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MIGRATION OF STUDENTS AS A RESULT OF THE WAR: SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The war in Ukraine, which has been going on for over a year, has led to mass migration of the population, including children and youth. According to UNICEF, as of the beginning of 2023, more than 1.8 million Ukrainian children have gone abroad. 10-15% of students are abroad. More than 2.5 million schoolchildren and students became internally displaced persons. This migration has a significant impact on the total number of students in Ukraine.

The migration of pupils and students caused by the war can have both short-term and long-term consequences for education in Ukraine.

Consider the short-term consequences. In the frontline regions, the number of students decreased due to the evacuation of residents and the loss of housing. This led to a reduction in the total number of students in schools and higher education institutions. For example, according to information from the Department of Education of the Kharkiv City Council, by August 2023, only 40 percent of school students who left at the beginning of the war returned to Kharkiv.

When students move away from areas with conflict, more students join schools in other parts of Ukraine. This puts extra stress on the school systems in those areas. Some students' education suffers because they can't go to Ukrainian schools when they leave the country or can't attend school due to ongoing conflicts. They may have limited access to internet or technology for remote learning.

This movement of students can have lasting effects. A lower education level can hurt Ukraine's economy and increase social inequality. Kids from less wealthy families who couldn't not move to a safer region of Ukraine or abroad may have fewer chances for education. Children who left Ukraine may not come back after finishing their studies or after the war.

To help with these challenges, Ukraine is taking steps like creating the "All-Ukrainian Online School" platform for easier access to quality education, and approving a standard program for children studying abroad so they can still learn about Ukrainian subjects.

In safer regions of Ukraine, shelters are being organized in schools and higher education institutions for full-time and mixed education. With the start of the second wartime school year, the number of children attending full-time education is expected to rise to 2.3 million from 1.3 million last school year. But according to estimates by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, approximately 1.7 million children – or 42 percent – will have limited access to full-time education. This includes about a million students who will rely solely on distance learning.

It is important that Ukraine does everything possible to ensure access to quality education for all children and youth, regardless of where they are. This is a key factor in securing the country's future.