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The Impact of the Ukrainian and Russian War on Education

On February 28, 2022, the world began to change once again– the Russian government, led by Vladimir Putin, launched an attack on Ukraine. His initial goal was to overthrow the Ukrainian government and its leader, Volodymyr Zelensky. Putin specifically targeted Ukraine's capital Kyiv, but soon turned his direction to invade the Southern and Eastern parts. Missiles have been launched over Ukrainian cities killing thousands of innocent civilians and causing millions of Ukrainians to flee. Refugees have left their homeland to secure their safety, but are disrupting their education. And those who have stayed behind are forced to take shelter in their homes, without access to education. Months and months have gone by, and a resolution doesn't seem to be in sight. The war in Ukraine has caused millions of children and young adults to battle for their safety, creating a struggle to keep up with their education causing their futures to be at risk.

As the COVID-19 pandemic began to settle down and life began to return to "normal", the people of Ukraine were faced with a much larger battle, the attack from the Russian leader, Vladimir Putin. The full-blown invasion of Ukraine put all citizens at risk, with missiles targeting their country and even schools. It's estimated that 7.5 million Ukrainian children are affected: their safety and education. Dozens of children have died from targeted attacks on elementary schools. Hundreds of schools have been bombed, and nearly 300 are left in shambles. Attacking schools and hospitals directly violates NATO's grave violations against children. The

cruelty of Putin's planned attacks are beyond comprehension. Irina Saghoyan, Save the Children's Eastern Europe Director, said "Schools must not become the battlefields where wars are waged and students are the casualties. With every school that is damaged or destroyed, and every lesson missed, children's prospects of experiencing and building a better future diminishes." As the war continues, Ukraine has no other option than to keep schools closed in certain areas. Children have missed school from COVID-19 and now the war, years from now the Ukrainian workforce will be behind and job opportunities will be limited. The lack of education is continuing to pile up for Ukrainian children, making them more vulnerable for a future.

Students living in the eastern and southern parts or near military zones have stayed at home. Ukrainian schools have switched to remote learning, to keep their safety a priority. Those who are living in safer zones have returned to school, around 50%. It is a step in the right direction. News articles flooded with the first day of in-person learning for Ukrainian children; they spoke about how they were personally affected. Young children retold the horrific experiences of their school being bombed. In-person schools have been adjusted, containing a bomb shelter underneath. The new norm for children has been training them to react calmly and quickly to an air strike. A parent stated, "Two years of Covid and … six months of war, it is having a disastrous impact on children's growth and learning and mental health,", the longevity of the disaster Ukraine has faced is heart-wrenching.

Parents decide whether they feel it is safe enough to send their children to school, causing many parents to keep their children at home. Additionally, the attacks have damaged 2,300 out of Ukraine's 17,000 schools. Some schools reopened with teachers prepared with lesson plans, but with no students to teach. Children have had their learning interrupted for almost three years.

The longer the war continues, the more behind the children become in their education. War has become the new norm for Ukrainians.

Remote learning is a temporary fix, but it cannot go on forever. Children have become isolated from their friends and the routine of school. Ukrainian teachers have taken a different direction when teaching; instead of teaching new content, they teach to distract their students from the war. Homework and tests have been put aside, classes are shortened to about an hour for elementary school students. The access of internet is not guaranteed for every student, Russia can easily perform cyber attacks to limit their internet connection. (Russia has the power to control what they see online and censor citizens from the brutality of the war.) Every time a siren goes off to warn citizens of an airstrike school ends for that day. Air strikes are very common in Ukrainian towns halting children from growing in knowledge. Learning has been compromised due to the war, and it will continue to be until an agreement is made between Ukraine and Russia.

International students studying in Ukraine have also been affected, they were forced to flee leaving their work and degrees in behind. For international students, the sudden attack left many stranded. Not every student had a place to go or the money to purchase a ticket home. On the other hand, when they left they were forced to abandon the degrees they worked for. International students will not return to Ukraine any time soon, and probably not in the future, due to the war. All the countless hours they have spent to earn a degree has been discarded.

The affects of the attack from Russia on Ukriane has immeasurable, problems have continued to pile up in Ukraine. Education has been put aside, learning has previously been halted due to COVID-19. With children staying at home, no attending schools, internet access being limited, the children are barely learning. The dangers imposed on innocent civilians by

Russia has been determental and sadly will continue to be. Tens of thousands of lives have been taken and billions of dollars in destruction so far, and the war isn't over. The lack of education will put a greate strain on the country's economy. The years of little education will not prepare civilians to run businesses leaving Ukraine's economy in jeporady.

The war between Ukraine and Russia has hd a ripple effect amongst citizens and the entire world. Thousands have died, families have been torn apart, andU.S. President Joe Biden declared the attack "unprovoked and unjustified". Just like children across the globe, Ukrainian children's educational opportunities were limited due to the pandemic. As the war continues, their education is jeopardized. The effects of the Ukrainian war on education, piling on top of COVID-19 for students will be detrimental to the citizens. Looking forward, job opportunities will continue to slim, as the citizens won't have the education they need to be qualified. Additionally, the country will experience brain drain as civilians have become refugees in neighboring countries. International students will be at a minimal in the future. The Ukrainian workforce will be damaged, creating a domino effect on the economy and job opportunities.