

## THE EFFECT OF INFORMAL EDUCATION ON THE LABOR MARKET IN UKRAINE

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### Summary

The work deals with a comprehensive analysis of theoretical and practical approaches to the impact of short-term courses on the labor market and the level of unemployment in Ukraine in the conditions of hostilities and martial law. Special attention is paid to the study of foreign experience in the field of professional development and retraining of workers in various sectors of the economy, as well as the introduction of short-term courses as one of the effective tools for adapting citizens to the new requirements of the labor market.

The paper analyzes in detail the problems faced by Ukraine after the invasion of the armed forces of the Russian Federation and their negative impact on the state's economy. In particular, the shortage of qualified personnel and the role of highly qualified workers in the process of defending territorial integrity within the armed forces of Ukraine were considered.

The study also proposed and analyzed the conditions for creating free space at workplaces and providing decent working and living conditions for low-mobility population groups. The importance of integrating these groups into the labor market through specialized programs and support from the state is highlighted.

In the conclusions of the work, attention is focused on In general, the introduction of short-term courses, the development of digital education, support for citizens with disabilities and the creation of a barrier-free environment, which are key directions for the economic recovery of Ukraine. This will help increase the competitiveness of the state and improve the quality of life of the population.

**Key words:** public administration, government policy, unemployment, barrier-free, disabilities, employment, barrier-free strategy, ensuring equal rights of citizens.

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### 1. Introduction

Today, the rapid development of technologies in the world and educational practices allows us to create conditions that satisfy the high level of professional qualifications of employees and managers of public and private enterprises and organizations, which requires constant professional development, the development of new approaches, methods of work, the involvement of new trends and technologies in the work process. It should be noted that this approach has already received positive feedback in the world, which allows us to implement basic methodological approaches to the creation and implementation of special short-term courses in Ukraine.

It should be noted that the need to implement such courses is determined by the conditions and needs of the labor market, the need to renew and modernize the production infrastructure

and the requirements of time, the need to restore infrastructure facilities that have suffered the devastating consequences of hostilities, the purpose of these measures is to strengthen and improve the economic efficiency of the state and ensure competitiveness on the world stage. All this indicates the relevance of the chosen research topic.

## 2. Foreign experience of educational activity

Conducting an analysis of foreign experience in reducing the level of unemployment, retraining and modernization of production; introduction and application of the methodology of short-term courses and modernization of labor requirements, provision of recommendations and their rapid implementation in the conditions of hostilities and martial law in the state.

It should be noted such problematic issues that have become relevant in the conditions of instability associated with the influence of the escalation of the military conflict on the territory of Ukraine

Among the problematic issues that Ukraine faced after the invasion on our territory was the forced migration of citizens from the zone of active hostilities and front-line territories, migration outside the state, which caused an extraordinary decrease in the number of employed and able-bodied citizens of Ukraine in the territory where hostilities were taking place (hostilities were taking place) and behind outside the borders of the state, it should also be noted the negative impact of mobilization processes from the point of view of the economy, because through the implementation of mobilization orders and the attraction and strengthening of mobilization, workers are released, which increases the level of unemployment and the loss of the state's production capacity in the relevant industries or causes a complete shutdown of the enterprise due to a shortage of workers. The positive influence of mobilization is an increase in the state's defense capacity in the fight against the enemy. The impact of hostilities caused negative phenomena regarding the abuse of official duties by officials in matters of crossing the state border and ensuring the procedure of postponement or reservation and provided an opportunity for the modernization of organizational and legal documents. We note that the shortage of workers exposed the problem of vital activities of all sectors, namely: Agriculture, Industry, Medicine, Education, Transport and food activities, as well as the insufficient level of informational support of the state regarding overcoming unemployment both at the level of the region and at the level of the state, regarding the possibilities of educational centers that provide continuous education and retraining of workers in relevant labor professions and provide an opportunity to gain practical experience in a new field for the worker (educational courses, programs, trainings, seminars, practical training, etc.).

Scientific works and theoretical and practical studies of the following scientists are devoted to the problem of research and implementation of reducing unemployment in Ukraine, the level of unemployment and its introduction into the work process with the application of the barrier-free approach and the development of new approaches to solving the urgent problems of ensuring barrier-free access in everyday life, namely: H. Voynamaki, L. Niskanen, K. Koskela, E. Shcherbyny, L. Martsenyuk, S. Faifer, G. Grebenyuk, L. Nalyvaiko, K. Stepanenko, Yu. Boychuka, N. Dobrenkoi, S. Kysil, N. Kryvoruchko, O. Kucheruk, I. Lopushinsky, L. Pyrig, S. Romanyuk, O. Usyk, M. Tchaikovsky, T. Mur., N. Kapur, D. Gunnell, S. Russo, and others. (*Council of the European Union, 2000; Martseniuk, 2023; Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy, 2024; Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2021*).

In many countries, such as the USA, Canada and EU countries, short-term courses have allowed workers to adapt to modern challenges of the labor market. Which is an indicator of

high efficiency, in a tumultuous period of economic instability, technological change and globalization, will reduce the demand for acquiring new skills faster than the traditional education system can satisfy.

In the US, short-term courses are offered through technical and community colleges, as well as through private company certification programs. These courses can last from a few weeks to a few months and cover a wide range of specialties, from programming and digital marketing to engineering, auto mechanics and medical professions.

An example is the "TechHire" program launched in 2015 by the US government to rapidly train workers for the technology, healthcare and manufacturing industries. Participants go through intensive courses (bootcamps) that provide specific skills, and many of them find work within a few months of completing the course.

Another successful example is the program from "Google Career Certificates", which offers training in specialties such as data analysis, project management and IT support. These courses usually last about 6 months and allow you to quickly master a new profession without the need to obtain a full university education.

In Canada, a system of short-term courses is actively used to retrain workers and integrate them into new sectors of the economy. Such programs are developed in cooperation with the government, educational institutions and private companies.

A clear example is the "Skills Development Fund", which finances short-term training programs for various industries: construction, IT and health care. The program supports not only the unemployed, but also those seeking to change professions or improve their qualifications by providing access to training courses both online and offline.

In addition, so-called "coop" programs that combine training and paid practice are common in Canada. This approach provides students with the practical skills needed to enter the job market after graduation.

In Europe, short-term courses play an important role in upskilling workers and combating unemployment, especially among young people and the long-term unemployed. These programs are often supported by governments and funded by the European Union.

Germany has a strong dual education system, where short-term courses are combined with practical on-the-job training, which helps employees acquire up-to-date skills and quickly integrate into the work process.

In France, there is a "Pôle Emploi" program, which offers courses for the unemployed or people who want to change professions. It covers various fields such as engineering, cultural industries, etc. and allows you to acquire new skills in just a few months.

In the Netherlands, the "Leven Lang Leren" (Lifelong Learning) initiative is actively being implemented, which aims to continuously improve the skills of the workforce. The programs provide an opportunity for people of all ages to take short-term courses to improve their qualifications or acquire new skills. The state also supports such programs through subsidies, making them available to a wide range of citizens.

### **3. Ukrainian present and new directions of development**

The effectiveness of such programs depends on partnerships between government agencies, business and educational institutions. Ukraine can develop short-term courses in high-demand industries such as IT, engineering, green economy, healthcare and construction. An important aspect is the implementation of certification systems, which will increase the recognition of these courses in the labor market.

It is also important to develop distance learning to make short-term courses available to the general public, particularly those who live in remote areas or have limited access to traditional educational institutions.

Ukraine is already taking the first steps in this direction, in particular through retraining programs for veterans, internally displaced persons and supporting digital skills among young people. But the development and distribution of these programs has significant potential for further growth.

The conducted analysis of world experience makes it possible to predict that the introduction and realization of short-term courses has a positive effect on the state of employment of the population. What enables the employee at the initial stages to understand the professional features of work by direction, responsibility, further ways to development and acquisition of informal education (self-education).

To date, there are a certain number of short-term courses in Ukraine, but their number and quality are significantly inferior to foreign counterparts, but the impact of negative factors on the state of education (epidemic, hostilities) made it possible to join international projects in a distance format, such as: Coursera, Udemy, EdX, Google Digital Workshop, LinkedIn Learning, and others that gave a significant impetus to the development of their own programs, for example: EdEra, Professional education online (profosvita.online). Today with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and (EU4Skills). The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine has started the implementation of digital technologies in the vocational education system. The main areas where such courses can be most effective are construction, information technology, health care, engineering, service and business sectors.

In today's world, it is difficult to find a field that is not related to information technologies, technologies have deeply entered our lives, therefore, taking into account the difficult situation in Ukraine, the need for specialists in this field has increased significantly, as in many other countries, the needs of the labor market change depending on from economic conditions, technological progress and social changes.

Unfortunately, in the conditions of active hostilities and the strengthening of requirements for the security situation in Ukraine, all industries are especially in need of specialists in Information Technology, social and technical support, personnel support and universal specialists who can combine several areas of work in their work. Thus, in accordance with the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 167-r, the Concept of the Development of Digital Competencies until 2025 was approved, the goal of which is to create a Data Protection system and systems to counter cyber threats, system administrators of databases, system analysts, programmers and developers of applications and applications (*United Nations, 1994*).

Thus, together with the Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure, together with the United Nations, a pilot project was introduced to train women drivers and attract more segments of the population to this area in order to transport passengers by bus and other public transport. The purpose of this pilot project is to provide training and/or retraining, retraining of female drivers and their involvement in the field of public transport, namely buses, trolleybuses, metro and other types of transport. This initiative of the Ministry is aimed both at overcoming the shortage of personnel and at overcoming stereotypes and prejudices about professions.

It should be noted that according to the latest analysis of the data of the Ministry of Social Policy and the State Labor Service, the shortage of workers, including bus drivers, in the regions is about 30%, which is about six thousand employees. Also, one of the relevant projects that began its implementation in the pre-war period is the presentation of the pilot

project "Work Freely" to help people with disabilities find employment (*Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2021*). This project is especially relevant today, because the hostilities on the territory of our country are still ongoing and, unfortunately, are causing more and more injuries among the citizens of Ukraine. This project "Work freely" is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the public organization "Social Unity Public Movement", which is implemented with the support of the Council of Europe project "Development of social human rights as a key factor of sustainable democracy in Ukraine" (*New Ukrainian school NUS web resource, 2020*). At the end of 2022, the Government of Ukraine made amendments to the normative legal documents and acts "On Amendments to Some Laws of Ukraine Regarding the Protection of Social, Labor and Other Rights of Individuals, Including During Martial Law, and Simplification of Accounting, Workplaces for Individuals with disabilities", "On the basics of social security of persons with disabilities in Ukraine" and "Procedure for employment of persons with disabilities", which obliged employers to allocate and create workplaces for the employment of persons with disabilities, in particular special workplaces, to create working conditions for such persons taking into account individual rehabilitation programs and providing other socio-economic guarantees provided for by legislation, providing the state employment service with information necessary for organizing employment of persons with disabilities, in accordance with the procedure established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. At the same time, employers independently calculate the number of jobs for persons with disabilities.

The full-scale aggression against Ukraine caused and made a significant push to actualize the problem of ensuring the accessibility of citizens in the war and post-war period, and therefore, the need to justify it as a national ideology and philosophy of Ukrainian society, which, in turn, is designed to increase the level of its well-being and access to objects of the physical environment.

It should be noted that there is a popular opinion that a ramp and an elevator or a lift are all that is needed to make the built space barrier-free. But it should be noted that the concept of barrier-free in a general sense has philosophical roots as an environment in which everyone is comfortable, also the concept of barrier-free has many other aspects, starting from the width of the opening of the door or passage, from the height from the floor to door handles or railings and from signs and duplicating his auditory signal (*Kysil, 2019: 29-37*).

As the Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine Maryna Lazebna noted, "Full employment of people with disabilities in well-paid jobs is one of our main tasks. The Ministry of Social Policy started with itself and introduced a specialized internship program for professionals with disabilities, and our first person is already undergoing an internship in the legal department. I suggest that all ministries and state institutions join this initiative."

Several groups of people are distinguished by the type of disability. These are, first of all, people who:

- cannot see or have limited vision;
- cannot hear or have limited hearing;
- have physical disabilities, suffer from arthritis, use wheelchairs or walkers for movement;
- are sick for a long period of time and have complications in movement;
- have an "invisible" disability;
- have mental health defects, consequences of brain injuries, psychological or mental complications.

Each person has different degrees of disability:

- light or medium;

- invisible to outsiders;
- complicate a person's physical abilities and mobility. For example, a person can walk well, but it is difficult for him to take an object with his hands or do something with it.

It should be noted that the "Work Freely" project is implemented on the basis of the "Freely" portal of the same name, which will become a communication platform where people with disabilities can find a job of their choice, and employers can conduct interviews online, if necessary, with translation into Ukrainian sign language. and find qualified employees. During the development of the portal, three main areas were identified: 1) education, 2) employment, 3) an interactive map of the availability of facilities and institutions. Anton Gulidin, the secretary of the public organization "Public Movement "Social Unity", told about this. "Programs for adapting candidates' skills to the employer's requirements will also work within the project. After completing a short training course, a person receives the minimum amount of knowledge sufficient to start working in a new place."

According to the Ministry of Social Policy, about 3 million people with disabilities live in Ukraine today, but it should be noted that only about 600,000 people with disabilities of working age are employed. Note that the goal of this project is to attract as many people of working age as possible to work and to create comfortable working conditions for them, that is, according to experts, according to approximate calculations, when creating comfortable conditions, it is possible to employ more than 1.5 million people with disabilities. That is, for almost 60%, the guaranteed right to work remains unrealized for various reasons.

It should be noted that the policy of many states regarding people with disabilities for centuries was aimed at one goal – to make them "invisible" and hide them from a prejudiced society. "Ignorance, scorn, prejudice and fear are social factors that throughout history have hindered the development of the abilities of people with disabilities and led to their isolation."

As the Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine Maryna Lazebna points out, this problem must be solved comprehensively – at the legislative level, at the level of communications with employers, at the level of quality education that must meet the needs of the labor market, and the creation of accessible infrastructure. For people with disabilities and groups with reduced mobility population (*Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2021*).

It is worth paying attention to the fact that all measures to create a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities must comply with the principles of Universal Design (*United Nations, 1994*).

According to international recommendations, 7 principles of universal design are distinguished:

Principle 1: Equitable use. The principle of equality and accessibility of the environment for everyone is to provide the same means for all users in order to avoid the personification of certain groups of the population. The design should be useful and easy to understand and use for people with different levels of ability.

Principle 2: Flexibility in use. The design should ensure the availability of a wide range of individual settings and capabilities, taking into account the needs of users.

Principle 3: Simple and convenient use. The design should be simple and intuitive to use regardless of experience, education, language level and age of users.

Principle 4: Perception of information regardless of the sensory capabilities of users. The design contributes to the effective delivery of all necessary information to the user, regardless of external conditions or the user's perception capabilities.

Principle 5: Permissibility of errors. The design minimizes the possibility of risks and harmful consequences of accidental or unintentional user actions.

Principle 6: Low level of physical effort. The design promotes effective and convenient use with minimal fatigue. The design is designed for the insignificant physical resources of the effort that users have to exert.

Principle 7: The presence of the necessary size and space during approach, entrance and various manipulations regardless of anthropometric characteristics, condition and mobility of the user (*United Nations, 1994*).

#### **4. The Ukrainian future, a look into the future in terms of barrier-freeness**

Employment of persons with disabilities is one of the key priority tasks of the state, which is aimed at rebuilding economic sustainability and stability. Note that more than 1 billion people in different countries have some form of disability. Which corresponds to approximately fifteen percent of the earth's population. If you make an approximate age distribution of the population, from 110 million two and two tenths' percent to 190 million (three and eight tenths' percent) people aged 15 and older experience significant difficulties in existence and barrier-free movement. It should be noted that disability rates are increasing in connection with the aging of the population, which exacerbates chronic health disorders. In order to promote the development of the employment system and the developed and proposed project of the Council of Europe "Development of social human rights as a key factor of sustainable democracy in Ukraine", the White Book "Ensuring the right to work of people with disabilities" was founded. Which provides recommendations on ensuring free access to the labor market for people with disabilities.

We note that regardless of the place of residence of a person with a disability, in a city or a village, they face obstacles every day, which is an additional incentive for defending and realizing barrier-free access for all residents of our state and guests of Ukraine and for every citizen in the fight for their rights. it can be physical barriers, lack of information in accessible formats, lack of accessible transport services, etc.

It is generally known that existing specific barriers can significantly affect the implementation and provision of numerous human rights. Thus, the lack of accessible transport can prevent people with disabilities from moving freely to places of work or study, to use health care and rehabilitation facilities, culture, sports, etc. The lack of available information about political processes not only limits the opportunities to exercise rights and freedoms through participation in the political and social life of the state, but also makes it impossible to make a conscious choice regarding issues related to other human rights.

The following types of barriers are classified, which can be tentatively classified into the following groups:

**Institutional:** These include laws, programs that actively prohibit or are unable to facilitate the "access" of people with disabilities, and their implementation practices.

**Mental:** Perhaps the most common obstacle is the attitude of people towards people with disabilities of many people – "mental barrier". Sometimes existing myths and stereotypes about people with disabilities in society can unknowingly cause a lot of damage and create artificial barriers. In other cases, barriers exist only because a large part of society does not know and does not understand the essence of the problems of people with disabilities.

**Physical:** These are "physical barriers", especially those that exist in buildings and structures or in transport infrastructure. These are the "first" barriers that come to mind when considering the issue of "accessibility" for people with disabilities.

Informational:

1. Often, the form of information submission and its content are not accessible to people with disabilities. Yes, people with impaired vision do not have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with publications that are printed in small print.

2. Television programs that are shown without subtitles or without sign language translation are inaccessible to deaf people.

3. If information is not accompanied by Braille or other appropriate tactile forms, it is inaccessible to blind people. If the inscription in the store's price tag is not duplicated with the Braille alphabet, then blind buyers will not be able to get information about the price of the product without outside help.

The content of the information is crucial. Information that is not presented in an accessible form is unlikely to be accessible to many people with cognitive impairments.

Looking at the health care system, Ukraine has already faced a shortage of qualified health workers and equipment and materials in health care facilities. Unfortunately, every specialist now in the conditions of an armed conflict and in the post-war years, every specialist with a medical education is very important and already endures a heavy load, which we need to reduce by conducting career guidance events and conducting courses on the training of specialists in the medical field, the government of Ukraine has adopted attempts to reduce the large deficit of personnel, the government developed and approved the Strategy for the development of the health care system until 2030" (*Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy, 2021*). Already now, in order to effectively provide medical services and improve their quality, there is a shortage of qualified workers in the medical field in Ukraine, namely: doctors and nurses, pharmacists, laboratory assistants and specialists in high-precision equipment, radiologists, diagnosticians, specialists in the maintenance of medical equipment and administrators, etc.

Specialists in the construction industry in accordance with the concept of restoration and modernization of Ukraine, compliance with new standards and modern requirements. It should be noted that the citizens serving the infrastructure who risk their lives every day and provide communal services in the conditions of war.

Thus, according to the list of specialties that our state needs today, the specialists that are in short supply are construction engineers, specialists in electrical systems, specialists in water supply systems, construction machinery operators, welders and installers, turners, millers, locksmiths, etc.

Note that already today some communities are already implementing barrier-free and accessibility policies in their activities, namely:

The Rivne City Territorial Community, together with experts, developed the Regulations on the Local Accessibility Council, which includes representatives of the municipality and the public, as well as accessibility experts. Barriers to movement through city streets are being actively removed. Rivne is involved in the flagship projects "Education without barriers" and "Digital Education Program". Rehabilitation services for adults, including veterans, and children are also being developed.

Slavutych city territorial community has been working on the implementation of barrier-free solutions since 2021. The program "Slavutych – a barrier-free city" and the corresponding plan of events have been in operation for several years. Barrier-free routes are laid through the city. City residents are involved in the implementation of barrier-free solutions through the "Participation Budget" program. The city community defines accessibility as one of the key priorities for development, therefore actively involves residents in discussions, evaluation of results and expansion of the map of accessibility projects. This is reflected in strategic



documents and budget planning, because accessibility directly affects the improvement of life in the city.

The Vinnitsa City Territorial Community created a Working Group on the Development of Barrier-Free Space in the City. The transport network and urban spaces are adapted according to the principles of inclusiveness. In the course of the year, it is planned to start the meetings of the local Barrier-free Council and approve the Program for the development of barrier-free development in the community. The Vinnitsa community implements the flagship projects "Education for all" and "Work without barriers". Also, as part of the "Ukraine without barriers" educational campaign, meetings and lectures are held with the participation of community residents.

The Oprichnina settlement territorial community is taking the first steps towards creating barrier-free spaces and services. Currently, the Action Plan for 2023–2024 has been developed for the implementation of the National Strategy for the creation of a barrier-free space (*Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy, 2021*). Also, a system of registration of people with disabilities and low-mobility population groups was introduced, the accessibility of communally owned buildings is being monitored. The priority of the community until the end of the year:

ensuring barrier-free access to medical facilities, as well as to social and administrative services;

implementation of barrier-free practices to involve people with disabilities, youth, the elderly, and parents with young children in cultural life.

It is important for cities, villages and towns to be involved in the state barrier-free policy, understand its content and tasks, accept responsibility and participate in its implementation. To do this, priorities, tools, channels of communication interaction should be clear and understandable for everyone.

## 5. Conclusions

Therefore, one of the main tasks for Ukraine is the elimination of restrictions affecting its citizens. In the conditions of the rapid development of technologies, changes in educational practices and new challenges in the labor market, it is necessary to implement new approaches to improving the qualifications of employees and managers. This is especially relevant for the public and private sectors in Ukraine. Large-scale hostilities, which have led to the destruction of infrastructure and population migration, create a need for renewed approaches to vocational training for economic recovery.

International experience, in particular from the USA, Canada and Europe, shows the effectiveness of short-term courses in increasing employment and promoting retraining of the population. Such courses, especially in technological and engineering fields, have demonstrated their ability to quickly prepare specialists for the labor market. The introduction of new approaches to education is an important area of modernization of professional education in Ukraine.

Another important problem is ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities, which has become especially relevant due to the consequences of hostilities. Initiatives such as the "Work freely" project are trying to adapt workplaces for people with disabilities, but in Ukraine it is still not possible to fully create a barrier-free environment for all groups of the population with limited mobility. The principle of universal design, which is already implemented at the state level, aims to ensure equal and comfortable conditions for all citizens in the areas of work, education and infrastructure.

Ukraine actively cooperates with international organizations, such as EU4Skills, the UN and the Council of Europe (*Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy, 2021*). This helps to implement

international standards in educational and social programs, contributing to the integration of Ukrainian society into the world community (*The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023*). Together with partners, Ukraine is implementing pilot projects aimed at attracting women to the transport industry, which is an important step in overcoming gender stereotypes and solving the personnel shortage in certain sectors of the economy. This shows how government initiatives can have a positive impact on gender equality in the labor market.

The adoption of new laws and amendments to existing legal acts should be aimed at improving working conditions, protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, and creating conditions for their full social integration.

Therefore, the introduction of short-term courses, the development of digital education, support for people with disabilities and the creation of a barrier-free environment are key directions for the economic recovery of Ukraine in the conditions of the war and post-war period. This will help increase the competitiveness of the state and improve the quality of life of the population.

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