhnonen (2018) described the structure of many Ukrainian classes: "Lessons are overburdened with theoretical knowledge and lacking in practical application, while textbooks are academically dry and overburdened with secondary factual materials – dampening motivation and curiosity among students" (para. 2). Addressing the issue of outdated methodologies and teaching materials is one of the fundamental goals of education reform programs like the New Ukrainian School. However, progress has been slow and may take years to resolve because of how deeply engrained these teaching practices have become in Ukrainian education, along with all the other challenges schools face. Factors such as a lack of resources, poor infrastructure, corruption, outdated methodologies and teaching materials all contribute to low teacher morale, which is another key issue that education reforms seek to address.

Furthermore, a reluctance for some teachers to adapt to the new curriculum has also become a cause for concern. According to Kakhnonen (2018), the teaching profession's low social status and even lower salaries demoralize hardworking men and women, and a lack of opportunities for personal growth stifle creativity, dynamism and ultimately, motivation (para. 4). Even though the New Ukrainian School aims to boost teacher morale through an increase in spending on education and increasing teacher salaries, one of the program's shortcomings is not taking into consideration the views and attitudes of teachers towards education reform. In their report "Primary School Teachers' Attitude to the New Ukrainian School Reform," Inna Khyzhniak and Iryna Viktorenko (2021) mention that monitoring the results of the New Ukrainian School program at the state level and public initiatives shows optimistic indicators for the reform, yet it does not take into account the important focus of the New Ukrainian School, which is motivated by teachers and their personal beliefs in the need to transform the national education system (p. 299). While many teachers throughout Ukraine understand the benefits of the new practices introduced by the reforms and welcome these changes, other teachers who are accustomed to the traditional system of education are not as optimistic and have been reluctant to accept them.

Throughout the implementation process of the New Ukrainian School, some educators lacked access to reliable information on the reforms and the positive changes they would bring to the education system, which in turn led to certain myths and disinformation. Some of these educators believed that giving a child more freedom and flexibility in their education and the right to choose would lead to an overall reduction of the intellectual level throughout Ukraine, and that the changes in the education system would produce a larger amount of work for teachers with little to no results in their students' academic achievements (Khyzhniak and Viktorenko, 2021, p. 301). However, monitoring and evaluation efforts have been conducted by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science since the reform was first implemented in 2018, and every year since then has shown an increase in positive feedback from teachers across the country (Khyzhniak and Viktorenko, 2021, p. 303). According to Khyzhniak and Viktorenko (2021), such results indicate the overall effectiveness of the New Ukrainian School program for

the national education system and the need to organize additional activities to further increase teachers' motivation, which has been on the rise in recent years (p. 303).

2.3.3. The Threat of Armed Conflict

Reform initiatives like the New Ukrainian School have the potential to mitigate challenges within the school system, but the threat of armed conflict has been the most significant external challenge to the education system since 2014. The annexation of Crimea and the start of the war in Donbas had a devastating impact on the Ukrainian economy, political landscape, and education system. According to UNICEF, approximately 10,000 people had been killed and 1.5 million were displaced by 2017, with about 700 educational institutions damaged or shuttered, and around 220,000 children left with an urgent need of safe schools (Friedman and Trines, 2019, The Impact of War section, para. 1). In the early years of the conflict, there were also 143 higher-education institutions located in the annexed or occupied territories of Crimea and Donbas, so Ukraine had lost a significant part of its educational and scientific resources (Friedman and Trines, 2019, The Impact of War section, para. 1). In addition to the other challenges which overwhelmed the education system, the Ukrainian government was still in the process of coping with the effects of armed conflict and its impact on education. While efforts have been made to reform the education system and address key challenges in recent years, the threat of armed conflict has become the primary focus since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

3. Maintaining Education in a State of Armed Conflict

3.1. Overcoming Disruption of the Education Process

The armed conflict in Ukraine started in 2014 following the Euromaidan Revolution and has negatively impacted multiple sectors of Ukrainian society, including education. However, intense fighting had mostly subsided following the signing of the Minsk Agreements. From 2014 to 2022, the war was mostly contained in Donbas, where Ukrainian government forces fought Russian-backed separatists for control over key territories of Donetsk and Luhansk (International Crisis Group, 2024, para. 2). The Ukrainian education system was already overburdened and undergoing a period of transformation through the new reforms implemented by the Ministry of Science and Education. But everything changed on February 24, 2022, when the Russian military launched its full-scale invasion, thus beginning the "hot phase" of the war in Ukraine. In response to the invasion, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science closed all schools across the country, with no notice of reopening. With active fighting no longer confined exclusively to the easternmost regions of the country, the conflict instantly suspended the education of approximately 5.7 million children between the ages of 3 and 17 years old, many of whom had already missed out on months of education due to deadly attacks on schools in eastern Ukraine, or school closures related to COVID-19 (Han, 2022, para. 1). Attacks on civilian infrastructure have occurred on a frequent basis since the current phase of the war began, and Ukrainian schools have been among the targets of these attacks.

In October 2022, it was reported by the Ukrainian government that 2,677 educational institutions had been damaged by the fighting, with 331 of them having been completely destroyed (van der Merwe and Mahmood, 2023, para. 4). With a significant amount of fighting taking place in civilian-populated areas throughout the course of the war, schools have not only been a target for shelling and missile attacks but also repurposed as military bases or storage depots for weapons and munitions. Shortly after the full-scale invasion began, Ukrainian schools managed to resume lessons through online learning and return to in-person classes, albeit under special circumstances. However, adapting to wartime conditions has been a challenge for teachers, students, and parents. Air raid sirens, blackouts, lack of internet service, no heat, and a shortage of teachers are among the challenges Ukrainian schools face, with blackouts in particular caused by Russian attacks on energy infrastructure leaving many students to alternate between remote and in-person classes (Snyder, 2023, Quick catch up section). Furthermore, the invasion brought mass dislocation just as Ukrainian schools were emerging from two years of online learning during the pandemic, with over 8 million Ukrainians having fled their country, and approximately 6 million Ukrainians displaced internally as of April 2023 (Caryl, 2023, para. 6).

Despite the constant challenges and the threat of armed conflict, Ukrainian education has managed to adapt and improvise in order to maintain some semblance of normalcy under wartime conditions. For instance, the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic allowed Ukrainian teachers and students to get acclimated to distance learning

and online education platforms, which has benefited the Ukrainian education process greatly during the full-scale war. In an interview with Olga Turval, a People's Deputy at the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and an active member of the Committee on Education, Science and Innovation, she gave the following statement on how education in Ukraine has changed since the beginning of the invasion: "Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine, cardinal changes have taken place in education. Of course, there are changes to learning conditions as a result of the war. But at the same time, the education system adapts to the realities of the times" (O. Turval, personal communication, May 7, 2023). Deputy Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023) also described the overall state of Ukrainian education following the COVID-19 pandemic and how the full-scale invasion has caused a further decline in the quality of education: "It is also worth mentioning educational losses. Over the past year, there has been a deterioration in learning outcomes at every level of education. Unfortunately, we do not have up-to-date PISA data, but in light of the pandemic since 2020 and the full-scale war, it is clear that the quality of education is declining."

In order to maintain a consistent level of quality for education, monitoring and evaluation efforts must continue in real-time as Ukrainian schools continue to adapt to wartime conditions. Deputy Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023) believes that for the sake of the quality of education, it is necessary to simultaneously evaluate the scope and content of educational programs. Following the start of the full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science has also had to adapt and improvise new ways to ensure that children and students can maintain their education, and despite the war, the reform of the New Ukrainian School continues. Deputy Turval gave a few examples of some of the decisions the Ministry of Education and Science has made under martial   law:
"In 2022, the Ministry approved a new procedure for admission to higher education. Due to military actions in Ukraine, traditional entrance exams to higher education institutions were canceled, accordingly, the order regulating the conduct of external examinations became invalid. Starting from 2022, and this year, the results of the National Multi-Subject Test (NMT) will be used for admission to the first course. Regarding professional education, in 2022, the Ministry of Education and Science approved the rules for the internal academic mobility of students of vocational education institutions during martial law. From now on, students can continue their studies in other vocational schools, while receiving a document on the professional education of the institution where they studied" (O. Turval, personal communication, May 7, 2023).

While the Ukrainian education system is under constant pressure from the hazards of war, teachers, students, and policymakers have shown significant resilience in the face of adversity and must continue to adapt and improvise as the situation in Ukraine remains uncertain. Besides closely monitoring the state of education and identifying key areas that can be improved upon given the circumstances, the Ukrainian government with its international partners must work to address the pressing education needs of Ukrainian pupils and students. Modern technology plays a significant role in continuing education through online lessons and distant learning programs. Furthermore, the role of human rights in modern education practices is more critical than ever in the Ukrainian education

system, especially in providing students and educators the practices and resources they need to overcome the psychological trauma of living under wartime conditions.

3.1.1. Education in Occupied and Hostile Territories

Although every school across Ukraine has been affected by the full-scale war in some form, the situation for schools located on the front lines or in occupied regions is especially dire. Ukrainian territories under Russian occupation face the greatest challenges in providing safe, stable, and quality education to students who have remained in those areas. In an interview with the Ukrainian human rights education expert and OSCE Project Coordinator Oleksandra Kozoroh, she described the impact of the war on schools along the frontlines and in occupied territories: "Educational institutions from territories where hostilities were actively taking place and which were quickly occupied by the Russian Federation faced great difficulties - the irregular evacuation process affected the export of necessary documents and equipment, which slowed down the process of resuming the work of educational institutions in a remote format" (O. Kozoroh, personal communication, May 23, 2023). The evacuation process itself, while disruptive to the learning environment, was necessary in order to ensure the safety of students and teachers and that they had access to resources in Ukrainian-controlled territories. According to Oleksandra Kozoroh (personal communication, May 23, 2023), there is a desire to preserve the identity, contacts and connection with local communities, which found themselves forced to migrate, and a large number of students who evacuated from occupied territories, some of which had schools that were damaged or destroyed, were able to resume their lessons with classmates and teachers in safer territories away from the front lines.

For Ukrainians who are still living under Russian occupation, thousands of students and teachers face pressure to switch to Russian schooling (Hyde, 2023, para. 8). The international community has taken note of war crimes in Russian-occupied territories, particularly crimes against Ukrainian children. In March 2023, the International Criminal Court issued warrants for the arrest of Russian President Vladimir Putin as well as Maria Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, for their alleged involvement in the mass deportation of Ukrainian children from occupied territories to the Russian Federation (International Criminal Court, 2023). In times of armed conflict, education can be weaponized and used as a tool for propaganda as it has the power to influence young minds. Throughout the conflict in Ukraine, this is most evident in the case of Crimea, which has been under Russian control since 2014. According to the Crimean Human Rights Group (Hyde, 2023, Ideological battle section), Russian education in occupied territories aims to erase Ukrainian identity and militarize children, and with regards to Crimea, history lessons claim that Ukraine was always a part of Russia, and army cadet courses and classes sponsored by local law enforcement agencies start for children as young as six. Despite the pressure to switch to Russian education, many Ukrainian families and teachers in Russian-occupied territory find ways to continue Ukrainian education.

Communities in formerly occupied territories also face similar challenges, such as rebuilding damaged schools and other facilities, providing medical aid and mental health resources for coping with trauma, the constant threat of shelling and missile strikes, and still being susceptible to power outages due to attacks on the electrical grid. One Ukrainian mother from Irpin, which saw intense fighting in the first month of the invasion, described the detrimental effects of war on education and the ongoing challenges following Russian occupation:

"Everything has changed, the quality of service provision, the ability of children to attend classes, the opportunity to spend time on homework has decreased, because there is often no electricity and air raid sirens. If the air raid sirens go off at night for several hours, no one sleeps, neither the children nor the teachers. In our case, everything is mostly online, because my daughter's school has not yet been restored. It is very difficult for a teenager without socialization" (anonymous informant #1, personal communication, May 11, 2023).

A lack of preparation before the start of the full-scale invasion also meant that most bomb shelters in communities across Ukraine had to be improvised, and for towns like Irpin where intense fighting took place, this made carrying out daily tasks like work and education virtually impossible. According to the mother from Irpin (personal communication, May 11, 2023), the biggest challenge that the Ukrainian civilian population faces is a lack of purpose-built bomb shelters in places like schools and other public facilities. Since the full-scale invasion began, daily life in occupied territories has been made difficult due to battlefield conditions, particularly in communities near the front lines that have experienced heavy fighting. In the case of Irpin, when there was no electricity for several days, students and teachers could not devote this time to learning, but rather to basic survival, such as finding places to keep warm, prepare hot meals, or charge devices like phones and laptops (anonymous informant #1, personal communication, May 11, 2023).

Teachers and school administrators in occupied and hostile territories have demonstrated resilience, courage, and ingenuity against overwhelming odds. In one instance, a school director from Rubizhne, Luhansk Region, immediately worked with her staff to provide online lessons to their students while also converting the school's basement into a bomb shelter for community members in the first few days of the invasion when power outages occurred with less frequency (Bilyakova, 2023, para. 1). There was another case in a village in the Luhansk Region, located on the demarcation line between Ukrainian-controlled and separatist-controlled territories since 2014, where another school director had invested time and resources into converting her school's basement into a bomb shelter (Vostok SOS, 2023). When the war in Donbas began in 2014, this school director worked to make her school's bomb shelter a functional learning environment and prepared emergency supplies in case a full-scale war ever broke out (Vostok SOS, 2023). In instances like these, citizens in active combat zones are unable to evacuate, and have resorted to not only converting basements into bomb shelters but also utilizing them as temporary living spaces.

3.2. Ukraine's Humanitarian Crisis and Support from the EU

The war in Ukraine has created one of the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II and has forced millions of civilians to leave their homes in search of safety and protection. As of spring 2023, approximately 8.2 million Ukrainian refugees have evacuated across Europe, with approximately 5.9 million internally displaced people within Ukraine (Dempsey, 2023, para. 5). Armed conflict not only disrupts the education process within a country but also violates citizens' right to work and study in a stable and safe environment. In order to meet the education needs of Ukrainian pupils and students, basic humanitarian needs must first be met. International organizations like UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross have worked to ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided and that Ukrainian civilians are able to live in safe and inhabitable conditions. UNHCR has been working in Ukraine alongside local authorities, partners and community organizations to deliver protection and humanitarian assistance to people in need and has managed to reach 4.3 million people inside Ukraine with assistance (UNHCR, 2022, para. 2).

The International Committee of the Red Cross, which has worked in Ukraine since the conflict began in 2014, has scaled up its work across areas directly affected by hostilities and in neighboring countries where Ukrainian refugees currently reside. The International Committee of the Red Cross in collaboration with its partners has been able to provide emergency relief, health care, essential infrastructure, protection, and restoration of family links to Ukrainians who are living in hostile areas or who have been displaced due to the war (ICRC, 2024, Our work in Ukraine section). Communities across Ukraine are in constant need of humanitarian assistance due to regular attacks on critical infrastructure, and given the massive destruction of homes, energy, and other essential infrastructure throughout the country, winterization efforts have also been crucial (UNHCR, 2022, para. 2). For civilians who have evacuated to neighboring countries, this has added another significant challenge to Ukraine's education problem in that Ukrainian children have been removed from their native environment and have had to adjust to life in their host countries.

Shortly after the invasion of Ukraine began, the European Union opened its borders to Ukrainian refugees under the Temporary Protection Directive. The objective of this decision was to introduce protection for Ukrainian nationals and third-country nationals residing in Ukraine who were displaced on or after February 24, 2022, as a result of the military invasion by the Russian armed forces (European Council, 2022, section 11). The Implementing Decision of the Council of the European Union stated the following in regard to granting protection to Ukrainian refugees: "Given the extraordinary and exceptional situation, including the military invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and the scale of the mass influx of displaced persons, temporary protection should allow them to enjoy harmonized rights across the Union that offer an adequate level of protection" (European Council, 2022, section 16). The vast majority of Ukrainian refugees are women and children, which make up approximately ninety percent of the total number of refugees (UNHCR, para. 2). This was a result of martial law within

Ukraine, which prohibited Ukrainian men between eighteen to sixty years of age from leaving the country.

Although the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic may have helped Ukrainian students and educators adapt to online learning platforms, there were significant challenges in adapting Ukrainian schools to wartime conditions in the immediate aftermath of the full-scale invasion. Widespread panic and uncertainty, along with the mass evacuation of Ukrainian civilians in the early days of the invasion prevented many schools from carrying out online lessons. According to Oleksandra Kozoroh (personal communication, May 23, 2023), due to the sudden evacuation, many teachers themselves were left without technical means to conduct the educational process. As Ukrainian refugees abroad managed to settle into their host countries and the situation in various regions of Ukraine became more stable, many Ukrainian students both at home and abroad were able to resume their lessons through online platforms. Support from the international community, particularly countries in the EU, has also been critical in allowing Ukraine to maintain its education process throughout the course of the full-scale war. According to Deputy Olga Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023), since the start of the invasion on February 24, 2022, Ukraine has received substantial support in the field of education from international organizations, the EU, and foreign governments. Deputy Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023) further stated that there are over forty organizations and governments of foreign countries that work as partners with the Ministry of Education and Science in the development of education in Ukraine.

In response to the influx of refugee students from Ukraine, many host countries' education systems have started to implement a variety of inclusion policies and practices to support the learning, social, and emotional needs of these students (OECD, 2022, p. 2). Policymakers in countries hosting Ukrainian refugees have had to deal with the challenges of promoting the integration of those who do not plan to return to Ukraine, and the question of integrating Ukrainian children into local school systems has been a point of concern. The first challenge was to ensure access to education for all refugee students, and the second challenge was to develop educational policies and practices that respond to the needs of refugee students and promote their inclusion in schools in the near and long term (OECD, 2022, p. 2). Despite these challenges, EU countries have played a significant role in providing necessary aid to the Ukrainian education system and adapting their own education systems for the influx of refugee students. Deputy Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023) stated that the European Union provides both external support for Ukraine and internal, in particular, providing living conditions for Ukrainian students and creating conditions for studying in the European countries where they are located.

3.2.1.   Protecting Ukraine's Children Under Wartime Conditions

Education is a fundamental human right and is essential for students in times of armed conflict. Beyond teaching, schools and universities can provide a safe space, give students routine, and connect them to life-saving resources such as meals and mental health services (Marston and Tsolakis, 2022, para. 3). Education helps children to thrive

not only in times of stability, but even more so in moments of fragility (Mann, 2024, Reimagining education section, para. 4). Even though the Ukrainian education system has managed to adapt to wartime conditions, Ukrainian teachers and students are still at a disadvantage in providing and accessing quality education. Repairing schools will require significant time and resources, and many students and teachers will experience stress and trauma that make learning and teaching difficult (Marston and Tsolakis, 2022, para. 5). Furthermore, civilian populated areas in conflict zones such as Ukraine are at risk of attacks on education; militaries and armed groups bomb, burn, and loot schools and universities and kill, rape, arbitrarily arrest, and recruit students and educators (Marston and Tsolakis, 2022, para. 8). Children are among the most vulnerable groups in conflict zones and require protection from the threat of violence and armed conflict. Exposure to violence and devastation from war is detrimental to a child's psychological well-being and personal development, and in order for Ukrainian school children to continue their education effectively in this wartime period, their basic needs such as protection from harm, safety, and psychological support must be met.

Recognizing the rights of refugee groups such as the Ukrainians who fled their country due to the full-scale war and implementing the necessary measures to protect their rights are the first steps towards supporting the education of their children. Certain international law instruments such as the United Nation's Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict recognize specific inalienable rights of women and children and call for the protection of these vulnerable groups in times of crisis and armed conflict. The Declaration specifically prohibits attacks and bombing of civilian populations, the use of chemical and biological weapons on civilian populations and requires states to abide by the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the Geneva Convention of 1949 (UN General Assembly, 1974, section 2). It also requires countries to take measures to end "persecution, torture, punitive measures, degrading treatment and violence," especially when they are targeted against women and children, as well as recognizing "imprisonment, torture, shooting, mass arrests, collective punishment, destruction of dwellings, and forcible evictions" as criminal acts (UN General Assembly, 1974, section 5). Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, there have been multiple reports of war crimes committed by the Russian armed forces against Ukraine's civilian population, yet the most significant crimes that have been recorded are those against children.

While children have been among the victims of alleged war crimes such as the indiscriminate shelling of civilian infrastructure, including schools and residential buildings, the deportation of Ukrainian children in Russian-occupied territories is recognized as the most severe of these crimes. A briefing published by the European Parliament stated that various international and Ukrainian actors, as well as several media outlets, report that the Russian occupation forces have deported Ukrainian children and that they were sent away for 'ideological screening' (Del Monte and Barlaoura, 2023, p. 2). In April 2023, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 2495, which condemns the forcible transfer and deportation of Ukrainian civilians, particularly children, to the territory of the Russian Federation, and calls for prosecution of these acts as war crimes (Parliamentary Assembly, 2023, section 2). According to the

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2023), as of mid-April 2023, 19,384 children have been deported and only 361 were returned to Ukraine (section 5). In March 2023, the International Criminal Court announced that it had issued arrest warrants for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova for their role in the illegal transfer of Ukrainian children in Russian-occupied territories since the start of the full-scale invasion. According to a 2023 article published by the U.S. Institute of Peace, the issuance of these warrants is a significant step forward for international accountability for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and it will also be critical for the international community to continue to pursue accountability for the crime of aggression (Ashby et al., 2023, What do the warrants mean section, para. 3).

The international community and various international institutions have condemned the illegal transfer of Ukrainian children to Russian territories, and various humanitarian organizations have worked to help Ukrainian parents locate their children and reunite families. While locating and reuniting children with their families presents many challenges, efforts are being made to rescue children who have been deported, as well as establish stronger measures to protect Ukrainian children and hold the perpetrators of these war crimes accountable. As for the issuance of arrest warrants for President Putin and Lvova-Belova, this has boosted morale for Ukrainian authorities and provides legitimacy to Ukraine's ongoing investigations for war crimes committed against its people (Ashby et al., 2023, How do these warrants support section, para. 1). Shortly after the invasion began, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the EU's protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine in April 2022, calling for 'the creation of safe passages and humanitarian corridors,' and 'the provision of the urgent help needed by children who are internally displaced, stranded in, or unable to leave encircled areas,' while explicitly mentioning the need for vigilance for unaccompanied and separated children and children from institutional care settings in Ukraine (Del Monte and Barlaoura, 2023, p. 10).

The protection of Ukrainian children has taken many forms, and besides efforts to rescue children deported to Russia, the evacuation of children in occupied or liberated territories of Ukraine has been a constant priority for the Ukrainian authorities since the invasion began. For instance, after the liberation of Kherson in early November 2022, civilians from liberated areas of the southern Kherson and Mykolaiv regions were evacuated, fearing that Russian damage to the infrastructure, lack of heat, power, and water would have been too severe for people to endure during the winter months (Leicester, 2022, para. 1). Various domestic and international organizations, such as UNICEF, the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Razom, and United24 have also provided a significant amount of humanitarian aid to vulnerable regions of the country, especially liberated territories or communities near the front lines. In the case of UNICEF, which has been working in Ukraine since before the start of the invasion, education equipment, medical supplies, and hygiene products have been delivered to key areas throughout Ukraine (UNICEF, 2024, How is UNICEF helping section). In neighboring countries, UNICEF is working with local governments and refugee-hosting municipalities to provide services such as education resources, clean drinking water, and health services (UNICEF, 2024, In neighboring countries section). By continuing to

provide support to Ukrainian children and meeting their basic needs for survival and protection, they will be able to resume their education under more stable circumstances.

3.3.   Significance of Online Education

Since the full-scale invasion began, protecting Ukraine's children and providing them with access to education has been a priority for both the Ukrainian government and its allies. As of January 2023, approximately five million children are displaced within Ukraine and abroad (World Vision, 2023, p. 2). Neighboring countries hosting Ukrainian refugees play a significant role in protecting displaced children outside of Ukraine and also providing them with education opportunities. Meanwhile, providing quality education under wartime conditions has been a major challenge within Ukraine, and with millions of students displaced within the country and abroad, online education has become the defining feature of Ukrainian education during the full-scale war. In a study conducted by the State Service for the Quality of Education of Ukraine for the 2022 – 2023 academic year, it was reported that in the first semester of the academic year, it was not possible to resume full-time in-person education throughout Ukraine (State Service for the Quality of Education of Ukraine, 2023, p. 6). These changes in education occurred mostly in Ukraine's eastern and southern regions, which were located near the frontlines. Deputy Olga Turval described the necessity of shifting to online lessons in regions near the frontlines:
"According to a recent study, about 800,000 schoolchildren changed the form of obtaining education from full-time to distance education. Most of these changes concern the East and South of Ukraine, where about 40% of students were forced to go abroad or move to safer regions in Ukraine. Accordingly, in view of the constant threat to the safety of students, the form of obtaining education has also changed. In the first half of the year, only 15% of institutions worked face-to-face, 33% worked remotely, and 51% worked in a mixed form" (O. Turval, personal communication, May 7, 2023).

In times of humanitarian crises, refugee children are unable to access education, but due to the rise of online education following the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning platforms provided an immediate resource for accessing education for Ukrainian children. Since February 2022, millions of Ukrainian children have been able to access online and distance learning in spite of school closures, which has reduced gaps in instruction, but more importantly, helped Ukrainian students maintain a sense of normalcy (Marston and Tsolakis, 2022, para. 4). Oleksandra Kozoroh (personal communication, May 23, 2023) explained the significance of online education and how the pandemic allowed Ukrainian educators and policymakers to adapt to remote learning: "Due to the adaptation and previous experience of working with online education systems in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was much easier to launch work processes online."

As countries like Ukraine have adapted to online education platforms, remote learning is now prevalent in all levels of education in Ukraine, and the Ministry of Education and Science promotes online learning platforms for primary, secondary, and tertiary education. There are various online schooling initiatives to maintain access to

education during the war for students within Ukraine and refugee students living abroad, and Ukrainian schools have access to platforms like the All-Ukrainian Online School e-platform, which was established during the pandemic, for distance and blended learning (World Bank, 2022, section 3). Deputy Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023) also described the role of online education in helping students and adults to develop their knowledge and skills in their respective professions: "Recently, the Ministry of Education and Science presented the distance learning platform "Professional Education Online", which will allow students to study labor professions online, teachers to supplement their education with modern digital content, and anyone who wants to acquire a labor profession or improve professional qualifications remotely."

As with the COVID-19 pandemic, distance learning provides a convenient alternative to traditional classroom learning that is easily accessible in times of war. Distance learning also allows for greater flexibility for students whose daily schedules have been disrupted by armed conflict, especially when lessons take place in an asynchronous manner. However, as learning conditions during the pandemic illustrated, online education presents several challenges, many of which are exacerbated by the conditions of war. For instance, many rural communities across Ukraine lack the funding, resources and infrastructure to adapt to online learning. But attacks on civilian infrastructure and frequent power outages have made accessing online education difficult for even the most developed parts of the country as well. As the mother from Irpin (personal communication, May 11, 2023) described, learning takes place mainly through the use of online platforms and group messenger apps, which families like hers were able to adapt to quickly during the pandemic, but factors like air raid sirens and the absence of electricity stops the learning process completely.

While online education can provide a practical alternative to in-person classes, the effectiveness of distance learning is hindered by the lack of a dedicated learning space and stable classroom conditions. Younger students, particularly those that are still in primary education, often require parents' supervision to access their online lessons. Many parents have also expressed concerns over their children's inability to independently connect to online lessons, and have cited being overloaded with other tasks, emotional instability, and a lack of motivation as reasons why their children could not effectively study online (State Service for the Quality of Education of Ukraine, 2023, p. 8). Even though online education is hindered by wartime conditions and does not present a suitable replacement to traditional in-person classes, it nevertheless offers an important alternative to conventional forms of learning. Given the current state of Ukraine's education system, it is the most practical option and has proven to be a critical tool in maintaining some form of stable education for Ukrainian children.

4. Accommodating Ukrainian Children in German Schools

4.1. Integrating Ukrainian Children into the German Education System

With over 8 million refugees recorded to have fled Ukraine as of April 2023 (Caryl, 2023, para. 6), the top three EU countries that have taken in the most refugees since the beginning of the full-scale invasion are Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic. With one of the highest numbers of Ukrainian refugees in the European Union, Germany stands out among other host countries in that it has well-established refugee support programs and has taken in over one million Ukrainian refugees since the start of the full-scale invasion (Reuters, 2022). Refugee benefits in Germany are among the strongest in the EU, and as protected refugees, Ukrainians residing in Germany have access to services such as public health insurance, job placement opportunities, unemployment benefits, child benefits, financial assistance for students of higher education, and retirement benefits (Prange de Oliveira, 2022, para. 6). In accordance with the Temporary Protection Directive and the regulations of each federal state in Germany, Ukrainian refugee children are also entitled to education within the German school system. Even though access to compulsory schooling in Germany is regulated differently in each federal state, most of the states have established a similar framework for integrating Ukrainian students, which includes additional classes called "welcome classes," preparatory classes, intensive classes or German language classes (UNESCO, 2023, How are students being integrated section).

While the circumstances may vary depending on each individual Ukrainian family and their living situations, in general, the majority of Ukrainian children residing in Germany continue to participate in online Ukrainian classes part-time while also attending German schools full-time, as required by local law. Most Ukrainian families gave priority to their children's Ukrainian education after arriving in Germany, as many of them were eager to return home as quickly as possible and reluctant to integrate, especially once they had the opportunity to resume classes with their Ukrainian schools online (Kinkartz, 2022, A growing number of Ukrainians section, para. 4). However, as time goes on and the war in Ukraine continues, more Ukrainian families are likely to prioritize their children's German education as they continue to integrate. Even though Ukrainian children have access to the German education system, German schools have faced multiple challenges within their own system prior to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. As of January 2023, over 200,000 Ukrainian students have registered with German schools, and this increase in students has presented a significant challenge for Germany's overburdened schools (Schulze, 2023, para. 2). German schools have faced problems such as a shortage of teachers and a lack of space in schools for years, and these problems were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the influx of Ukrainian refugees, German schools have a greater need for school counselors and trauma experts, and the lack of space in schools and kindergartens has municipalities across the country worried about giving priority to Ukrainian children over local children (Schulze, 2023, para. 3).

The experiences of Ukrainian students who are enrolled in German schools vary drastically and can depend on multiple factors such as the student's age, their individual needs, the staff and resources available at their German host school, the type of school they are attending, and the regulations of the state or school district where they are residing. According to some educators in the German school system, getting these students acclimated to studying in a German school and having a sense of belonging has been a significant challenge since they first arrived. In an interview with a teacher at a gymnasium in the city of Mannheim, Baden-Württemberg, she described the efforts teachers and staff at her school took to help the Ukrainian students feel welcomed and get them acclimated to their school: "We (the teachers) tried to create a cozy atmosphere, we would let them stay the whole day in our school's multimedia library, where they had access to sofas and armchairs and had the opportunity to relax (anonymous informant #2, personal communication, May 2, 2023)." Privileges like these were granted to Ukrainian students when they first arrived as a show of support and gave them time to adjust to their new schools in a new country. But these privileges were temporary, and as time went on, Ukrainian students were treated as equals with their German peers and expected to follow the same rules. According to the teacher from Mannheim (personal communication, May 2, 2023), after a certain period of time, the Ukrainian students were expected to go to class instead of spending the school day in the multimedia library and were held to the same standards as their German classmates to show them that they would no longer be treated as foreigners, but as equal members of the school community.

Some schools have divided their Ukrainian students into groups based on their level of German and how quickly they have acquired the language. The teacher from Mannheim, who works with two groups of Ukrainian students ranging from ten to seventeen years of age, stated that her students with an advanced level of German hope to integrate into German society as quickly as possible and practice their German skills on a regular basis (anonymous informant #2, personal communication, May 2, 2023). Age is also an important factor to consider for the faculty in German schools who have been tasked with working with Ukrainian students. According to another teacher who works in the town of Lich, in the state of Hesse, her school decided to divide their Ukrainian students into two age groups in order to design lessons with activities that are more age-appropriate depending on the group (anonymous informant #3, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

Communication has been a significant challenge for both teachers in German schools and Ukrainian students since most Ukrainians who came to Germany have no background in the German language, and likewise, many German teachers are unable to communicate in Ukrainian and Russian. In order to alleviate these challenges, German host schools rely on Russian or Ukrainian-speaking teachers who work in German schools to act as interpreters. Some schools have even hired qualified Ukrainian educators living in Germany as part-time assistant teachers to help with students who are still unable to communicate in German. The teacher from Mannheim, who is a native Russian speaker, described her ability to communicate with Russian-speaking Ukrainian students and the significance of communicating with them in their native language: "It helps to establish an emotional connection with them that they cannot have with other teachers, knowing

that this teacher understands them and that he or she knows their language or identity, so I think that language is a powerful tool" (anonymous informant #2, personal communication, May 2, 2023). The teacher from Lich, who is native Ukrainian and works as an assistant teacher, described her role in supporting Ukrainian children to adapt to their German school and how she and her German counterpart relied on common languages to communicate with their students:

"I work with children who have problems with the German language, so we decided to divide them into two groups – those who can learn the language quickly and those who cannot. I had the age group from ten to sixteen years old, and my German colleague also had children from ten to sixteen years old, but her students were an advanced group that learned German more quickly. Her students knew English and could learn German through English, so she used English as a tool to teach them German" (anonymous informant #3, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

Despite the benefits of having common languages like English and Ukrainian to communicate with their students, this teacher also mentioned the challenges that came with being a native Ukrainian speaker:

"As for my students, it was difficult to work with them in the beginning because firstly, they were traumatized by the war. Secondly, they only tried to speak with my colleague in English and they would only talk to me in Ukrainian. They see me as a fellow Ukrainian who can still help them and understand them. From one side, it was good that they saw me as an equal person who could help them, but on the other hand, they did not want to communicate or practice their German. After the current school year started, everything improved with them. We worked a lot with them and then they began to speak with us more in German" (anonymous informant #3, personal communication, May 17, 2023).

Russian or Ukrainian-speaking teachers that work in German schools have played a strong role in supporting the learning and integration process of Ukrainian children in communities throughout Germany, but not all German schools have access to employees like these. Many German schools rely solely on their German staff to support Ukrainian students registered with their schools and provide them lessons. One teacher from a school in the town of Hattingen, North-Rhine Westphalia, stated that her experience working with Ukrainian children has not been much different from working with other students, and that age and educational background are significant factors in a student's motivation to learn, as opposed to where they come from (anonymous informant #4, personal communication, June 2, 2023). However, the language barrier remains a key issue, and German teachers who are unable to communicate in Russian or Ukrainian, often have to rely on creative solutions to interact with their Ukrainian students. In an interview with another teacher in Hattingen, she described her initial lessons with her Ukrainian students:

"When I first started teaching there, it was only me with about twenty kids, and that was the biggest challenge, because they need individual help and they come with such different levels of German. Some already knew a little bit of German, most did not know any German, some spoke a little bit of English, some did not. So the first few weeks I was

figuring out how I was going to communicate with them" (anonymous informant #5, personal communication, June 2, 2023).

Some of the communication methods many German teachers use to overcome the language barrier include using translators on their personal devices, using keywords or phrases in a language that the students understand, or relying on other Ukrainian students who are more knowledgeable in German to act as interpreters for their classmates who cannot fully understand German. According to the second teacher from Hattingen (personal communication, June 2, 2023), it felt impossible for her in the beginning to give simple instructions in German. This teacher (personal communication, June 2, 2023) also mentioned that a few students would respond to German, while a few others would respond to English, but the rest still did not understand her instructions, at which point she had to resort to Google Translate on her tablet. Besides the language barrier, the first teacher from Hattingen (personal communication, June 2, 2023) cited other key challenges that Ukrainian students face, such as finding new friends and adapting to a new teaching system, all of which are challenges that children from any country would face.

The first teacher from Hattingen noted some key differences between the German and Ukrainian education systems, which provides a better understanding as to why many Ukrainian students have experienced difficulties adjusting to the German school system. According to the first teacher from Hattingen (personal communication, June 2, 2023), there is a big change in teaching methods for Ukrainian children and adult learners in that they are used to a teacher-centered learning style, whereas the German system focuses more on independent, student-centered learning. This could be beneficial in the long-term for Ukrainian students, as one of the aims of the New Ukrainian School program is to make lessons in Ukrainian schools more student-centered like their EU counterparts, and exposure to this style of learning could help Ukrainian students get acclimated to it. The first teacher from Hattingen (personal communication, June 2, 2023) also mentioned that some of her Ukrainian students requested tests and grades in order to get feedback for their academic performance, which had initially surprised her. Tests and grades are a major part of the Ukrainian teaching system, but less so in the German system since it places a stronger emphasis on independence, which can be a challenge for some Ukrainian students (anonymous informant #4, personal communication, June 2, 2023). German language is generally the primary subject that most Ukrainian students focus on in their German host schools, regardless of their school or host city. The majority of Ukrainian students in German schools attend integration classes or "welcome classes," however many others are enrolled in regular classes with German classmates.

According to the teacher from Lich (personal communication, May 17, 2023), the integration classes in her school were designed specifically for Ukrainian children that registered with their school, and the initial goal was to integrate them. Gradually, they would be allowed to participate in classes for other subjects, such as physical education, art, and music, and over time, their German language teachers would evaluate their progress in German and make their new class schedules (anonymous informant #3, personal communication, May 17, 2023). Many students that study regular subjects have

found the language barrier to be particularly challenging, especially when it comes to subjects that involve heavy discussions or specific vocabulary. This in turn can create a negative attitude towards the Ukrainian students on the part of some teachers. According to the second teacher from Hattingen (personal communication, June 2, 2023), not all staff members in German schools have the same empathy towards these students due to limited interaction during lessons. Ukrainian students continue to face many significant challenges at their schools and maintaining a strong support system through key faculty members at their host schools, friends and peers, and families is an essential component in the integration process.

4.2.   Survey for Ukrainian Parents in Germany

In order to better accommodate Ukrainian children in the German school system, it is imperative that the German authorities take the necessary measures to evaluate the integration process of Ukrainians in German schools and be open to feedback from Ukrainian parents. While conducting this research, a survey was distributed to thirty-two Ukrainian participants residing in various cities across Germany. The cities where participants resided at the time the survey was conducted included the capital Berlin, Hamburg, five cities in North-Rhine Westphalia (Düsseldorf, Cologne, Bonn, Essen, and Troisdorf), three cities in Baden-Württemburg (Heilbronn, Mannheim, and Kirchheim-unter-Teck), and one city in Hesse (Marburg). Since the participants of this survey resided only in the federal states of Berlin, Hamburg, North-Rhine Westphalia, Baden-Württemburg, and Hesse, the results do not provide a comprehensive analysis accounting for every education system for all sixteen federal states, but rather give a general overview of the collective experiences of Ukrainian students as a whole.

While every state in Germany manages its own education system, the process of integrating immigrants and refugees follows a similar structure. There are submerged models of education, in which all foreign students are taught together in a regular class with German students, and partially integrative models, where foreign pupils partially participate in the instruction of the regular class and only language support is provided outside of the regular class, and parallel models (such as "welcome classes"), where foreign pupils are taught in a specially designed class for a certain period of time or even until graduation (Klöpfer et al., 2024, School participation section, para. 2). For the Ukrainian parents who participated in this survey, their children's experiences in German schools vary depending on which of these models of education they studied under. The aim of this survey is to better understand the migration trends of Ukrainians who evacuated their country following the full-scale invasion, their decisions as to why they chose to live in Germany, their children's experiences studying in German schools, how it compares with the Ukrainian education system, and their overall feelings towards the German school system and integration process. These survey responses supplement the findings of this research through firsthand experiences and provide crucial insight into the state of Ukrainian refugee education and the integration of Ukrainian children into German schools.

4.2.1. Survey Overview

The survey was comprised of ten written questions: 1) When did you arrive in Germany and from what city in Ukraine? 2) Why did you choose to live in Germany? 3) Do you have any children? If yes, how old are they? 4) Do you and your children know German? If yes, at what level? 5) Do your children attend school? If so, what grade are they in? 6) In your opinion, what are the differences between the Ukrainian and German education systems? 7) Do you like the level of education your child has received at their German school? What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of the German education system? 8) What difficulties did you and your children face while adapting to the German education system? 9) Do you want to continue studying at a Ukrainian school while studying at a German school? If yes, why? 10) What would you like to change or improve in the German education system for your child?

All thirty-two participants in this survey were based out of multiple cities across Germany, which included Berlin, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Bonn, Heilbronn, Essen, Mannheim, Marburg, Troisdorf, and Kirchheim-unter-Teck. The overwhelming majority of participants resided in Berlin, with seventeen of the thirty-two total participants living in the German capital. Four participants resided in Heilbronn, the city with the second-highest number of participants, and two participants resided in Cologne, the city with the third-highest number of participants. There was only one participant from each of the remaining cities, along with one participant who did not disclose the city in Germany where they were residing. It is also worth mentioning that none of the survey participants resided in any of the former East German states, which may offer different integration and education experiences compared to the Western states.

4.2.2. Results and Analysis

In regards to the period of arrival in Germany, the vast majority of participants arrived within the first month of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, from February 24 to March 24, 2022. This trend reflects the state of the war in the first month of the full-scale invasion, the immediate danger civilians faced in many regions, particularly around the capital Kyiv, and the urgent need for evacuation to safer areas. Twenty-two of the thirty-two total participants stated that they left Ukraine and arrived in Germany within the first month of the full-scale invasion. Following that first month, there was a significant drop in participants who came to Germany, with only one participant stating that they arrived in spring 2022 after the first month of the invasion. However, seven participants said that they arrived in Germany in the summer of 2022, a few months after the invasion began, and the remaining two participants did not specify their time of arrival.

These figures indicate that most Ukrainians evacuated to Germany, and presumably other EU countries, during the first month of the full-scale invasion due to the unpredictable nature of the situation in Ukraine at that time. However, the low number of participants who arrived in Germany after the first month of the invasion coincides with the period when the Ukrainian Armed Forces secured a victory during the Kyiv offensive and began to liberate Russian-occupied territories, thus reducing the sense of panic and urgency

among civilians to relocate to safety in neighboring countries. The higher number of participants who arrived in Germany in the summer of 2022 may reflect the frequency of attacks on Ukrainian cities at that time and a renewed desire for some civilians to relocate to safer countries.

As for the cities and regions of Ukraine where participants came from, areas include regions from all over the country, including Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Odesa, Lviv, Zaporizhzhia, Poltava, Cherkassy, and Rivne. The majority of participants came from the regions of Dnipro, Kyiv, and Kharkiv, with ten participants from Dnipro, six from Kyiv, and five from Kharkiv. Two participants came from Zaporizhzhia, with only one participant coming from each of the remaining cities or regions, and the four remaining participants did not disclose what part of Ukraine they came from. The fact that the majority of participants came from some of the largest populated areas in the country, Dnipro, Kyiv, and Kharkiv, may reflect the impact of the full-scale invasion on these regions in the early months of the war. Even though Dnipro was not on the frontlines and had not been subjected to any major battles, many civilians from the Dnipro region evacuated in the early stages of the invasion due to the unpredictable nature of the war, especially in the first month.

Furthermore, due to Dnipro's proximity to Donbas, the city became a hub for internally displaced persons from Donetsk and Luhansk following the full-scale invasion. The Kyiv offensive took place during the first month of the war and saw various communities outside of the capital subjected to Russian occupation and intense fighting, which in turn caused a state of panic among the civilian population and an overwhelming desire to evacuate to a safer country. Though Kyiv and the surrounding areas have become safer after the first month of the invasion following liberation by Ukrainian forces, Kyiv has nevertheless remained a key target for Russian missiles and drone attacks. As for Kharkiv, which is the second largest city in Ukraine and located in the eastern part of the country near the Russian border, this city and its surrounding area saw intense shelling and was the site of a fierce battle in the early stages of the invasion. Russian forces also occupied a significant portion of the territory within the Kharkiv region during the first few months of the war, thus prompting an immediate evacuation for many civilians.

Survey participants stated a variety of reasons as to why they chose to come to Germany, but the most common responses were because they had friends or relatives who they could stay with and because of social benefits, such as public health insurance, job placement opportunities, unemployment benefits, educational opportunities, and so on. Twelve participants stated that they came to Germany because of friends or relatives, eleven stated that they came for social benefits, and nine said that they came for various other reasons. Some of the other reasons that were given included finding a job in Germany, knowing the German language, educational opportunities, finding Germany to be a safe country, and Germany's proximity to Ukraine in comparison to other EU countries. All participants have children, and the majority of families reported having two children within their households. All the families surveyed have no more than three children, with twenty-one participants having two children, eight having only one child, and the remaining three having three children. As for knowledge of the German language,

the overwhelming majority of participants, twenty-nine in total, stated that they and their children either had no knowledge or only a beginner level of German. The remaining three participants stated that they had a proficient or advanced level of German and could communicate with no problems. Even though German has grown in popularity as a foreign language in Ukraine in recent years, most Ukrainian citizens have no experience with the language, and these figures are an indication of this trend.

Despite the vast majority of participants claiming that they and their children do not have a high level of German, almost all participants said that their children attend German schools. Thirty participants said that their children attend German schools, and ten of those parents mentioned that their children specifically attend "welcome classes" or some form of integration classes. The remaining two participants said that their children do not attend German schools at all. In regards to differences between the Ukrainian and German education systems, most of the participants gave similar answers. Fifteen participants described the Ukrainian education system as having a more complex and structured program compared to the German system. Nine participants described German schools as being more progressive, student-centered, flexible, and having more subjects that could help students in their future careers when compared to Ukrainian schools.

One participant mentioned that they believe that German education places a strong emphasis on learning the language for non-German students, and the remaining seven participants did not give any detailed answers. Some of the key differences that some participants mentioned about Ukrainian schools are that they have a greater focus on theory, math and hard sciences and that Ukrainian schools give more homework, encourage more extracurricular activities, academic competitions, provide a more challenging curriculum, and provide more vacations. With regard to differences with German schools, some participants noted some of the differences were a greater emphasis on freedom, more games and activities to stimulate learning, less homework, more career-focused subjects, and more student-centered approaches to teaching. Exposure to these methods from the German school system could motivate Ukrainians to carry them over to the Ukrainian school system since Ukrainian education reforms sought to adopt similar practices to those in German schools. Some other differences with German schools that were mentioned include a greater gender balance among teachers and school faculty, more school field trips, and less emphasis on grades as a way to incentivize students.

In regards to overall satisfaction with the German school system, survey participants gave a variety of different responses, with the majority expressing some form of dissatisfaction. Thirteen participants said that they were not satisfied with German education, whereas eleven participants said that they were satisfied. Five participants expressed mixed feelings towards the German school system, and three participants were not sure how they felt. For the parents that said they were not satisfied, many of them mentioned factors such as a lack of homework, a lack of understanding of the material, too much focus on language study, weak math and science courses, and too much free time as being disadvantageous to their children. Some of these parents believe that the Ukrainian education system is stronger in regards to how they cover subjects like math

and science and that their children have less free time, which they view as being more productive and useful for their children's education. These opinions may be a result of cultural differences and experiences that this generation of Ukrainian parents had growing up with the Ukrainian school system prior to any significant education reforms in the post-Soviet era. It should also be noted that one participant mentioned a case where their child was bullied by Russian students from pro-Kremlin families in their child's host school.

As for parents who said they were satisfied, some of them mentioned that they liked the student-centered approaches to teaching, as well as younger teachers and staff at schools who were more open-minded compared to their Ukrainian counterparts. Even though many participants were satisfied with their children's education in Germany, they still mentioned certain disadvantages, such as the language barrier being a constant hindrance to their children's learning. For parents who gave mixed responses, one of them mentioned that there should be more specialists in German schools who can help their children integrate, such as Russian or Ukrainian-speaking teaching assistants who can help with communication. Another participant gave a similar response, stating that some German teachers might not fully understand the needs of Ukrainian children, in which case, teaching staff who understand the language and culture of these children would be beneficial. Another participant also expressed concerns over the different types of schools in the German system and how a child's level of knowledge determines which type of school they will study in and how this could be problematic for their child's long-term development. Since only one participant out of the thirty-two total number of participants expressed this concern about the German school system, it is unlikely that most Ukrainian parents are not yet fully familiar with Germany's unique school structure, and if they are aware, then it is not a point of concern for them.

Most participants said that their children have experienced different challenges throughout their time studying in German schools, with the overwhelming majority citing the language barrier as the most significant challenge. Twenty participants said that the greatest challenge was the language barrier, two participants said it was adapting to new conditions in a new learning environment, two more said it was adapting to a different culture and mentality, while eight participants did not list any challenges at all. For families who claimed that adapting to new conditions was a significant challenge, some of them mentioned that in their children's cases, school rules such as the prohibited use of tablets and smartphones made it difficult for their children to communicate since they were not allowed to access translation apps. However, this rule varies depending on factors like the federal state they live in or the school they are attending, as some teachers allow Ukrainian students to use their gadgets during class for translation and communication purposes. Some parents even mentioned that their children were not even allowed to speak with other Ukrainian classmates in their native language at school. For families who said that adapting to a different mentality posed a challenge, one parent mentioned that her child had difficulties making friends with German classmates due to a difference in mentality.

As for continuing some form of Ukrainian education, the vast majority of participants said that their children still have online lessons with their Ukrainian teachers in addition to lessons at their German schools. Twenty-five participants said that their children are still enrolled in Ukrainian schools, whereas six participants said that their children are no longer enrolled in Ukrainian schools, and one participant said that they were not sure. Parents who wanted their children to continue Ukrainian education stated that they made this decision because they do not plan to remain in Germany and hope to return to Ukraine. Therefore, they want their children to retain their knowledge from their Ukrainian lessons and to preserve their Ukrainian identity and language. Parents who chose to stop their children's education at Ukrainian schools said that they made this decision because they were disappointed with how online lessons were conducted, they were worried about their children being overloaded with too much schoolwork, or that they do not plan to return to Ukraine. As the war continues and Ukrainians become more integrated into German society, it is likely that more Ukrainians residing in Germany will prioritize their children's studies in their German schools as they may seek to stay permanently.

Lastly, many participants gave several recommendations for improving learning conditions for their children, with the two main ones being more resources for integration, translation, and psychological support, and providing lessons that promote faster acquisition of the German language and more comfortable integration. Seven participants suggested providing more resources for integration, translation, and psychological support, seven other participants suggested placing a greater focus on learning German, six participants gave a variety of other miscellaneous recommendations, and twelve participants had no recommendations. For the miscellaneous answers, some of the recommendations consisted of ideas such as a more challenging educational program, improving attitudes towards Ukrainians and other immigrant groups, offering more extracurricular activities, changing the German school system completely to give all children the opportunity to change schools at any age, giving more homework, and having more vacations.

4.3.   Addressing Key Challenges

While the response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis on the part of German authorities has shown positive results, greater priority should be given to the education and integration of refugee children, since children are the most vulnerable group during times of conflict and schools can provide a sense of safety and stability. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022), education systems in host countries such as Germany should develop holistic approaches to address the learning, social, and emotional needs of Ukrainian students (p. 3). Challenges within the German school system prior to the start of the Ukrainian refugee crisis are well-documented, and the German federal government must make a concerted effort to manage longstanding challenges such as teacher shortages and a lack of space in educational institutions.

Some critics have also claimed that the federal structure itself has had a negative impact on Germany's education sector, as it delegates education policy and implementation to individual states, inequality and educational disparities, digitalization and technological adaptation, vocational education and training relevance, and the integration of migrant and refugee students (Mizan, 2023). This criticism of the federal structure could mostly be applied to the states that have low-ranking education systems within the country. In regards to the states where the survey participants for this project resided, their individual rankings in education vary significantly, which may impact the overall experiences of their children in their German host schools. In a 2023 assessment conducted by the New Social Market Economy Initiative, Hamburg ranks fourth in terms of education quality, with Baden-Württemberg ranking fifth, Hesse ranking eighth, North-Rhine Westphalia ranking thirteenth, and Berlin, which had the largest number of survey participants, ranking fifteenth (INSM Bildungs-Monitor, 2023, Table section).

The experiences of Ukrainian students in German schools vary greatly based on different factors such as their host school, city, state, and level of integration, yet the majority of these students face common challenges, which include overcoming language barriers, adapting to a new environment and culture, coping with trauma, and balancing the workload between their German and Ukrainian lessons. In order to mitigate the effects of these challenges, the teachers that were interviewed for this report proposed the following recommendations: providing greater accommodation to different learning styles, greater parental involvement in their children's education in the German school system, more widespread access to extracurricular activities and afterschool sports, and recruiting more specialized staff like Ukrainian teachers and mental health professionals. Despite the decentralized education system, schools across Germany follow a similar structure for integrating refugee and migrant students, which includes some form of integration courses or enrolling these students into regular classes with German peers. Sometimes the student may not adapt well to the type of class they were assigned to, therefore there should be greater flexibility in allowing the students to change classes or even schools if necessary.

According to the teacher from Mannheim (personal communication, May 2, 2023), some schools have a system where students are integrated into normal classes with German students, while there are other schools that have classes only for Ukrainian students, which can cause some logistical challenges. After a couple of weeks of working with these students, it is easier for teachers to say which students would fare better in the types of learning systems offered in their host schools. As the teacher from Mannheim (personal communication, May 2, 2023) described, Ukrainian students need to be in an "authentic environment", or rather regular classes with German students that can help them develop their communication skills. However, for some students, regular classes with German students can be overwhelming if they cannot adapt to the language quickly enough. Therefore, they need to be in the integration courses with other Ukrainians and other foreign students, so that they can focus on German and acquire the necessary language skills as quickly as possible (anonymous informant #2, personal communication, May 2, 2023).

In order for Ukrainian students to thrive in their new learning environment, parental involvement is essential. According to the teacher from Lich (personal communication, May 17, 2023), the students, teachers and parents are all one team in the education process, and they all must work together cohesively in order for the children's educational needs to be met. When it comes to learning German, the teacher from Lich (personal communication, May 17, 2023) also suggested that parents can work together with their children to study at home, since most Ukrainian parents are also in the process of learning the language. Greater access to extracurricular activities and afterschool sports, particularly activities that Ukrainian children usually find more appealing, would also be beneficial in allowing Ukrainian students to practice their language skills and integrate more easily into their host communities. This in turn will allow them to build stronger connections with their German peers and make friends, which will help them establish a sense of belonging in their host communities. The teacher from Lich (personal communication, May 17, 2023) told her Ukrainian students that the best way to learn German is to attend different sports clubs and to put themselves in situations where they have to speak with their German peers.

Parents also play a critical role in motivating their children to participate in extracurricular activities like afterschool sports. According to the teacher from Lich (personal communication, May 17, 2023), there may be instances where children are reluctant to attend afterschool clubs, and it is the parent's job to give them the "push" that is necessary to join afterschool clubs and attend them consistently. The teacher from Mannheim (personal communication, May 2, 2023) attested to the effectiveness of extracurricular activities as a vital resource for acquiring language skills and stated that many of her Ukrainian students are involved in different organizations outside of school, such as sports clubs, which give them an opportunity to practice their language skills and make friends. Adapting German classes to different learning styles, greater parent participation, and providing extracurricular activities and afterschool clubs that are appealing to Ukrainian children are all steps that can be taken to address challenges in their education, but one of the most critical resources is specialized staff like Ukrainian teachers, school psychologists and trauma experts. Since most Ukrainian children who fled to Germany with their families do not have a German language background, teachers who work in German schools that can communicate in Russian or Ukrainian have proven to be a vital resource.

In the interview with the second teacher from Hattingen, she gave an example of another school in Hattingen that employs a Ukrainian staff member: "At the other gymnasium in Hattingen, they have Ukrainian students there, and their German language teacher is a Ukrainian woman. I think that is so much better because she can explain things like grammar to them in Ukrainian" (anonymous informant #5, personal communication, June 2, 2023). While many German schools do not employ full-time teachers from Ukraine, teaching assistants who can speak Ukrainian or Russian have become common and are also a strong asset. The second teacher from Hattingen emphasized the importance of teaching assistants in helping Ukrainian students: "Children in German schools who have other challenges, whether it is behavioral or cognitive, tend to have the luxury of having a teaching assistant assigned to them who

accompanies them to the lessons. We do not have many teaching assistants here, but at other schools, they are really common. At least one teaching assistant sits with a child who would otherwise struggle during the lesson" (anonymous informant #5, personal communication, June 2, 2023). There are logistical concerns such as how many of these assistants can be realistically hired in different school districts and how schools should prioritize the number of assistants based on the number of Ukrainian students that the schools host.

Nevertheless, German schools should make an effort to continue recruiting teaching assistants who can communicate with Ukrainian students in their native language. Given the traumatic conditions under which Ukrainian families were forced to relocate to Germany and other European countries, employing school psychologists and trauma experts should also be a priority for schools that host Ukrainian students. Psychologists and trauma experts could also benefit Ukrainian teaching assistants who have experienced trauma similar to their students. As a fellow Ukrainian, the teacher from Lich is able to connect with her students in regard to their shared traumatic experiences. "All of these children have trauma, and when I came to Germany, I also had trauma, so I needed to talk to a psychologist (anonymous informant #3, personal communication, May 17, 2023)." In an interview from the Tagesspiegel, Michael Schwägerl, chairman of the Bavarian Philologists' Association, stated how German educators are not equipped to provide psychological support to Ukrainian students, that they are experts in their subjects, but as a rule they are not interpreters for Ukrainian or Russian or trauma experts (Schulze, 2023, para. 7). Therefore, greater priority should be given to recruiting mental health professionals who can assist Ukrainian children in German schools.

5. Role of Civil Society Organizations in Refugee Education

5.1. Supporting Refugee Families with Evacuation and Accommodations

Since the Ukrainian refugee crisis began, civil society organizations have played a significant role in providing critical aid to Ukrainian refugees in Germany and other European countries. While international organizations like UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross have been instrumental in providing humanitarian assistance to Ukrainians, organizations like these require substantial donations in order to operate. Individuals across the world expressed their solidarity and support for Ukraine at the start of the invasion by sending donations to the numerous organizations that have mobilized in the EU member states in order to support Ukrainians who have sought protection in the EU (European Commission, 2022, Introduction section, para. 1). These organizations include the national branches of international agencies, umbrella organizations, and a range of other charitable and humanitarian bodies (European Commission, 2022, How you can help section, para. 2). In the case of UNHCR, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi stated during a visit to Ukraine in January 2023 that donations provided by governments, businesses, and private individuals have been incredibly generous, and that they must be sustained in order for the UNHCR to maintain its support for Ukrainian refugees (USA for UNHCR, 2024, About the Crisis section, para. 5).

Even though large international organizations have played a major role in humanitarian support for Ukraine, many smaller, grassroots organizations have also been created as a direct response to the war and have actively contributed to supporting Ukrainian refugees throughout Europe. One of the key benefits of volunteer and non-profit organizations is that they are able to provide additional support in ways that government authorities are unable to in times of crisis. Organizational support for Ukrainian refugees has taken many forms throughout the full-scale war, such as providing transportation to civilians, donations of necessities such as food and clothing, translation services, support with visas and other documents, medical care, housing, education, and job placement. In response to the invasion of Ukraine, the European Economic and Social Committee, its members and their organizations reacted quickly to this unprovoked aggression, offering humanitarian, logistical and medical assistance, as well as support for Ukrainians and their families to adapt to the new reality (European Economic and Social Committee, 2022, para. 1). At the start of the refugee crisis, multiple existing humanitarian organizations across Germany and the EU made a collective response to the influx of refugees, while several other smaller charity organizations were established for the primary purpose of addressing this urgent matter.

With large numbers of refugees arriving in places like Berlin and Brandenburg in the first few weeks of the invasion, a large number of private citizens wanted to volunteer at border crossings and transportation hubs. Employees of non-governmental organizations and aid associations understood that people wanted to help out spontaneously, but due to a lack of proper organization, long lines of private cars full of

eager volunteers from Germany and other EU countries caused significant traffic jams in Poland near the Ukrainian border (Voss et al., 2022, Traffic jams at the borders section, para. 1). Experts from large aid organizations stated that such a large buildup of traffic at border crossings caused logistical problems by tying up the capacity of customs officers and other employees that could have addressed the more urgent needs of incoming refugees (Voss et al., 2022, Traffic jams at the borders section, para. 2). Since evacuation was a pressing concern for many Ukrainians at the start of the full-scale invasion, many grassroots organizations worked to provide transportation and other essential services to Ukrainian refugees who were entering the EU, while also consolidating the number of private vehicles at border crossings to prevent large traffic jams.

For instance, the Berlin-based organization "Kinderschutzengel" cooperated with local authorities and specifically picked up families with children and pets, and Brandenburger Ukraine-Hilfe in Bernau and Lobetal proposed that private individuals who were determined to pick up Ukrainian families with their own vehicles should go to the borders with Ukraine in Moldova, Romania and Hungary instead (Voss et al., 2022, Traffic jams at the borders section, para. 3). Grassroots organizations across Germany began to work jointly with their local authorities and municipal governments to welcome Ukrainian refugees and provide them with transportation and housing. In the early stages of the refugee crisis, the city of Hanover was designated as the "hub for the reception and the relocation of Ukrainian refugees in Germany" by Marie Bullet, the Head of International Relations of the City of Hanover (Garcia, 2022, Hanover is an example section, para. 1). Special trains were prepared to transport Ukrainian refugees who were traveling to Hanover from Poland or other German federal states and were provided temporary housing at two exhibition centers in Hanover before they were orientated to other cities and places in Germany (Garcia, 2022, Hanover is an example section, para. 2).

Organizations in other cities such as Cologne and Dortmund have also contributed significant aid to support Ukrainians who have sought refuge in Germany. Citizens from Cologne have shown extensive support and solidarity for Ukrainians who arrived after evacuating Ukraine, with the Cologne-based German-Ukrainian Association 'Blue-Yellow Cross' having donated several tons of aid which was delivered to the Polish-Ukrainian border (Garcia, 2022, Colone and Dortmund section, para. 2). The city administration of Dortmund has also worked to deal with refugees and humanitarian aid in close cooperation with various welfare organizations that have provided support to Ukrainians who arrived in the city of Dortmund, such as German Red Cross Dortmund, Caritas Dortmund, and AWO Dortmund (Garcia, 2022, Cologne and Dortmund section, para. 5). Organizations from cities throughout Germany have also traveled to Ukraine to provide direct support to Ukrainians who have remained in the country. For instance, the TOLOCAR project of the Berlin-based non-profit association CADUS provided training and materials to plan and build accommodations for internally displaced persons who relocated to safer regions of Ukraine, such as renovating a former hotel in Ivano-Frankivsk (van Treel, 2022, Workshop on four wheels section).

5.2.   Providing Opportunities for Education

Upon their arrival to European host countries such as Germany, one of the immediate priorities for Ukrainian refugee families was to access educational resources for their children. Providing education in emergencies not only ensures that children realize their right to education, but also provides them with a sense of hope and normalcy when their lives have been disrupted, promotes their psychological and social well-being and cognitive development, and lessens the risk that they will be recruited into dangerous activities (Sommers, 2003, p. 6). Civil society organizations across Germany understand the significance of education and the crucial role it plays in a child's development, as well as providing a zone of safety and comfort to refugee children. Humanitarian interventions without an educational component do little to advance children's social and intellectual development (Sommers, 2003, p. 21). Therefore, many organizations have incorporated an educational component into the services that they offer to Ukrainian refugees residing in Germany.

Non-profit organizations have supported education efforts for Ukrainian refugee children in Germany primarily through supplementary German courses which give them an opportunity to practice and apply the German language skills they have acquired in their host schools. According to the Halle-based organization Save Ukraine (2022), many Ukrainians who fled the war did not expect to stay in Germany for as long as they have, and the question of whether to integrate into German society has become a greater cause for concern as time goes on (para. 1). Many Ukrainian parents have decided to enroll their children in German schools in order to help them adapt, but many Ukrainian children continue to struggle within their host schools due to the language barrier. Despite their best efforts, many German schools cannot overcome the significant demand for German courses due to teacher shortages (Save Ukraine, 2022, para. 1). Save Ukraine, in cooperation with the organization LAMSA, have organized additional German courses for Ukrainian refugee children, and they organize the lessons based on the students' age and level of German (Save Ukraine, 2022, para. 2).

Besides Save Ukraine, there are other organizations that also provide supplementary German courses, and they rely on volunteers to conduct lessons which include topics like grammar, speaking, and writing. Meanwhile, other organizations such as CARE Germany have provided educational aid to Ukrainian children in the form of practical items, such as back-to-school packages that include backpacks, workbooks, and other useful school supplies to help Ukrainian children settle into German host schools (CARE Germany, 2022). In addition to providing supplementary education opportunities to Ukrainian refugees in Germany, organizations from Germany and other EU countries have contributed substantial aid to supporting education within Ukraine during the full-scale war. Much of the aid that EU countries have provided to Ukrainian schools has been in the form of supplies and equipment. In regards to EU support for Ukrainian schools and distance learning, Deputy Olga Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023) stated the following: "In order to implement the educational process in Ukraine under martial law and improve distance learning, Ukraine has received digital equipment, vehicles, and other necessary tools from foreign partners in the EU."

5.3.   Mental Health Services and other Humanitarian Aid

One of the most critical resources for refugees in periods of armed conflict is access to mental health services to help address the psychological trauma of war. In a report written by Donna C. Tonini (2005), it was stated that the three defining aspects of refugee experiences are trauma, loss and deprivation (p. 38). According to Tonini (2005), the issue of loss is particularly significant, which can include loss of home, community, security, loss by death, or separation from a loved one (p. 38). The trauma experienced by refugee children can manifest itself in different ways, such as anger management issues or disruptive behavior (Tonini, 2005, p. 38). Teachers in schools across Germany have witnessed the traumatic effects of refugee life on their Ukrainian students and have seen them express their trauma through unusual or disruptive behavior. In the interview with the second teacher from Hattingen, she described her experiences working with one traumatized Ukrainian child:

"One boy is seeing a psychiatrist because of post-traumatic stress. He has nightmares every night and he sleeps really badly, and that shows that he cannot really concentrate. I remember before I really got to know him, you would speak to him and he would not notice when you were speaking to him and just carry on doing what he was doing, and sometimes it would take three or four attempts before you could get his attention. Or as soon as he would hear the "Kahoot!" music, he would jump up and start bouncing up and down. At first I would tell him off and tell him to sit down, but then I realized that he cannot help it, that's what he does, he hears music, let him bounce, the world isn't going to end" (anonymous informant #5, personal communication, June 2, 2023).

Since many German schools are not equipped to deal with cases like post-traumatic stress, various civil society organizations across the country offer psychological counseling and mental health services. Organizations such as SOS-Kinderdörfer and Sternsinger offer psychological support to Ukrainian refugees in addition to other essential services such as transportation, temporary housing, and medical services (Hagl, 2022). In Berlin, organizations like Be An Angel have provided support to Ukrainian refugees since the start of the full-scale war to provide immediate access to services that schools and other government institutions are unable to. With offices in Chișinău, Moldova and Berlin, Germany, the humanitarian aid organization Be An Angel has organized evacuation buses from the Odesa region to Moldova and then to Germany and has worked to find temporary housing and comfortable living conditions for Ukrainian refugees (Be An Angel, 2024, Impact Briefing section, para. 1). LaruHelpsUkraine is another humanitarian organization which was founded in Berlin immediately after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began. LaruHelpsUkraine has provided assistance to Ukrainian refugees entering through the German capital in many forms, but it has mainly served as a guide through the administrative, bureaucratic, and cultural landscape of Berlin for people who left Ukraine due to the war (LaruHelpsUkraine, 2022).

6.   Promoting Ukrainian Identity While Integrating into German Society

6.1.   Significance of Ukrainian Identity

The question of Ukrainian national identity has become an important issue following the Euromaidan Revolution and the start of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict in 2014. National identity can be described as a person's sense of self, a sense of belonging to a particular nation, distinguished by the presence of a single language, culture and traditions, and political characteristics, and can be subject to change and transformation (Mateo, 2022, Conclusion section, para. 1). Since Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union, there has been much debate on a united sense of what it means to be Ukrainian. In a blog post from the Berghof Foundation, Mariia Levchenko (2022) described the struggle to find a common identity across Ukraine: "In Ukraine, language, ethnicity, and historical memory have long divided the country since it first gained independence in 1991" (para. 4). Even after the Euromaidan Revolution and the start of the conflict with Russia, establishing a common definition of a Ukrainian national identity has been a challenge for Ukrainian officials and the nation's society as a whole. According to Levchenko (2022), during the eight years since the occupation of Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions, there have been few opportunities for engaging local civil societies in dialogue processes or providing space to discuss and acknowledge the complexities of Ukrainian identity (para. 4).

Despite the challenges of establishing a common definition of what it means to be Ukrainian, a unified national identity has slowly started to take shape in Ukraine over the last few years. In an interview with Iryna Kostyuk, a civil education specialist at the National Academy of Sciences in Kyiv and the co-author of the education standard for basic secondary education in Ukraine, she described the significance of Ukrainian national identity and how discourse on this topic has remained an important issue for so long: "Of course, this identity makes us (Ukrainians) stronger, and we have had a discussion over the last thirty years of what it means to be Ukrainian" (I. Kostyuk, personal communication, June 1, 2023). As a result of the full-scale war and the threat to their nation's survival, many Ukrainians both in Ukraine and abroad feel a stronger connection to their national identity out of a sense of patriotism and national survival. Mariia Levchenko (2022) gave the following statement on the role of Ukraine's national identity in the nation's fight for survival after the start of Russia's full-scale invasion: "Despite the constant struggle, Ukrainians are ready to continue their fight. Identity plays a significant role as a motivator. They feel that with the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine became not only the center of a geopolitical conflict, but also a place where universal values, such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are at stake. The atrocities in Bucha and Irpin, the constant targeting of civilians, and the documented war crimes in newly liberated territories has introduced a fierce national identity element to the war. Ukrainians are fighting for survival as a nation" (para. 4).

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine generated a sense of outrage and national pride among Ukrainian people, which in turn helped to foster a sense of unity under a common Ukrainian identity. In her blog post, Levchenko (2022) described a change she noticed in Ukrainian society since the start of the full-scale war: "I have observed the awakening of a common national identity, the acceptance of new identity markers and an understanding that the whole community is in the process of rethinking itself and its belonging" (para. 5). There is a strong sense of solidarity among Ukrainians both in and outside of the country, which demonstrates this new feeling of a common national identity. Ukrainians have felt divided for so long due to a variety of factors, most notably language differences, political views, and their geographic locations within Ukraine. However, according to Levchenko (2022), factors like geographical lines (Eastern or Western regions of Ukraine) or language (Ukrainian and Russian) have lost their significance, and the historical memory of belonging to the Soviet Union and its legacy, which has historically been a point of contention between Ukrainians who supported European integration and those supported closer ties to Russia, is no longer relevant (para. 7).

As Iryna Kostyuk (personal communication, June 1, 2023) described herself, she grew up under the Soviet system and originally identified as a Russian-speaking Ukrainian, but at the same time, she understands that her civic position is that of a modern Ukrainian citizen. The factors that once contributed to this longstanding sense of national division are now recognized as symbols that represent different values, ideals, and cultural backgrounds within Ukrainian society. Certain issues that may have once been a cause for division such as geographic lines within Ukraine and political differences, most notably a pro-Russian versus a pro-European mindset, are no longer relevant, especially for many Ukrainians who evacuated to Germany and other EU host countries due to the war. While progress has been made in defining a Ukrainian national identity, the question remains: How can people with multiple identities from across Ukraine come together in the long term and how can a country torn apart by war and trauma be supported (Levchenko, 2022, para. 7)? According to Iryna Kostyuk (personal communication, June 1, 2023), ethnicity and language, as well as a national sense of pride and a wartime mindset are not enough to support the common Ukrainian identity in the long term, and there should be a large "sociological syncing" to cultivate a national identity in the post-war era.

6.2. Connecting With Other Ukrainians in German Host Communities

As a leading EU member state with the strongest economy in Europe, in addition to its strong refugee support programs, Germany has been an attractive country for Ukrainian citizens who have fled the war. Next to Poland, Germany has taken in the second-highest number of Ukrainian refugees, with over a million Ukrainian citizens having registered in Germany since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. Of the more than one million Ukrainian refugees who came to Germany to escape the war, 44% hope to stay in the country permanently, according to a survey conducted by the German Institute for Economic Research in Berlin and its affiliates (Martinez and Rinke, 2023).

According to this survey, many Ukrainians are interested in remaining in Germany thanks to integration opportunities such as government-sponsored German language courses, as well as supplemental courses offered by civil society organizations, which in turn can improve their employability and career prospects in Germany (Martinez and Rinke, 2023). Despite the opportunities for integration, Ukrainian identity nevertheless remains an important characteristic of Ukrainian refugees who came to Germany. Whether or not they choose to remain in Germany or return to Ukraine, Ukrainians living in Germany have managed to retain their national identity by connecting with other Ukrainians in their German host communities.

By communicating with other Ukrainian nationals who fled the war, Ukrainians living abroad can continue to feel a sense of national unity and solidarity through shared experiences and mutual support for one another. It is crucial for both Ukrainian parents and their children to maintain some form of contact with their native culture in order to help them adjust to life in a new country, retain their native language and traditions, and not feel isolated in their host communities. In regards to Ukrainian children, retaining cultural identity while integrating into the culture of a host country such as Germany could be overwhelming, and therefore they may prioritize one culture over the other based on their own decisions or the decisions of their families. As for moving to a new country as a refugee, refugees all share common experiences such as having their daily lives disrupted, being forced to relocate due to war, suffering from loss, and dealing with other sources of trauma. Adjusting to life in a new country is especially difficult for refugee children since they are accustomed to certain routines in their home communities and have no control over the conditions in which they may live in their host countries. After arriving in a new country, refugee children's social networks may be weak as a result of community loss, but also due to the fact that their parents have had similar experiences and may be psychologically vulnerable themselves (Tonini, 2005, p. 38).

While host nationals in countries such as Germany have expressed their support and solidarity to Ukrainian refugees in many ways, there is a lack of a shared experience and culture that only other Ukrainians can connect with. A shared national identity, a mutual sense of purpose, and national pride during Ukraine's war of survival has brought Ukrainians who are living abroad together. In an article written by Natalia Liubchenkova (2022), a journalist from Kyiv who lives in Lyon, France, she described her experiences after she and a fellow Ukrainian heard the news about the Russian invasion: "If there is something I can be thankful for, it is that I faced the most difficult news in my life with someone who could understand how it feels, and who was more into action than words" (para. 3). Many Ukrainians who were living abroad prior to the full-scale war contributed to humanitarian and defense efforts for their native homeland and also participated in refugee response programs as Ukrainians evacuated to safer countries. Liubchenkova (2022) described the role of Ukrainians living abroad in supporting their country and people: "Pretty much everyone I know outside the country has become a war-response volunteer these days – coordinating, collecting, transporting, informing, and giving professional psychological support" (para. 9).

Many Ukrainians who fled to safer countries following the full-scale invasion relied on relatives or friends who were living abroad. After arriving in host countries like Germany, they also developed new networks by connecting with Ukrainian support groups through humanitarian organizations or social media. As time went on and new refugees entered host countries like Germany, Ukrainians who arrived in these countries earlier in the invasion also participated in activities to support Ukraine. In Berlin, a group of young Ukrainians formed an initiative called 'Vitsche," which organized protests, events, and help for refugees, and also collected medicine, protective equipment, and hygiene products, which they sent to Ukraine (van Treel, 2022, Ukrainians in Germany section). Ukrainian educators who were employed as translators and teaching assistants in German schools also feel a connection to their students and a devotion to their country which in turn motivates them to help Ukrainian refugee children. As the teacher from Lich (personal communication, May 17, 2023) described, she was committed to helping her students integrate into German society while also helping them to retain parts of their Ukrainian identity, such as practicing the Ukrainian language. Whether it is continuing some form of Ukrainian education through online classes, attending events that celebrate Ukrainian traditions or culture, or helping one another with the challenges of integrating into a new host country, Ukrainians living abroad are able to maintain their shared identity through mutual cooperation and interactions with each other.

6.3.   Promoting Ukrainian Language and Culture in German Society

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the start of the refugee crisis, German authorities and civil society organizations responded immediately in order to provide assistance to the influx of refugees. Throughout the course of the war, German citizens have given a lot of support and expressed their solidarity to Ukrainian refugees through activities such as social activism, donating supplies and resources to humanitarian efforts, volunteering at refugee centers, and hosting refugees in their homes. The German government has also provided significant aid to Ukrainian refugees in various forms, which include living allowances, subsidized housing, access to education, medical services, and language and integration courses. Integration courses in particular have been an attractive incentive for Ukrainian refugees to remain in Germany, as competence in language and integration is the deciding factor when it comes to employment opportunities (Bosen, 2023, Language skills section, para. 1). Integration has become a critical component in the life of Ukrainian refugees since it allows their children to function in German classes while parents are able to attend their own integration courses, which in turn will grant them access to the German job market.

According to Andreas Ette of the Federal Institute for Population Research, having sufficient day care places for children is important for the large group of Ukrainian refugees in Germany, and it helps parents to be able to attend language courses and take up employment, and for children to learn the language, have a structure in their everyday lives and make friends (Bosen, 2023, Children, parents section, para. 1). The influx of Ukrainian refugees could also be beneficial for the German economy in that it could help

to address the labor shortage in key sectors. The German government is aware of the economic benefits that Ukrainian refugees who hope to remain may bring and is simultaneously trying to address both a shortage of skilled labor and concerns about high levels of migration (The Associated Press, 2023). Compared to other refugee and migrant groups, Ukrainians immediately receive residency status in Germany and other EU countries upon arrival, and the German government has launched new programs to help Ukrainians find jobs quickly (The Associated Press, 2023). Even though the German government continues to offer generous social benefits and integration resources to Ukrainian refugees, the integration process should encourage Ukrainians to retain their national identity by fostering an environment that allows for Ukrainian culture, language, and traditions to be practiced.

Germany has proven to be a reliable partner for Ukraine, having provided a substantial amount of both humanitarian and military assistance over the course of the full-scale war. Yet the collective understanding of Ukraine and its national identity on the part of German society was quite different prior to the Russian invasion. In the years leading up to the full-scale invasion, there were contrasting interests towards Ukraine in Germany; at the time, public awareness vacillated between indifference in times of relative calm within Ukraine and dedicated solidarity in times of crisis (GIZ, 2018, p. 21). Germany perceives Ukraine primarily as a country of crisis and war, and with a strong demographic of ethnic Russians among the German population, many misconceptions about Ukraine were spread during the Russian media and propaganda campaign which took place between 2014 and 2015 (GIZ, 2018, p. 22). Furthermore, due to Germany's historic ties with Russia, particularly within the regions that were formerly East Germany and the Russian influence in German society, German attitudes towards Ukraine were often associated with Russia.

Before the full-scale war, many Germans perceived Ukraine as an unknown country in Eastern Europe which was seen as part of the Soviet Union, and later an extension of Russia (GIZ, 2018, p. 22). Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing humanitarian crisis have brought the plight of the Ukrainian people to the attention of citizens across Germany and all EU member states and therefore created a newfound interest and desire to support Ukraine. In order for German society to change its attitudes and show support for the Ukrainian national identity, it is imperative that this identity is recognized and that Ukraine's independence and its distinction from Russia is understood. Grassroots initiatives should also be developed to promote the Ukrainian language and culture within German society as a show of solidarity with the Ukrainian people. In the interview with the teacher from Mannheim (personal communication, May 2, 2023), she described how the Ukrainian language has been used in her school to not only support the education of Ukrainian refugee students, but also as an act of solidarity: "When some teachers were trying to translate some worksheets into Ukrainian, I think they did a great job for the children because it shows that they are seen here, and that their identity is valued."

Different cities and organizations across Germany have also shown solidarity and support for the Ukrainian identity by organizing cultural events that celebrate Ukrainian music,

heritage, and traditions. For instance, in February 2023, the Berlin-based organization UCC (Ukrainian Cultural Community), in collaboration with other partner organizations such as LaruHelpsUkraine, organized a Ukrainian cultural festival called "Nation Code," which promoted Ukrainian art and the Ukrainian artists now living in Berlin (LaruHelpsUkraine, 2023). Events like these promote an understanding of the Ukrainian national identity by allowing Ukrainians, Germans, and other ethnic groups within German society to come together to experience Ukrainian culture. By encouraging Ukrainians living in Germany to speak their language and practice their cultural traditions, Germans who work with Ukrainian refugees can develop a better understanding of the Ukrainian national identity, which in turn will promote continued support and a sense of solidarity between the Germans and the Ukrainians.

7.   Implications of Returning to Ukraine in the Post-War Era

7.1.   Impact of Ukrainians Who Return from Living Abroad

As of summer 2024, Ukraine remains in a state of active war with the Russian Federation. In spite of this, Ukrainian officials along with their international partners have discussed reconstruction efforts in Ukraine in the post-war era. Reconstruction efforts have already taken place in liberated territories immediately after the Ukrainian government reestablished control, which has instilled a sense of hope that the war could end favorably for the Ukrainians. The success of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the liberation of occupied territories have encouraged Ukrainian refugees living abroad to return to Ukraine. According to a United Nations survey conducted in the summer of 2023, of the approximately 8 million Ukrainians who fled Ukraine since the full-scale war broke out, around 1.8 million Ukrainians have returned to their home country as of August 2023 (Malenko, 2023, para. 3).

The mass evacuation of Ukrainian civilians has had a negative impact on Ukraine's economy and labor market. According to the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, Ukraine's domestic product drops by 0.5% for every 100,000 Ukrainians living abroad, with Ukraine's GDP having shrunk by a third in 2022 (Malenko, 2023, para. 6). Most Ukrainian returnees have cited family reunification as their main reason for returning to their homeland, although other factors have influenced their decision to return, such as financial security, familiarity with a home environment and native language, and no longer having to deal with the challenges of life as a refugee (Malenko, 2023, para. 4). Ukrainians who have returned from living abroad could have a positive impact on the Ukrainian economy and the reconstruction of Ukrainian society as a whole. The arrival of Ukrainians from abroad has already been shown to bolster Ukraine's economy and morale, and according to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the return of Ukrainian people from abroad is critical to strengthening the nation's economy (Malenko, 2023, para. 5). In addition to filling positions in Ukraine's job market, Ukrainians who lived abroad could have positive effects in other areas of society, thanks to any new skills and experiences they may have acquired while living abroad.

In the field of education, Ukrainian parents and educators who were exposed to new teaching practices while living abroad under the protection of the EU could also advocate for the adoption of such practices in Ukrainian schools. Ukrainian teachers who worked in German schools could encourage Ukrainian policymakers to make meaningful reforms to education funding by adopting similar practices to what they experienced in their German schools. In the interview with the teacher from Lich (personal communication, May 17, 2023), she mentioned that she received funding from her German school district to pay for classroom supplies and hopes that schools across Ukraine will adopt a similar model that allows teachers the necessary funding to cover their classroom expenses. In the interview with the teacher from Mannheim (personal communication, May 2, 2023), she mentioned that the relaxed atmosphere of German

classrooms and the student-centered approaches to teaching also could potentially carry over to Ukrainian schools once Ukrainian families and teachers who lived in Germany return to their country. In EU countries such as Germany, student-centered classrooms are commonplace, and this was one of the goals of the New Ukrainian School program (Pidgorna, 2024, The New Ukrainian School section, para. 2). Ukrainian families' experiences with student-centered learning while living abroad in host countries such as Germany are likely to have a positive role in Ukrainian schools moving further away from authoritarian teaching practices (Pidgorna, 2024, The New Ukrainian School section, para. 2). While significant contributions can be made by Ukrainians living abroad, it ultimately depends on their decision to return to Ukraine or to permanently remain in their host countries, and their experiences in host countries like Germany could contribute to successful post-war reconstruction and improving the quality of Ukrainian education.

7.2. Prospects of Returning to Ukraine or Remaining in Germany

As an economic power of the EU with strong refugee benefits, many Ukrainians who arrived in Germany after the start of the full-scale war feel motivated to remain in Germany permanently. The German government is also encouraged to maintain support for its Ukrainian refugee population due to the economic benefits of having skilled workers from Ukraine fill the labor shortages in various job sectors across Germany. Continuing to offer benefits such as living allowances, healthcare, subsidized housing, and integration courses through government programs incentivize Ukrainian refugees to remain in Germany and start a new life. Even though many Ukrainians have decided to remain in Germany or other EU host countries for an indefinite period of time, a significant number of Ukrainians who evacuated to the EU have either already returned to Ukraine or plan to return once conditions allow. According to Michael Newson, the Senior Program Coordinator for Migration and Sustainable Development at the International Organization for Migration in Kyiv, there has been an increase in Ukrainians returning to Ukraine despite the ongoing war, and current data suggests that Ukraine can expect a larger share of its population abroad to return after the war than in any other post-conflict setting to date (Radomska, 2023, para. 1).

In spite of the success of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in liberating territories across their country, as of October 2023, the Russian military still occupies about 17.5% of Ukrainian territory (Kelly, 2023). Attacks on civilian-populated areas continue to pose a threat across Ukraine, and this has dissuaded many Ukrainians who are still abroad from returning to their home country. Ukrainians abroad who are considering returning home as the war continues face a significant dilemma, which is safety in a foreign land or the familiarity of home even if it has become a war zone (Malenko, 2023, para. 2). Despite the inherent risks that come with life in Ukraine during the full-scale war, many Ukrainians have decided to return to their homeland with the hope that their communities will be spared from any future attacks from the Russian military and that their lives may resume with some level of normalcy. However, many Ukrainians who are still abroad are not only

encouraged to remain in their host countries due to the guarantee of safety but also for other benefits that their host countries may offer.

With almost half of the Ukrainian refugees in Germany hoping to remain permanently, the prospect of building a new life in Germany is a more viable option than returning to Ukraine, especially for those Ukrainians who have managed to integrate into German society. In the interview with the first teacher from Hattingen (personal communication, June 2, 2023), she predicts that over time the number of Ukrainians in Germany who hope to remain will increase if the war does not end in the near future, and they will be more motivated to integrate, find jobs and settle permanently. Regardless of their decision to remain in their host countries or return to Ukraine, Iryna Kostyuk believes that Ukrainians abroad will still retain their Ukrainian identity. In the interview with Iryna Kostyuk, she stated the following in regards to the integration of Ukrainians in their host communities and the significance of the Ukrainian identity:

"There is a fine line between integration and assimilation, especially for children since they learn languages easier than adults, but even the children will always know their Ukrainian roots. If these Ukrainian children manage to integrate into local host communities, they will continue their studies, find a job, and have a good social status. Of course the surroundings in their host communities are also more pleasant now than in Ukraine, Ukraine is destroyed, and host countries like Germany have clear rules, this is not the same in Ukraine. I think we must keep the civic identity of Ukraine for these students and people in Germany or other EU host countries" (I. Kostyuk, personal communication, June 1, 2023).

Iryna Kostyuk (personal communication, June 1, 2023) believes that a new Ukrainian diaspora in each host country can help to maintain the national identity of Ukrainians who are living abroad and that several factors can influence their decision to ultimately return to Ukraine, such as the host country's attitude towards Ukrainians, education policy, and policy of social support. Furthermore, most Ukrainians prefer not to have the title of 'refugee' due to the negative connotations of this term, and Ukrainians abroad may find a connection to the Ukrainian national identity as a source of empowerment (I. Kostyuk, personal communication, June 1, 2023). Though many Ukrainians have already returned from living abroad, the state of the war and the policies of the Ukrainian government will determine whether or not more people choose to return. According to Michael Newson, security is a key criterion for the return of more Ukrainians who are currently abroad, as well as government programs that will guarantee economic stability and a comfortable transition to life back in Ukraine (Radomska, 2023, para. 3).

7.3.   Reconstructing the Ukrainian Learning Space

The full-scale war in Ukraine has had a catastrophic impact on schools across the country and will continue to affect the Ukrainian education process for the foreseeable future. As the war continues and shows no signs of any immediate ceasefire agreements, Ukrainian schools along with other facilities in civilian-populated areas are still at risk of

being military targets, particularly in communities in occupied territories or near the frontlines. According to UNICEF, as of August 2023, the number of schools that have been completely destroyed in Ukraine due to the armed conflict with Russia now exceeds 1,300, but the number of schools destroyed or damaged in Russian-occupied territories remains unknown (Marusyak, 2023, para. 5). Even though the war is ongoing and remains a constant threat to civilian life, the Ukrainian government and civil society have demonstrated considerable resiliency and the ability to adapt to wartime conditions. Reconstruction efforts have already taken place in formerly occupied territories and other war-torn areas, including the repairs of community institutions such as schools. However, reconstructing schools in war-torn communities is one step in a multilevel process in rebuilding the Ukrainian education system in the post-war era.

The Ukrainian government understood the severe impact the war would have on education and other sectors of society and immediately began to make efforts to prepare for the reconstruction of Ukraine shortly after the full-scale war began. According to Deputy Olga Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023), in April 2022, the National Council for the Recovery from the Consequences of War was established by decree of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, with its main tasks including the development of a plan of measures for the post-war reconstruction and development of Ukraine. Over twenty groups have been established under this new council to prepare proposals, one of which is aimed at issues of education and science (O. Turval, personal communication, May 7, 2023). In the case of restoring Ukrainian education to liberated territories that have been under Russian occupation since 2022, this process has generally been straightforward since the occupation period did not last long. However, following the Ukrainian army's de-occupation of some of these territories, the Ukrainian authorities accused some education staff of collaboration with the Russian occupying authorities and subjected them to a form of compulsory security screening known as "filtration" (Human Rights Watch, 2024, para. 4). Education plays a critical role in rebuilding Ukrainian society in that it will continue to provide a safe and stable learning environment for Ukrainian children, prepare the next generation of Ukrainian citizens to rebuild and maintain their country in the coming decades, and it will serve as a basis of human rights in a free, democratic society in post-war Ukraine.

According to a CEPR column published in May 2023, education will play a vital role in Ukraine's reconstruction, as it not only imparts the necessary knowledge and boosts human capital within society, but also fosters the development of responsible, morally upright citizens who respect human rights, integrity, and accountability (Kahanec et al., 2023, para. 3). Due to the severe human cost of the full-scale war, human rights will become a major component of Ukrainian education in post-war society. Since the conflict with Russia began in 2014 and the Ukrainian government pursued further alignment with the democratic world, observance of human rights in schools began to receive more attention as Ukraine sought to modernize its school system, especially with the development of the New Ukrainian School program. Deputy Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023) believes that in order to carry out effective recovery plans for the Ukrainian education system, the following set of mandatory measures should be included: conducting a thorough assessment of the state of Ukraine's education, resolving

the issue of financing education, and improving the quality of distance learning. The education assessment can include different factors such as an assessment of schools, teaching staff, and the availability of textbooks and other necessary learning materials. Other factors to consider for this assessment would be an evaluation of Ukrainian students who returned from living abroad, understanding the positive aspects of their education in EU host countries like Germany, and adapting these methods into the Ukrainian curriculum where applicable.

Understanding the state of schools across Ukraine and the resources available to them is the first step in addressing the challenges the country will face as it rebuilds and develops its education system in the post-war period. Financing education is also a crucial matter; because of the destruction of infrastructure and other resources during the war, funding the education system will be a high priority. Deputy Turval (personal communication, May 7, 2023) believes that the government should allocate special funds for the restoration of schools and necessary education equipment and that donations from international partners will also be necessary. As for distance learning, Ukraine first learned to adapt to this new approach to education like other nations had to during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to adapt and refine its virtual learning platforms as it has played a significant role in Ukrainian education throughout the full-scale war. According to the first teacher from Hattingen (personal communication, June 2, 2023), the level of online education in Ukraine is changing in that it has become more widespread, stabilized, and professionalized over the past few years, and the war has acted as a catalyst for the development of Ukraine's online learning platforms.

Human rights and international humanitarian law are relevant to Ukrainian education now due to the war and the humanitarian crisis it has caused. Even though there is a crucial need for human rights practices in Ukrainian schools, Iryna Kostyuk (personal communication, June 1, 2023) described some of the challenges policymakers and educators face with implementing these practices into Ukrainian classrooms: "Human rights specialists such as Oleksandra Kozoroh and her team have expressed a demand for the inclusion of human rights practices in the Ukrainian school system to the Ministry of Education and Science. Officially, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science has implemented a human rights component into the national curriculum. However, according to Iryna Kostyuk, in practice it has proven to be ineffective due to most Ukrainian teachers' lack of experience or understanding of human rights practices and the fact that most of these educators studied under the Soviet system when the observance of human rights was not yet implemented (I. Kostyuk, personal communication, June 1, 2023).

Another challenge is who should be responsible for carrying out workshops on understanding human rights, and that most teachers in Ukraine think that it should be the responsibility of teachers of law (I. Kostyuk, personal communication, June 1, 2023). In addition to lessons on understanding human rights, international humanitarian law has also become a priority as a school subject in post-war Ukrainian education. However, developing classes that focus on international humanitarian law for Ukrainian schools also comes with their own challenges. As Iryna Kostyuk (personal communication, June

1, 2023) described, human rights specialists in Ukraine such as Oleksandra Kozoroh and her colleagues have tried to push knowledge of international humanitarian law into the national curriculum, because it is relevant to the current situation in Ukraine. But besides focusing on human rights, international humanitarian law also includes the rules of war, and Ukrainian policymakers and educators are not sure how they can incorporate both of these subjects into effective lessons on human rights (I. Kostyuk, personal communication, June 1, 2023).

Iryna Kostyuk (personal communication, June 1, 2023) believes that it will be possible to incorporate the topics into the national curriculum as long as the information taught is of high quality and these lessons give proper education on human rights instead of lessons which are disingenuous and do not equip Ukrainian students with the knowledge that helps them understand human rights and how it applies to them. Due to the relevance of observing human rights in Ukrainian schools along with the humanitarian crisis the country has been experiencing, mental health and trauma recovery should also take precedence in Ukraine's post-war education. For liberated territories, specifically towns that have suffered significant trauma under occupation such as Bucha, Irpin, and Hostomel, focusing on mental health and psychological recovery is an urgent matter. Educational institutions in the de-occupied areas have to take on an additional task of working with the mindset and trauma of the local population and possible cleavages and tensions within the de-occupied communities. By addressing the psychological trauma caused by the war, the reintegration of students with multiple vulnerabilities should also be considered (Kahanec et al., 2023, para. 8).

With over two million children who fled abroad with their families due to the war, special attention should also be paid to the reintegration of students who return from abroad since they will have different training experiences and may develop negative perceptions of post-war realities in Ukraine (Kahanec et al., 2023, para. 8). In order to integrate effective practices that support the psychological recovery, mental health, and reintegration of students, Iryna Kostyuk (personal communication, June 1, 2023) stated that there needs to be a collective vision: "A humanitarian crisis means psychological trauma, and as a society, we (the Ukrainian people) need a good vision for the post-war development, but we do not have this vision now." Iryna Kostyuk described the significance of this vision for the future of post-war Ukrainian society:

"In this vision, we should place a great emphasis on education and how to work in the conditions after the war. We need to figure out how to address challenges such as a shortage of skilled teachers, lack of funding for schools, lack of reform in schools, and a lack of understanding of new methods in education. It also depends on how policymakers take the recommendations included in reports compiled by specialists like Oleksandra Kozoroh, and whether or not they will implement them effectively. We also need the support of our international partners, especially from nations who have dealt with armed conflict. War is an abnormal situation for society, but we as Ukrainians are not unique, therefore we need the support and experience of other countries that have suffered the hardships of war, such as South Korea, the Balkan states, and also Germany" (I. Kostyuk, personal communication, June 1, 2023).

7.3.1. Reintegrating Russian-Occupied Territories

The reintegration of Russian-occupied territories poses some of the most significant challenges to the development of Ukraine's post-war education. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Russian authorities immediately banned Ukrainian education in territories occupied after February 24, 2022 and imposed the Russian curriculum in violation of international law (Human Rights Watch, 2024, para. 2). Schools and academic institutions in occupied regions have faced the greatest risks of the full-scale war, including being prone to airstrikes and missile attacks in battles near the frontlines and being used as platforms to carry out the Russification of Ukrainian children living in these occupied areas (Zhurzhenko, 2022, Education as a weapon of war section). In an article published by Ukrainian Pravda, Roman Hryshchuk (2023), People's Deputy of Ukraine and the chairman of the subcommittee on lifelong learning and extracurricular education, described the challenges of reintegrating formerly occupied schools in the post-war-period: "As of March 2023, about 1,600 schools, a tenth of all schools in Ukraine, along with over forty institutions of higher education, as well as kindergartens and institutions of professional education were located in Russian-occupied territories" (para. 5). In addition to these educational institutions, there are other challenges to consider such as a shortage of Ukrainian teachers, destroyed Ukrainian textbooks, tens of thousands of students who studied according to a different teaching method, evaluation, and value system (Hryshchuk, 2023, para. 5).

One important factor to consider in restoring the Ukrainian education system in formerly occupied territories is the duration of time some occupied territories were under the control and influence of the Russian system. According to Deputy Hryshchuk (2023), when adapting the education system in the returned territories to Ukrainian standards, it is worth remembering that the needs may be different and depend on the time the territory was under occupation (para. 7). Crimea and certain parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions are of particularly high importance since these regions have been occupied since the beginning of Russia's armed aggression in 2014 (O. Turval, personal communication, May 7, 2023). Teachers and children who have lived under occupation since the beginning of the full-scale invasion will be able to readjust to life under the Ukrainian curriculum more easily and quickly due to the fact that they have had lessons in Ukrainian and are familiar with the education process in Ukraine (Hryshchuk, 2023, para. 8). However, for teachers and children who have lived under Russian occupation since 2014, it will be a long and challenging process for them to adjust to the Ukrainian education system since they are accustomed to the Russian curriculum.

Primary school-aged children will have an easier time adapting to the Ukrainian curriculum once Kyiv restores control of these territories which have been occupied since 2014, but it will be more challenging for high school students due to the fact that most of them grew up under Russian occupation and never had any exposure to the Ukrainian education process. In his article, Deputy Hryshchuk (2023) proposes a general analysis of these students in the form of tests or interviews, in order to determine their level of preparation for Ukrainian education and knowledge of subjects such as Ukrainian language, Ukrainian history, and other social science subjects (para. 10). According to

Deputy Hryshchuk (2023), these tests should be developed by experts from the Ukrainian Center for the Evaluation of the Quality of Education, the institution that conducts the National Multi-subject Test (NMT) and External Independent Evaluation (ZNO) for admission into Ukrainian institutions for higher education, and he believes that the analysis should be divided into classes and regions in order to better understand how and whom to adapt (para. 11).

For students who have studied under the Russian curriculum prior to 2022, experts like Deputy Hryshchuk understand that the reintegration process will take time and that teaching materials such as bilingual textbooks with Ukrainian and Russian translations are essential for quicker and easier adaptation (Hryshchuk, 2023, para. 14). Another major challenge to consider when preparing for the reintegration of occupied territories is the threat of collaborators who worked with the occupying forces and their potential to disrupt or hinder the reintegration process. While many teachers in occupied territories still maintain a pro-Ukrainian mentality and have taught the Russian curriculum out of fear and intimidation, there have been several documented cases of teachers who have willingly collaborated with occupying authorities. One instance was in the war-torn city of Mariupol, where the occupying forces identified fifty-three teachers among the civilian population who were prepared to collaborate and sent these teachers to the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don for a retraining program (Zhurzhenko, 2022, Russification of the school system section). According to Deputy Hryshchuk (2023), teachers who willingly contributed to the occupying authorities should not be permitted to work in Ukrainian schools and given the shortage of qualified teachers in occupied territories, he believes that teachers from other regions of Ukraine should be called upon to support the reintegration process (para. 16).

Deputy Hryshchuk (2023) proposes a grassroots initiative he refers to as a "Teacher's Guard" to support the reconstruction and reintegration efforts in liberated territories (para. 17). This "Teacher's Guard" would be comprised of a reserve of teachers from the groups of internally displaced persons across Ukraine, active youth and veterans who can become leaders and drivers of reintegration and Ukrainization of educational institutions in the liberated territories (Hryshchuk, 2023, para. 17). International support will also play a significant role in rebuilding and modernizing schools in the liberated territories. Foreign workers and volunteers from EU partner countries will have opportunities to engage in activities such as training workshops that help reinforce the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science's goal to bring Ukrainian schools to the standards of EU education. Germany in particular stands out as a strong example for Ukraine and can offer support with the reintegration of formerly occupied territories since it had a similar experience with the reunification of East and West Germany (I. Kostyuk, personal communication, June 1, 2023). Any remaining teachers and professionals who contributed to the integration of former East German schools under the West German system would have the potential to collaborate with their Ukrainian counterparts and offer them their expertise and guidance as they carry out the reintegration process.

8.   Conclusion

As the war in Ukraine continues, the future of the Ukrainian education system remains uncertain. Although the Ukrainian Armed Forces have managed to regain much of its formerly occupied territories since the start of the full-scale invasion, the Russian military still controls several key areas in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. As long as armed hostilities continue and a new ceasefire agreement is not brokered, civilian-populated areas across Ukraine remain at risk of being targeted by artillery and missile strikes, and this includes schools and other educational institutions. In spite of the significant toll the war has taken on Ukraine's education sector, teachers and pupils have managed to adapt to wartime conditions since February 2022. In addition to most lessons being conducted virtually, the content of certain subjects has been modified as well. According to Oleksandra Kozoroh (personal communication, May 23, 2023), since May 2022, policymakers within the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science began to change the content of education in order to adapt it to the conditions of the full-scale war and revised the content for subjects including Ukrainian language and literature, world literature, history, civic education, and jurisprudence.

While virtual learning remains the prominent form of conducting lessons in Ukrainian schools, many schools across Ukraine have become accustomed to living in wartime conditions and have managed to resume in-person lessons, particularly if the schools are equipped with bomb shelters or are located in regions far from the front lines and have been less prone to missile attacks. Despite the war, education reforms under the New Ukrainian School continue, and children who lost the opportunity to attend their own educational institutions are able to get an education in safer regions or remotely (O. Turval, personal communication, May 7, 2023). Furthermore, Ukrainian children who are abroad have the full opportunity to continue their studies, as online learning conditions have been created to support their education (O. Turval, personal communication, May 7, 2023). However, online learning is not a permanent solution, as it depends on access to the internet, poses problems for working parents and younger children, and may put families who are still living in occupied territories at risk as soon as the occupation authorities start sanctioning Ukrainian "underground" schools (Zhurzhenko, 2022, Russification of the school system section).

The question of how Ukrainian children abroad manage to integrate and adapt to schools in their respective host countries also remains a point of concern. In the case of Germany, the experiences of Ukrainian pupils in German schools vary drastically depending on the pupil's living conditions, their experiences with the war, and the school and city in Germany where they are residing. Whether or not a pupil's family plans to remain in Germany is also a factor in the integration process, as families who have decided to return to Ukraine in the post-war period place a greater emphasis on their children's studies with their Ukrainian schools, as opposed to focusing on learning German and integrating into German schools. Due to Germany's strong refugee support programs and opportunities for work and study as well as the fact that the war in Ukraine has become a protracted conflict, more Ukrainians could be incentivized to remain in Germany

permanently. Access to education and training plays an important role in motivating Ukrainians abroad to come back to Ukraine as soon as the war is over, and no less important are safety and access to the labor market (Kahanec et al., 2023, para. 15).

Regardless of their families' decision to stay in Germany or return to Ukraine, German schools should be prepared to support Ukrainian refugee children for the long term. Funding and resources should be allocated to schools that are host to a large number of Ukrainian refugee children, and resources like interpreters and mental health specialists should take priority. As for Ukraine's education system, which has been severely impacted by the full-scale war, reform programs such as the New Ukrainian School could potentially benefit from the return of Ukrainians residing in EU countries, as the New Ukrainian School sought to bring the Ukrainian school system in line with EU standards. According to the teacher from Mannheim (personal communication, May 2, 2023), who had experiences studying in a post-Soviet school system, countries like Ukraine that have followed a post-Soviet style of education for decades are not used to more progressive, student-centered teaching practices in EU countries like Germany. As the teacher from Mannheim (personal communication, May 2, 2023) described, her Ukrainian students came to Germany accustomed to teaching methods similar to the ones she had experienced in a post-Soviet school system, such as frequent vocabulary tests, text memorization, strict learning environments, and a greater focus on grades and feedback for their work, which are generally not standard practices in German schools.

Since most Ukrainian parents studied under the traditional style of post-Soviet education, they are not accustomed to the current student-centered teaching practices that are prevalent in EU schools, with some of them having been resistant to the changes in the Ukrainian curriculum under the New Ukrainian School prior to the full-scale invasion. However, by being exposed to these teaching practices in German schools and seeing the benefits of their children learning under this system, Ukrainian parents who may have been resistant to similar changes in the Ukrainian curriculum may become more open to the adoption of such practices in the post-war period. The first teacher from Hattingen (personal communication, June 2, 2023) believes that it is possible for German education to have a positive impact on the development of the Ukrainian school system, but it is not likely to have any impact for the foreseeable future, and many Ukrainian families who are already in Germany will choose to remain indefinitely. At this current stage of the war, it is difficult to predict whether Ukrainians who have successfully integrated will return to Ukraine in the post-war era, even if the war ends favorably for Ukraine and the Ukrainian government manages to establish ideal conditions for returning. However, there is hope that in the scenario that the war ends favorably for Ukraine, Ukrainians who managed to integrate into German society and decide to return to Ukraine in the future can take what they learned from the German school system and apply it to their own system. The second teacher in Hattingen (personal communication, June 2, 2023) hopes that if any of her Ukrainian students eventually move back to Ukraine, they look back at their experiences from their German host school and take something back to their schools in Ukraine that could benefit their education and development.

As the war in Ukraine continues, the international community's attention is shifting to other major conflicts and other urgent problems around the world. Nevertheless, the situation in Ukraine should remain a priority for EU countries such as Germany since the war has greatly impacted European security and the Ukrainian refugee crisis continues to affect EU member states. Germany's support for Ukraine remains crucial as the Ukrainian Armed Forces strive to liberate its remaining occupied territories and establish security within its borders. In order to create long-term, sustainable peace within Ukraine in the post-war period, further development and modernization of the Ukrainian education system must be one of the main priorities of the Ukrainian government. Ukraine's education system is poised to confront multiple challenges in the coming years, such as recovering from the full-scale war and creating a comprehensive development strategy (Kahanec et al., 2023, para. 16). Roman Hryshchuk (2023) believes that a patriotic and conscious generation is the future of Ukraine, a national strategy for the country, a contribution to national security and the formation of a strong state (para. 24). The future of Ukrainian education is dependent upon the outcome of the war, and allies like Germany have the potential to make significant contributions to Ukrainian education in the post-war period.

Appendix A: Surveys

A.1   Standard Survey Questions

1. When did you come to Germany and from which city?

   Коли Ви приїхали до Німеччини і з якого міста?

   Когда Вы приехали в Германию и из какого города?

2. Why did you choose to live in Germany?

   Чому Ви обрали саме Німеччину для проживання?

   Почему Вы выбрали именно Германию для проживания?

3. Do you have children? If so, how old are they?

   Чи є у Вас діти? Якщо так, то скільки їм років?

   Есть ли у Вас дети? Если да, то сколько им лет?

4. Do you and your children know German? If so, at what level?

   Чи знаєте Ви і Ваші діти німецьку мову? Якщо так, то на якому рівні?

   Знаете ли Вы и Ваши дети немецкий язык? Если да, то на каком уровне?

5. Do your children go to school? If so, what grade are they in?

   Ваші діти ходять до школи? Якщо так, то в якому класі вони навчаються?

   Посещают ли Ваши дети школу? Если да, то в каком классе они учатся?

6. In your opinion, what are the differences between the Ukrainian and German education systems?

   Які, на Вашу думку, є відмінності між українською та німецькою системами освіти?

   Какие, по Вашему мнению, есть отличия между украинской и немецкой системами образования?

7. Are you satisfied with the level of education of your children in German schools? In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the German education system?

   Чи задоволені Ви рівнем навчання Ваших дітей в німецькій школі? Які, на Вашу думку, є переваги та недоліки німецької системи освіти?

   Вам нравится уровень обучения Ваших детей в немецкой школе? Какие, по Вашему мнению, есть преимущества и недостатки немецкой системы образования?

8. What difficulties did you and your children encounter while adapting to the German education system?

   Які труднощі виникли у Вас і Ваших дітей під час адаптації до німецької системи освіти?

   Какие трудности возникли у Вас и Ваших детей во время адаптации к немецкой системе образования?

9. Do you want to continue studying at a Ukrainian school while studying at a German school? If so, why?

   Чи бажаєте Ви продовжувати навчання в українській школі під час навчання у німецькій школі? Якщо так, то чому?

   Хотите ли Вы продолжать обучение в украинской школе во время обучения в немецкой школе? Если да, то почему?

10. What would you like to change or improve for your child in the German education system?

    Що б Ви хотіли змінити або покращити для Вашої дитини в німецькій системі освіти?

    Что бы Вы хотели изменить или улучшить в немецкой системе образования для Вашего ребёнка?

Appendix B: Interviews

B.1 Standard Interview Questions for Participants in Germany

1. In general, what are your experiences working with Ukrainian refugee children (what age group do you mostly work with)?

   Welche Erfahrungen haben Sie im Allgemeinen bei der Arbeit mit ukrainischen Flüchtlingskindern gemacht (mit welcher Altersgruppe arbeiten Sie hauptsächlich)?

2. In your experience, how have these children integrated into their German host school and life in Germany as a whole?

   Wie haben sich diese Kinder Ihrer Erfahrung nach in ihre deutsche Gastschule und das Leben in Deutschland insgesamt integriert?

3. How would you say German education has positively impacted these children?

   Wie hat sich Ihrer Meinung nach die deutsche Bildung positiv auf diese Kinder ausgewirkt?

4. Based on your observations, what difficulties or challenges do these children face at their German host school?

   Mit welchen Schwierigkeiten oder Herausforderungen sind diese Kinder Ihrer Beobachtung nach an ihrer deutschen Gastschule konfrontiert?

5. What are your recommendations for resolving these challenges?

   Was sind Ihre Empfehlungen zur Lösung dieser Herausforderungen?

6. In your opinion, can the education systems in EU countries like Germany have a positive influence on the Ukrainian education system?

   Können die Bildungssysteme in EU-Ländern wie Deutschland Ihrer Meinung nach einen positiven Einfluss auf das ukrainische Bildungssystem haben?

B.2   **Standard Interview Questions for Participants in Ukraine**

1. How has education changed in your schools since the start of the full-scale invasion?

    Як змінилася освіта у ваших школах з початку повномасштабного вторгнення?

2. How did teachers, students and parents adapt to learning in wartime conditions?

    Як адаптувалися вчителі, учні та батьки до навчання в умовах воєнного часу?

3. What, in your opinion, were the biggest challenges in education after February 24, 2022?

    Якими, на Вашу думку, були найбільші виклики в освіті після 24 лютого 2022 року?

4. What, in your opinion, should the Ukrainian authorities and international partners do to improve the current state of education?

    Що, на Вашу думку, має зробити українська влада та міжнародні партнери, щоб покращити поточний стан освіти?

5. How can international organizations and people abroad support Ukrainian schools?

    Як міжнародні організації та люди за кордоном можуть підтримати українські школи?

6. How did the war affect programs such as the New Ukrainian School?

    Як війна вплинула на такі програми, як Нова українська школа?

7. How did the Ministry of Education and Science adapt?

    Як адаптувалося МОН?

8. How did EU countries such as Germany support the education system during this period?

Як країни ЄС, такі як Німеччина, підтримували систему освіти протягом цього періоду?

9. What are the possible plans to restore the education system to a normal state and peace after the war?

Які можливі плани відновлення системи освіти до нормального стану та миру після війни?

10. How would you describe the state of Ukraine's education system after the full-scale Russian invasion? How are communities in occupied territories and near the frontlines particularly affected?

Як би ви охарактеризували стан системи освіти України після повномасштабного російського вторгнення? Як особливо постраждали громади на окупованих територіях і поблизу лінії фронту?

11. Explain the significance of online education. What are some advantages and disadvantages to online learning platforms while the country is engaged in all-out war?

Поясніть значення онлайн-освіти. Які переваги та недоліки мають платформи онлайн-навчання, поки країна веде повну війну?

12. What impact, if any, have you noticed from Ukrainian pupils studying in the local schools of foreign host countries (such as Germany)?

Який вплив, якщо такий був, ви помітили від українських учнів, які навчаються в місцевих школах іноземних приймаючих країн (таких як Німеччина)?

13. Are you aware of any major challenges that Ukrainian pupils are facing while studying in local schools in their host countries?

Чи знаєте ви про серйозні проблеми, з якими стикаються українські учні під час навчання в місцевих школах у приймаючих країнах?

14. What role has non-profit and charity organizations played in supporting the education of Ukrainian pupils?

Яку роль відіграють некомерційні та благодійні організації у підтримці освіти українських школярів?

15. What is the significance of Ukrainian identity for pupils and their families who are living in different host countries?

    Яке значення має українська ідентичність для учнів та їхніх родин, які проживають у різних країнах перебування?

16. Based on your understanding, do many Ukrainians living abroad want to return to Ukraine after the war? In your opinion, why or why not?

    На вашу думку, чи багато українців, які живуть за кордоном, хочуть повернутися в Україну після війни? На вашу думку, чому чи ні?

17. What is the significance of human rights in Ukrainian education? Has it changed since the full-scale invasion began?

    Яке значення прав людини в українській освіті? Чи змінилося воно після початку повномасштабного вторгнення?

18. In conclusion, how do you think the war and the humanitarian crisis it created will impact future development of the Ukrainian school system?

    На завершення, як, на вашу думку, війна та викликана нею гуманітарна криза вплинуть на майбутній розвиток української шкільної системи?

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