

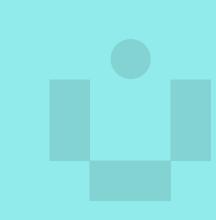




CASE STUDY:

# DISPLACED UNIVERSITIES IN UKRAINE

Fund of the President of Ukraine



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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to extend my sincere thanks to Roman Tolpezhnikov, a Dean of the Law School at Mariupol State University. He evacuated in late April from the occupied city and helped his team and students. I would also like to thank Yevhen Nikolaev analyst of OsvitAnalityka think tank for collecting and analysing data on displaced universities.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine changed the life of the entire Ukrainian society. Armed aggression of the Russian Federation could not bypass such institutions as universities. The activities of some updated COVID regulations to the war ones. In contrast, others either had to evacuate to safer regions remaining in the territory under the control of the Ukrainian Government or suffer destruction and occupation.

The disruption of the peaceful life and education process creates inequalities that are difficult to assess now — uneven mastery of educational materials and increased workload, especially for students of graduate courses. Among organisational problems, along with the poor psycho-emotional state of students and teachers, problems with constant access to the Internet and communication, the need to work and volunteer

Some universities in the occupied territories or near the combat zone could not continue their functions. Such institutions had to relocate and register on the new address and create new bank accounts. They moved part of the staff and the students as well. These higher education institutions are displaced universities.

Limited state capacity and a long list of urgent matters due to the war do not allow for the design and implementation of a solution for the complex problem of the displaced universities. Even though Ministry have previous experience managing university relocation government has a reactive, and not proactive, policy.

# THE CHALLENGE

With the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, the leadership of Ukraine recognised the impossibility of ensuring the proper functioning of Ukrainian universities in territories under temporary occupation or where hostilities are taking place. Therefore, universities from Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and part of Zaporizhzhia regions were moved to the controlled territory of Ukraine.

During the war, universities close to the battlefield also faced the problem of retaining students and faculty. Because of the danger, many people moved to other regions or abroad, and foreign students had to be quickly evacuated. This is the second time Ukrainian higher education institutions must run from war. There is a special recognition of such institutions in Ukrainian legislation – the displaced universities (DU).

#### OCCUPATION AND ANNEXATION IN 2014

Since Russia annexed Crimea and started the war in Donbas in 2014, 18 Ukrainian public universities have been evacuated from the occupied areas: ten from Donetsk Oblast, seven from Luhansk Oblast, and one from the Crimean Peninsula.



img: <u>Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia in 2014</u>

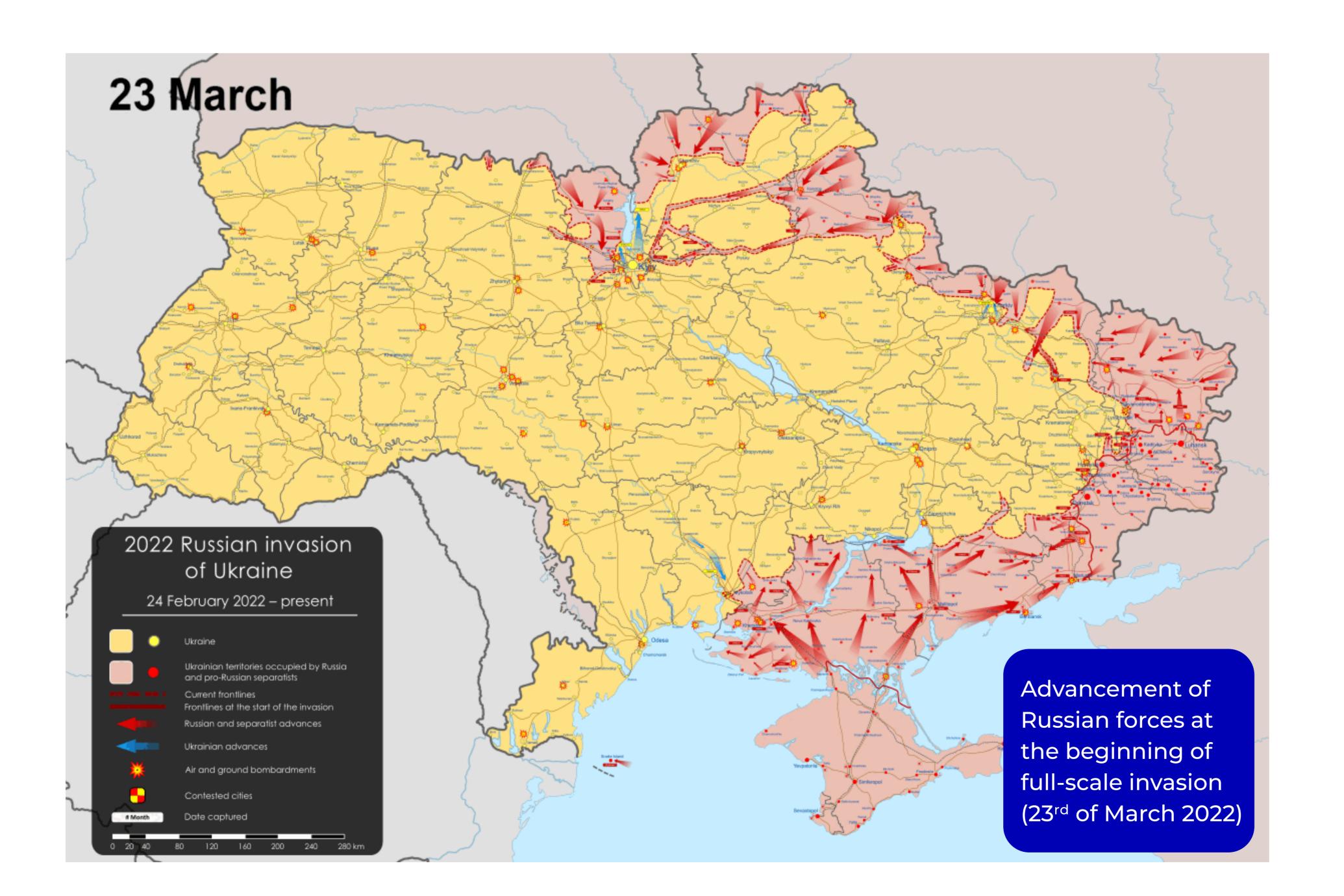


The illegal occupation and annexation of Ukraine's regions have been going on for eight years. Military actions caused a flow of displaced persons from the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk region to government-controlled territories. In official documents, they are called internally displaced persons (IDPs). During the first 2 years of the war, 1 million 75 thousand IDPs from Donetsk and Luhansk were registered in the State Emergency Service of Ukraine. Considering the number of unregistered migrants, the figure may reach 2.5 million people or a third of the pre-war population of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. According to the Coordination Centre for Displaced Universities, 40,000 students and 4,000 teachers and scientists were displaced during this conflict phase.¹ (Annex 1 List of DU in 2014).

Coordination Centre for Displaced Universities made a documentary about the 2014-2015 relocation by interviewing the stories of the educators.<sup>2</sup>

#### FULL-SCALE INVASION IN 2022

The scale of university relocation in 2022 is significantly greater than in 2014. The fact and scale of displacement had a noticeable impact on the participants of the educational process (students and teachers). Students and teachers faced problems of a financial, technological, and psychological nature, and those who went abroad also had problems overcoming the language barrier and arranging life in another country. Students and teachers who could not leave the temporarily occupied territories have significant problems. As a rule, these are security problems, quality of the Internet and communication, and lack of funds.





https://www.facebook.com/kcpzvo/photos/a.659765487458072/736256649808955/?type=3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zxdrksPUIA&ab\_channel=DisplacedUniversities



#### RELOCATING THE INSTITUTION

The relocation of universities was managed in two models: relocation of the management and relocation of the entire institution<sup>3</sup>.

By the end of May 2022, most universities have relocated management, which means that the rector, vice-rectors of the university, the accounting department, the person entrusted with working with the Student Register, and some other employees directly travel to the territory controlled by Ukraine. The administration continued to work in the premises and offices provided by another educational institution or local authority while teaching took place using remote technologies.

"The rector of our university himself took out the servers and part of the teams until it is possible at the end of February. Even then, in April-May, there was no communication in Mariupol, so we checked when one of our events was online in order to contact them. In this way, they contacted everyone with whom there was an opportunity."

Roman Tolpezhnikov, a Dean of the Law School at Mariupol State University

Some universities could manage to relocate the university, which involves moving not only the administration but also part of the teachers and students to another city. Such universities also negotiate with local authorities or universities on the rent of facilities.

In total, 25 independent universities and 19 separate departments of various universities were relocated in March-May 2022. More than 54,000 students study at DU, and almost seven thousand teachers work there (Annex 2 List of DU in 2022).

https://voxukraine.org/u-chuzhyh-stinah-yak-dolayut-problemy-peremishheni-universytety/



There are 10 universities among these institutions that have been forced to relocate for the second time after 2014.

Organisational and financial problems arose for the management of the universities related to the need to establish the university in a new location. At the same time, some universities relocated for the second time after the first in 2014. Previous relocation experience has been helpful since most of the necessary operational and management actions are carried out according to a previously developed algorithm. The widespread use of remote digital communication technologies simplifies the adaptation process.

#### FUNDING

Ukrainian universities have two significant sources of funding: public funding from the state budget and tuition paid by students.

Ukraine's Higher Education has not completed the financial reform. From 2020, higher education institutions are financed according to a formula where universities with better performance results receive more funding than last year's budget. Specific indicators include the scale of the university; the number of students; regional coefficient; positions in international rankings; the funds for research that the university attracts from business or international grants, and graduates' employment. This formula aimed to unleash university potential tied only to the number of students, which was the only component of the budget.

Because of the war, state budget expenditures for financing all public universities for June-December 2022 were reduced by 17 per cent. In addition, many "contract" (tuition) students lost the opportunity to pay for education. These two circumstances determine the problematic financial situation. Since the main item of their expenses is traditionally the salary of employees, universities use various legal tools to cut the salary but keep people employed.



"Now our faculty has more than 800 students. Practically everyone is studying at the expense of the state budget. We have the opportunity to pay the salaries of our teachers every day - it is free to keep the team."

Roman Tolpezhnikov, a Dean of the Law School at Mariupol State University

The displaced universities' funding problem is even more extreme due to the relocation costs: rent facilities for education, administration and accommodation, heating, and other utilities. This means more spending while income is dropping. The funding of universities heavily depends on the number of students they have. That is why displaced universities have high hopes for the admissions campaign. They target their communication on the IDPs that also moved to new cities. If the universities recruit many applicants, they will have money. If they do not recruit, they will have even bigger financial problems.

#### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Because of the military actions, displaced universities announced a long break in the educational process, sending students on vacation. The educational process in Ukrainian higher education institutions began to resume on March 14. For the most part, the educational process took place remotely in synchronous and asynchronous modes.

The administrations of higher education institutions note that in resuming education during martial law, they came in handy with the previous experience of introducing a distance education format, which was introduced after the rapid spread of COVID-19. However, the entire system of higher education in Ukraine during the "covid" academic years adapted unequally. Systematic transition to distance learning as the "new normal" was not the case for all universities. Instead, the majority hoped that with the lifting of quarantine restrictions, education would return to "business as usual". And here we have not only the problems of funding, lack of technical resources, and access to licensed software, but also the adaptation of educational courses to the distance format, insufficient knowledge of teachers with the methods of effective teaching specifically in the distance format, and therefore the minimal use of these methods.

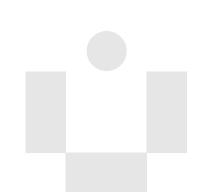


Every participant in the education process (teachers, students, administration) is dealing with a traumatic experience related to war. The peculiarity of this experience is that it is different, depending on the place of residence, the loss of loved ones, and personal safety. Such experiences often result in decreased cognitive abilities, sleep disturbances, memory problems, speech delays, anxiety, and problems with focusing attention. Educational professionals need to be prepared for potential students' breakdowns and be able to respond accordingly.

"The main thing is to maintain contact with people, with the team, with students. Therefore, we are in each other's desire to get the big one away from hostilities."

Roman Tolpezhnikov, a Dean of the Law School at Mariupol State University

The relocated universities faced technical problems. Servers that store library information resources, materials for distance learning, documentation of the educational process, etc., remained in the temporarily occupied territory. To solve this problem, the management of relocated universities tries to use the computer capacities of the universities to which they have moved, or they turn to the services of other third-party organisations.



# SOLUTION

Russia's war against Ukraine forced every university to face several challenges: to survive, to continue providing high-quality educational services, to preserve scientific potential and, having adapted to new conditions, not to lose hope for further development. These issues became especially severe for universities in the line of fire.

It is hard to find a complex governmental document describing policies towards displaced universities or at least an outline of the state's intention regarding displaced education institutions. There are several legal documents and public statements that might be considered solutions for the stated problem.

In 2015 an NGO established the Coordination Centre for Displaced Universities. The Centre aimed to advocate for better legislation for the relocated institutions. Its work resulted in a Council of Rectors of Displaced Universities created by the Ministry of Education and Science in January 2016 as an advisory body. The Coordination Centre and the Council of Rectors provide decision-makers with data and media content to support needed changes.

The Coordination Centre and the Council of Rectors established a good working relationship with a group of parliamentarians affiliated with a particular university or education in general. Close cooperation with the Ministry and the Parliament helped to adopt the Law on Displaced Universities in November 2016. The Law was a breakthrough in terms of new definitions. From that moment term "displaced higher education institutions" was introduced. Among other changes there were:

- · Prolonged accreditation of DUs;
- · Change of the students per teacher ratio;
- · Declared Ministerial support in solving DU's infrastructure issues;
- Guaranteed number of state-funded students;
- The moratorium for penalties and sanctions of credit and other agreements;
- · Release of responsibilities for the property and actions on the occupied territories;

<sup>4</sup> https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/v0050729-16#Text



The new law fixed the urgent short-term legal needs of the displaced universities. At the same time, it had not given a direction for the development or other long-term solutions. The next couple of years were diverse for different Displaced Universities: some could manage to find facilities and recruit new students, while others were dying out. After the Law on Displaced Universities in 2016, there were no significant changes in policies or legislation.

With a full-scale invasion, the problem of displaced education institutions emerged on a bigger scale. During the first weeks of the war, many Displaced Universities started their second relocation, while other universities in Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions began looking for a safer location. Some DUs renew the education activities after March 14th. After February 24, 2022, part of the students, teachers, and other employees of higher education institutions found themselves outside of Ukraine, the other part moved to the territories under Ukrainian control, but a significant part of them continued to stay in the temporarily occupied territories.

In May 2022 Ministry of Education and Science declared a policy regarding DU. Minister of Education and Science made a statement:

"Our main goal is to create a safe educational environment for the education organisation under martial law. I am grateful to the heads of higher education institutions, who in the shortest possible time made maximum efforts so that students and teams continued the educational process in safer places"



### Minister of Education and Science<sup>6</sup>

For the 2022 Admission Campaign Ministry of Education has developed a modification for the state funding mechanism. Previously, all the secondary education graduates participated in the "wide competition" with their certificates of the external independent evaluation<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1731-19#Text



Special 2<sup>nd</sup> Quote<sup>8</sup> allowed universities to enrol students from the temporarily occupied territories up to 10% for regular and up to 20% to the displaced universities of the admission capacity for public funding. It incentivises young people to move out of the occupation and generate some income for the institution. More than 15,000 graduates became students under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quote regulations. Not all of them ended up in Displaced Universities, and some chose big universities in Kharkiv and Kyiv.

International partners have created some opportunities for DU. For example, Volodymyr Dahl Eastern Ukrainian National University, with the support of the Fulbright Program, set up an anti-crisis committee. National and international experts joined the committee to consult the university in these difficult times. The British Council<sup>9</sup> has launched the three-year project to support Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University and Mariupol State University. It aims to increase the capacity and competitiveness of displaced universities.

The budget spending on education, especially higher-cost education at DU, is very limited. Thus, DUs are trying to recruit international officers to improve their capabilities of international cooperation. This will allow them to engage foreign funding for humanitarian needs, new infrastructure, and scientific and education activities.

There is a need for a discussion of the future of Displaced Universities. The topic is not well-liked in the Ministry of Education and Science, since they do not have a clear vision of how it can be solved without an unpopular decision (e.g. merging of higher education institutions). The presented case study is a platform for the debate and laboratory for the complex solution design, that can be presented to Ukrainian officials. Please, consider these, but not only, potential policy goals during the discussion:

- Preserving the educational institution
- Ensure quality of the education outcomes
- Limiting budget spending during the war
- Social guarantees for the DU personnel
- Reintegration of the occupied territories

<sup>6</sup> https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/zakladi-fahovoyi-peredvishoyi-ta-vishoyi-osviti-zavershuyut-proces-timchasovogo-peremishennya-do-bezpechnih-regioniv-ukrayini

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> https://testportal.gov.ua/

<sup>8</sup> https://osvita.ua/legislation/Vishya\_osvita/82362/

<sup>9</sup> https://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/en/programmes/education/redu



# CONCLUSION

Ukrainian higher education is going through another crisis. Universities that had to flee from the war suffered the biggest blow; some employees and students went through filtration camps organised by Russia, and some died.

The previous experience of displacement in 2014-2016 only helped some. This time, the geography of displacement and the number of people is much larger. Universities are negotiating premises in new cities to resume studies since only educational activities and students will be able to maintain the institution.

Displaced Universities are under scrutiny and can rely only on themselves. Limited managerial capacities and funding reduce flexibility and decision options. The government deals with the atrocities of the education infrastructure at all levels and has no resources to respond to the needs of the displaced universities. The uncertainty of the duration of the war and random shelling of the civilian infrastructure creates an unfavourable emotional state for the development of the education environment.

Despite significant problems with funding and accommodation of staff and students, displaced universities are thinking about the future. They see their future role in reintegrating the occupied territories and rebuilding their homes.

"It would be good if the Government developed a plan to return actions to our cities when they are de-occupied. We as an institution could play an important role in reintegration. Although it will be challenging and psychologically difficult for many, we are ready."

Roman Tolpezhnikov, a Dean of the Law School at Mariupol State University

## NOTES

- 1. Coordination Centre for Displaced Universities Facebook post about the current situation and consultation with the stakeholders from March 23, 2016, <a href="https://www.facebook.com/kcpzvo/photos/a.659765487458072/736256649808955/?type=3">https://www.facebook.com/kcpzvo/photos/a.659765487458072/736256649808955/?type=3</a>
- 2. Documentary about Displaced Universities in 2014-2016, Coordination Centre for Displaced Universities April 10, 2018, <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?">https://www.youtube.com/watch?</a>
  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?">v=7zxdrksPUIA&ab\_channel=DisplacedUniversities</a>
- 3. Summary on the funding and student admission in displaced universities. VoxUkraine July 22, 2022, <a href="https://voxukraine.org/u-chuzhyh-stinah-yak-dolayut-problemy-peremishheni-universytety/">https://voxukraine.org/u-chuzhyh-stinah-yak-dolayut-problemy-peremishheni-universytety/</a>
- 4. Ministry of Education and Science Act on Creating a Displaced University Rectors Council, January 26, 2016 <a href="https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/v0050729-16#Text">https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/v0050729-16#Text</a>
- 5. Law on Temporary Displaced Educational Institutions November 3, 2016 <a href="https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1731-19#Text">https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1731-19#Text</a>
- 6. Education and Science Minister statement May 17, 2022 <a href="https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/zakladi-fahovoyi-peredvishoyi-ta-vishoyi-osviti-zavershuyut-proces-timchasovogo-peremishennya-do-bezpechnih-regioniv-ukrayini">https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/zakladi-fahovoyi-peredvishoyi-ta-vishoyi-osviti-zavershuyut-proces-timchasovogo-peremishennya-do-bezpechnih-regioniv-ukrayini</a>
- 7. Ukrainian Center for Quality Assurance <a href="https://testportal.gov.ua/">https://testportal.gov.ua/</a>
- 8. Higher Education Admission Rules April 15, 2022 <a href="https://osvita.ua/legislation/">https://osvita.ua/legislation/</a> <a href="https://osvita.ua/legislation/">Vishya\_osvita/82362/</a>
- 9. The British Council and Institute of Higher Education project <a href="https://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/en/programmes/education/reducation/



Projest initiated by the Fund of the President of Ukraine for Education, Science, and Sports, implemented by Eidos and supported by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom in Ukraine







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