Lifelong Learning as a Direction of State Policy in Times of Uncertainty

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Abstract:

In this article, the authors aimed to examine, using specific case studies, the development of lifelong learning as a vector of state policies and national models of higher education, to clarify the interpretation of the categories ‘lifelong learning’ and ‘adult education,’ and to investigate the reasons behind the intensification of this trend worldwide. The authors examined cases of the formation and development of LLL in the United States, Canada, Singapore, Great Britain, France, and Ukraine. The article focuses on the development of adult education in Ukraine during the war and provides arguments as to how lifelong learning has become one of the key factors in the survival and resilience of Ukrainians in a state of martial law. The discussion is illustrated with examples from the current practice of Ukrainian universities.

Key words: *state policy in the face of uncertainty, state educational policy, lifelong learning, adult education, political decision-making under conditions of uncertainty, recovery of Ukraine, Russian-Ukrainian war, liminal war.*

Introduction

In the context of global challenges and uncertainty, when a new world order is emerging and dialogues between states and societies at the national level are becoming increasingly tense due to the rise of authoritarian politics and the insecurity of the world's population, the search for effective political solutions and prudent public policy is becoming crucial for the world in the future. Changes in the population structure of the world's countries due to migration, the expansion of the war zone on the world map, the unpreparedness of governments for the rapid transformation of national economies in the face of climate change, educational losses and gaps between technologies and consumers capable of using them are conditions in which the skill of lifelong learning becomes an indicator of the maturity of an individual, society and state. Lifelong learning as a vector of state policy in the face of uncertainty is the subject of an interdisciplinary analysis by the authors of this article. The world practice of developing public policy in this area has unique solutions and cases that are important for political science, educational management and practices of recovery of Ukraine in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war as the "liminal war".

The world practice of developing public policy in this area has unique solutions and cases that are important for political science, educational management and practices of recovery of Ukraine in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war as the "liminal war". Regardless of extremely challenging times associated with the Russian war aggression, higher education in Ukraine demonstrates not only resistance and resilience but also finds ways to contribute to Ukrainian Victory and to enhance its societal role. Many Ukrainian Universities have become volunteer hubs; they open their bomb shelters to the local community, share their dormitories with displaced people and refugees, support displaced universities and do a lot of other socially significant work under martial law. At the same time, there is evidence of an increasing role of lifelong learning programmes which help to address demand from different categories of people affected by the war, for instance, displaced people

trying to find a job in the new environment, war veterans trying to return to civic life, people who are forced to change their specialisation and to obtain new skills and competencies to address new societal and economy needs and requirements under martial law. In addition, some categories of workers and officials need to cover their knowledge gaps associated with temporary change of activities or long absence at working place, for example, mothers who had to flee abroad with their children and returned to Ukraine or civil men who volunteered to Armed Forces and returned to their working places. Under such circumstances and considering this raising demand higher educational institutions expand their lifelong learning programmes to address modern societal challenges and needs. This paper discusses how lifelong learning became one of the key survival and resilience factors under martial law. The discussion is illustrated with some examples from the current practice of Ukrainian universities. Some ideas on how lifelong learning can become a driver of post-war recovery are also shared.

Methodology

The research methodology is interdisciplinary - it combines definitions, theoretical approaches of political science, crisis management, educational management, methods and techniques of causal assumptions, modelling of socio-political processes, economic statistics, and case study. Among data collection methods structured in-depth interviews with different LLL providers' top-managers and case studies were used.

The key author's concept is the understanding that the world has changed radically since the beginning of the 21st century and is in the bifurcation phase of the formation of a new world order after the victory of Donald Trump in the USA. The bifurcation contains two probable models of the world. In the first and desired one, partnership agreements, rules of the game in world politics, the right to self-determination of Man and the Nation-State, based on the value of human life and freedom of choice, have a value. In such a world, peace after war is a state better than the previous

one, and the results of war are recognized, recorded and unambiguous. In the other (probable) the priority of force is established, which entails endless wars, because there will always be someone stronger and more ambitious, and victory cannot be final. The establishment of one or another model depends on the strength of networks of free people in the world, societies that are able to influence the agenda of political decisions and state policies in their countries. The development of civil societies and the strength of networks of active citizens are the result of education, which, in our opinion, should be continuous, lasting throughout life, laying the foundation for a worldview, values, and virtues at school and at the undergraduate level, forming professional knowledge and soft skills at the graduate level, strengthening and transforming professionalism in postgraduate education programs, teaching how to solve complex current and strategic tasks with an eye to the future through experience and short-term adult training programs. Meaningfully, the authors see *lifelong learning* (hereinafter - LLL) as a continuous process of learning new things and improving acquired knowledge and competencies throughout an individual's life. And *adult education* (hereinafter - AE) is its component, which may include training in formal education programs (second higher education, PhD and doctoral programs) and non-formal education (short-term training programs for advanced training, retraining, additional soft skills).

The factors that, among others, influence the need to develop a state policy in the field of adult education are: trends in authoritarian state administration; changes in the population structure of countries around the world as a result of migration; expansion of the zone of military operations on the world map as a condition for mastering special knowledge and skills from first aid to combat in "liminal war"; the unpreparedness of governments for the rapid transformation of national economies in the face of climate change and population aging; educational losses and the gap between technologies and consumers capable of using them.

The interdisciplinary academic discourse contains evidence that migration processes, as an objective indicator of the nonlinearity of the development of the world order, are political in nature

and are determined by the specifics of state policy of both the country where the motivation for migration arises, and the targeted political practices of states interested in obtaining new human capital. An unstable political system is vulnerable to the loss of human capital (Bezugliy, 2018). In the context of globalization and partial liberalization of movements, the centers of world (or continental) development have become more accessible to workers from different countries, and the motives for making a decision on labour migration have become more complicated. Such decisions can be influenced by a comparison of the taxation system, social protection, working conditions and living conditions of the migrant and his family. This approach is inherent in the theory of synthetic migration (Massey, 1990).

The aging of Europe and the mobilization of the working-age population in countries where war is raging have made the issue of population employment, along with adult education, relevant in order to bridge the gaps in national economies and change the focus of state socio-economic policy towards involving vulnerable social groups and the elderly in production and services. The world sees precedents of successful cases of the “silver economy” in Japan, South Korea, Germany, France, Finland, Canada, the Netherlands, Australia, and Ukraine.

Also, the intensity of migration flows, including labour, and their direction can also be determined by past political and economic ties - for example, colonial (Wallerstein's world systems theory); previous migration waves that create information exchange systems, capital and form diasporas and cultural centers (theories of migration networks, social networks). According to the neoclassical theory of human capital (Sjaastad, 1962), the growth of highly skilled migration flows leads to increased investment in education (Nagornyak, 2017). The Russian-Ukrainian war and other armed conflicts in the world have fundamentally changed the population structure of the world's states and have intensified the need to adjust migration policies, as well as the needs of migrants and forcibly displaced persons (hereinafter - IDPs) in professional reskilling programs, acquiring new skills of intercultural dialogue and language competences (Nagornyak, 2018).

The term “liminal war” is not a commonly used concept in military history or political theory, but it can refer to military actions that are part of a broader conflict. For example, it can refer to irregular warfare that takes place in uncertain environments or in transitional political contexts where traditional notions of peace and war are blurred.

The following interpretations and analogies are powerful in the literature:

1. ‘liminal warfare’ as a form of irregular warfare in which the struggle is not fought along clearly defined fronts, but for legitimacy, influence, and control over certain population groups, territories, and other global resources;

2. war in the ‘grey zone’ or ‘threshold war’ (Kilkallen, Milz, 2015), characterised by uncertainty, the absence of direct military confrontation and the use of hybrid methods or military provocations;

3. war as a transition to a new world order, arising during a period of change from one political or social state to another and creating temporary ‘liminal’ conditions that can lead to violence.

In this article, the authors use the term “liminal war” to describe the actual brutal Russian-Ukrainian war, understanding it as part of a larger global conflict - a conflict of values initiated by Russia and taking place in uncertain, transitional or blurred conditions, where the boundaries between different forms of conflict are blurred. In other words, according to the authors, liminal war is a condition that compels the world's states to retrain their populations for the sustainability of national economies and readiness to defend their territories physically and technologically, and at the same time an impersonal political process in which state education policy becomes a guarantee of preserving and strengthening the influence of states in the world.

The concept of the author's scientific exploration contains the understanding of Lifelong learning as a vector of state policy in the face of uncertainty. Therefore, the *purpose of this article* is to clarify the interpretation of the categories "LLL" and "adult education", identify trends in

uncertainty and clarify factors that, among others, influence the need to develop a state policy in adult education, to record successful Ukrainian and world cases. 5 countries were selected for the analysis of state policies and practices of implementing LLL - the USA, Canada, UK, Singapore, and France. The criteria for analysis were legal regulation of LLL, implementation models, conditions that prompted governments to seek policy solutions in adult education, specifics of LLL implementation cases.

Among the data collection methods, the study employed structured in-depth interviews with top managers of various universities - LLL providers, complemented by case-study analysis. To identify the universities for interviews, the LLL practices of more than 30 higher education institutions (HEIs) were reviewed through an examination of their websites, institutional policies, strategic documents, and publicly available reports. This initial mapping enabled the institutions to be categorized into five clusters based on similarities in their LLL approaches. Following principles of purposeful sampling-specifically “maximum variation” and “typical case” selection (Patton, 2002; Patton, 2002) -the most representative case within each cluster was identified. A member of the top management of each selected university was then interviewed after informed consent had been obtained. This approach aligns with established qualitative case study designs that recommend systematic case selection to ensure depth, comparability, and analytic rigor (Yin, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The authors' special attention is drawn to Ukraine due to their own experience in organizing and evaluating LLL and AE at Ukrainian universities and the belief that this exploration can be useful for scientific analysis and practical implementation.

Lifelong Learning: From Philosophy to Global Action

The LLL concept has evolved from early philosophical ideas to a structured global movement. The idea of lifelong learning (LLL) is not new. Ancient civilizations, including Greece

and China, developed the idea of continuous self-improvement and self-study. 2000 years ago, Seneca said "*Tamdiu discendum est quamdiu vivis*" (as long as you live, keep learning how to live - translation from Latin). It was adopted by folk wisdom as "Learn as long as you live" and crystallized as a concept about 50 years ago. In the 20th century, international organizations, such as UNESCO and the OECD, formalized LLL as essential for personal and societal development. In the 1970s few international initiatives regarding LLL were developed and progressed. Among them, the Council of Europe plans to reshape European education for the whole life span and the introduction of the concept of permanent education (Titz n/a). The OECD highlighted recurrent education as an alternation of full-time work with full-time study, similar to sabbatical leaves. In 1972 UNESCO published the Faure Report titled 'Learning to Be', emphasizing education as a lifelong process essential for individual and societal development and as a transformative and emancipatory force, not only in schools, but in society at large (Lifelong Learning. Evolution of the Lifelong Learning Movement. N/A). The Faure Report advocated for a shift from traditional schooling to a more flexible, inclusive, and learner-centred approach, highlighting the need for continuous learning beyond formal education. In parallel with these initiatives, Mondale's Bill 'Lifetime Learning Act' was considered by the US Senate "to increase the opportunity of Americans to receive academic and job-related training throughout their lives" (Hicks, 1975).

All these initiatives in the 1970s laid the foundation for modern LLL policies, influencing global education reforms and inspiring later documents and reports such as the Delors Report published by UNESCO in 1996. The Delors Report titled "Learning: The Treasure Within" (Learning: the treasure within; report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, n/a) promotes education as a lifelong process and introduces its four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. This document also fosters personal growth, employability, and social cohesion, and has become a cornerstone for modern LLL strategies and sustainable development. It has a direct impact on education policies

worldwide and emphasizes learning as a holistic, continuous process essential for personal and societal development.

Since the 1990s, the interest in LLL has been raised and pushed by the rapid development of information technologies, wide access to information, competition on the labour market, and economic restructuring toward knowledge-based industries. All these modern societal transformations, including aging societies, wide access to information became part of national policy discussion and strategic development. There is evidence that the LLL concept's mounting substantially depends on societal requests and people's learning needs.

It has been over 15 years since the European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning (EUA, 2008) was published by the European University Association in 2008. With this document, universities and governments took commitments to develop and implement lifelong learning strategies to address societal needs, workforce demands and personal development. The need for inclusive, flexible, and learner-centered education was emphasized in the Charter. The Charter also sets a framework and highlights ten key commitments advocating for policies that support continuous learning, prior learning recognition, and collaboration between academia, industry, and society. These include widening access to diverse learners, developing flexible learning pathways, integrating LLL into institutional strategies, quality assurance, innovating teaching methods, and using technology to enhance learning.

The commitment to LLL was further reinforced by the UN's adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (The 17 goals, n/a) in 2015, particularly SDG 4 which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

It is also important to note that in September 2023, the new Council of Europe Education Strategy 2024-2030 "Learners First" was launched (Council of Europe, 2023). It is based on three pillars: renewing the democratic and civic mission of education, enhancing the social responsibility and responsiveness of education, and advancing education through a human rights-based digital

transformation. It is expected that it will become a basis of the new legal and policy instruments, standards and capacity building tools at national, regional and international levels. And it was agreed to start preparation of a new framework convention codifying the principles of a European Space of Citizenship Education (Council of Europe, 2023) and to pilot a toolkit to ensure resilience in education EDURES (Education in times of emergencies and crisis toolkit) (Council of Europe, 2024).

Summing up all these developments and initiatives it is worth to note that education has been recognized as the transformative power in fostering a sustainable and equitable world.

World Experience in LLL: Global Experience of LLL: Legislative Basis, Development Trends, Implementation Models

Case Studies: Lifelong Learning Models in the USA

In the USA, adult learning and lifelong learning policies have historically developed in a fragmented manner, without coordination at the Federal level. Being a decentralized sector, most decisions were left to states and local councils, while the federal level dealt with specific target programs and the legislative framework (Commission for International Adult Education, 2023). In contrast to many European countries, the USA lacks a body that would centrally coordinate Lifelong learning as a holistic system. Just as there is no single national strategy on this issue. Instead, the country implements specific programs to support individual population groups. Federal laws have played an important role in shaping the modern American education system. Thus, in 1964, the “Economic Opportunity Act” was adopted. It is a legislative act with a purpose to reduce the level of illiteracy among the population in the context of the general fight against poverty. Then the “Adult education act”, 1966, “National Literacy Act”, 1991, and “Workforce Investment Act”, 1998 were adopted. These documents laid the foundation for financing adult basic education

programs and integrated education into the broader context of personnel training (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2013). Today, the "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act", 2014, which contains the "Adult Education and Family Literacy Act", is in force. This law provides annual federal funding to states for programs to eliminate illiteracy, English learning for immigrants, to obtain general secondary education, and other educational services for adults (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 2014). LLL is provided by public schools, community colleges, universities and civil society organizations. Programs providing basic secondary education and language learning are widely available. The service of obtaining an Associate degree (equivalent to a junior bachelor's degree) provided by community colleges is popular and is significantly cheaper compared to traditional higher education institutions, and popular among students who combine work with study. Educational institutions implement continuing education and distance learning programs. It is important to mention the network of Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLI), which is a non-profit initiative funded by an independent foundation, providing educational services for people over 50 years of age in cooperation with universities throughout the United States (The Bernard Osher Foundation, n.d.). In addition, there are programs to compensate for the cost of vocational training and computer literacy for certain population categories. Educational benefits for veterans (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.), as well as corporate training, are widespread.

Case Studies: Lifelong Learning Models in Canada

Canada's LLL model is similar to the US and has a decentralized delivery system. Due to Article 93 of the Constitution Acts of Canada, responsibility for the quality of education and LLL as well lies with provinces' governments and is often dispersed across different departments (Elfert & Walker, 2020). At the same time, the Canadian Federal Government also takes an important part in LLL through the Department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), which

works to improve the standard of living and quality of life for all Canadians. The Department does this by promoting a labour force that is highly skilled and promoting an efficient and inclusive labour market (ESDC, 2025). Canada has a high level of higher education coverage, as according to ESDC, 57% of Canadians have a higher education (ESDC, 2019). Participation in adult education is also above average compared to OECD countries. However, researchers note that Canada's policy towards LLL is not coherent and requires a national strategy, a system for measuring progress, as well as best practices exchanges between provinces (A. Roumell, E., & D. Salajan, F., 2023). Despite the lack of specialized regulatory central legislation, it is worth noting the programs implemented in Canada that are useful in access to educational skills. The participation of the Canadian federal government in the development of education, and lifelong learning in particular, is mainly carried out through the signing of funding agreements and joint strategies with the provinces. ESDC administers 23 umbrella programs and sub-programs under two branches, namely the Learning branch and the Skills Development and Employment branch. This myriad of programs reflects ESDC's commitments to addressing the diverse needs among Canadians. Of the 23 programs, 6 programs primarily serve adult learners (Soliman et al., 2021). One of such programs is the "Skills for Success" program, focused on retraining and acquiring nine specific skills, including digital skills (ESDC, 2024). The federal government of Canada also supports specific initiatives: the Training and Employment Program for Indigenous Peoples, veterans' reintegration programs, and prisoner training programs. In addition, the government provides financial incentives for education in the form of tax credits, as well as interest-free loans from personal retirement plans through the Canada Training Credit and Lifelong Learning Plan.

An important milestone in recent years was the launch of Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs) - bilateral agreements with each province and territory to design and deliver employment programming similar to Employment Benefits and Support Measures outlined in Part II of the Employment Insurance Act. LMDAs help unemployed Canadians quickly find and return

to work. They also ensure a skilled labour force that meets current and emerging needs of employers. To implement this initiative, the 2017 budget included the following measures: investing an additional $1.8 billion in LMDAs over six years, broadening eligibility for Employment Benefits to include unemployed individuals who have made minimum Employment Insurance premium contributions in at least 5 of the last 10 years, expanding eligibility for Employment Assistance Services (previously only available to unemployed Canadians, to also include employed Canadians) and increasing flexibility for provinces and territories to support employer-sponsored training under Labour Market Partnerships.

Case Studies: Lifelong Learning Models in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, the history of adult education dates back to the 19th century. In addition to educational institutions, the Workers' Educational Association movement emerged and spread from 1903. In the 20th century, Britain was among the leaders in the conceptualization of lifelong learning: the 1919 report of the Adult Education Commission declared that "adult education is a permanent national necessity, inseparable from citizenship (The Centenary Commission on Adult Education, 2019)". Today, the state actively uses the term "lifelong learning" in strategic documents, combining the ideas of social inclusion and economic competitiveness. The government reports "The Learning Age" (1998) and "Skills for Life" (2001) laid the foundations of a policy aimed at mass involvement of adults in learning -from basic literacy skills to advanced training in the workplace. There is also a significant level of decentralization here, as England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have individual characteristics in their education systems. At the same time, there are common challenges related to the need to improve skills, the existence of gaps between the competencies of workers and the demands of the labour market. An additional challenge is the education of older people, which is especially important in the context of an aging society.

Britain faces challenges in the education system, and one of the biggest is the decline in funding for the adult education system in the 2010s. Thus, after the financial crisis, the government cut the adult education budget by 45% in the 10 years from 2010 to 2019. This led to the closure of night schools and a reduction in the number of students (House of Commons Education Committee, 2020). The problem is also the low motivation of some categories of adults. For example, people with a worse school experience are reluctant to return to the learning process. To this end, there is a recommendation to introduce personal career advice and training for adults, as well as to establish local learning centers in communities where it is easier to attract low-educated citizens. Despite the challenges, there are a number of cases in the United Kingdom that deserve attention. For instance, a key link in the adult education system are Further Education Colleges - educational institutions that offer language courses, as well as professional and academic programs. The Open University is one of the first distance/part-time learning universities, which has been providing distance education services since 1969 and continues to provide them. Many universities have programs accessible for part-time employed students, which allow the students to combine the educational process with work. For example, Cardiff University offers both part-time courses (Cardiff University, n.d.) and professional development courses (Cardiff University, n.d.). Civil society is widely represented by the Workers' Educational Association, which specializes in non-formal education, as well as the network of "Universities of the Third Age" - interest clubs where older people share and acquire new skills. British policy prioritizes the fight against insufficient basic and digital skills, reskilling for the needs of the green and digital economy through the Local Skills Improvement Plans program and the education of older people through the Digital Inclusion for Seniors program. The latter, in turn, was inspired by the concept of the silver economy.

Case Studies: Lifelong Learning Models in Singapore

Singapore is a small city-state that in recent decades has become a role model on the world stage in the context of quality modernization changes in public administration, in particular regarding the policy of lifelong learning. Having no access to natural resources, the country focused on the development of human potential. One of the first and large-scale initiatives was the Skills Development Fund in 1979 (Skills Development Levy Act 1979, 2023). Within the framework of the fund's activities, the Singapore government invested funds in training and mastering professional skills by the population. Singapore has a centralized education management system. This approach allows for the rapid development and implementation of initiatives massively among the population. In the 21st century, with the total transition to the digital era, the authorities have faced new challenges, as the obsolescence of knowledge, the release of human talents caused by automation and the development of technologies and the emergence of new sectors of the economy. The response was the development and adoption of a new comprehensive government program, SkillsFuture Singapore, in 2015. This program aims to empower people to learn throughout their lives, pursue skills and develop successful careers for a future-ready Singapore. In its activities, the program leads and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promotes the development of a culture and a holistic system of lifelong learning through the pursuit of skills, and strengthens the ecosystem of quality education and training in Singapore. This is done so that Singapore becomes “a country of lifelong learners and a society that values skills acquisition” (SkillsFuture Singapore, n.d.). The annual funding volume of the initiative in the 2023-2024 financial year was about SGD 280 million (~ USD 215.8 million), of which about SGD 255 million are government grants, and 25 million constitutes income from the implementation of activities. Interestingly, for the previous 2022-2023 financial year, the funding volume was SGD 480 million. Given the size of Singapore's population, which is estimated at 5.8 million residents, the amount of this investment is significant (SkillsFuture Singapore, 2024).

Key elements of SkillsFuture include several elements that aim to provide comprehensive support. Thus, educational cash loans of SGD 500 were provided for every Singaporean aged 25 and older. Additionally, educational loans were provided for residents aged 40-60 under the Mid-Career Support Credit program (Cheney, 2021). In addition, Singapore subsidizes the cost of vocational training as part of the Subsidies & Training Leave initiative. Thus, a person aged 40+ can receive a subsidy of up to 90% of the cost of training, and a person with a disability can receive up to 95%. In order to unify the educational standard, the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications system was introduced. This system introduced a standard for educational services for adults throughout Singapore. Educational courses that have passed WSQ verification can issue special certificates that confirm the level of knowledge and are recognized throughout the country. This practice helps employers trust educational documents, and adults plan their studies. Adult education centers have been established, which are also a platform where a number of courses are taught. The activities of such centers do not necessarily require establishment within the framework of the SkillsFuture initiative, in particular, the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) was independently founded with the aim of becoming a leading adult education institution (SUSS, n.d.). Despite demonstrating successes, the system in Singapore has its challenges, like greater interest in education among already educated and more affluent residents compared to low-income residents. Small business employers also often find it inconvenient to send their employees to long-term training programs.

Case Studies: Lifelong Learning Models in France

France, as a developed country with a long history, also has significant achievements in supporting lifelong learning. In France, lifelong learning is defined as “the continuous process between initial, general or vocational training and all situations where skills are acquired” (Department of National Education, Higher Education and Research). It encompasses all learning

activities undertaken by individuals to develop their citizenship, personal and social self-fulfilment, their capacity for professional integration or their ability to remain in employment. These activities can also take place within formal education and training systems (initial and continuing training) and outside them, in professional, associative or cultural activities; they cover the whole life, from pre-school to retirement (Eurydice, 2023). The key laws regulating adult education in France - Law No. 2009-1437 of November 24, 2009 on orientation and lifelong learning (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2023).

In 2018, the Law "On the freedom to choose a professional future" made significant updates to the adult education process. In line with the implementation of the renewed policy, a new agency, France Compétences, was created, which aimed to bring together the State, the regions and the social partnerships to regulate the programmes and distribute funds fairly. The law also aimed to simplify financial flows and reform the financing mechanisms to create a disintegrated training system: the mandatory contributions of companies for continuing training, previously paid to the Organismes paritaires collecteurs agréés (OPCA) - joint bodies managed by the social partners responsible for collecting and redistributing funds for the continuous training of employees, started being paid to the URSSAF - the network responsible for collecting and redistributing social security contributions on behalf of the State since 1960. This enabled French residents to save EUR 500-800 each year on special education accounts (CPF) to cover their educational needs. These innovations ensured the right of different groups of the population to lifelong learning (Cedefop, 2023). The effectiveness of the program is difficult to overestimate, as the use of the personal education account (compte personnel de formation, CPF) continues to grow. Studies published in the last quarter of 2021 (DARES and Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations) show a significant expansion, which increased to 984,000 training courses in 2020 compared to 517,000 the year before. France is particularly committed to the development of digital skills. Thus, a state program to strengthen digital skills and general digital literacy among the population was launched, "Compétences

Numériques". The program also contributed to the strengthening of online learning, which resulted in the creation of the France Université Numérique (FUN) platform and the corresponding FUN MOOC platform to place online courses from French universities available to anyone. Moreover, France is the birthplace of the Universities of the Third Age. Although they do not have a unified structure, it was in France, in Toulouse, in 1973, that the first such university was founded by Professor Pierre Vellas. Today, they are usually affiliated with local universities, which allows them to use the educational base and improve the level of teaching. The state supports such initiatives by providing local grants, locations, co-financing, etc. This is especially relevant given the trend of extending the duration of working life, as well as the concept of active aging in Europe.

Navigating LLL in Ukraine: Global Trends, War-Driven Challenges, and Legislative Developments

There is a number of determinants affecting LLL in Ukraine, including broader global trends as in many other nations, and factors specific for Ukraine and resulting from the Russian-Ukrainian war (Table 1). The educational landscape is shaped by these factors taken together, which offer opportunities and difficulties for the growth of LLL throughout each single nation. For instance, from the worldwide perspective, the increasing demand for LLL is being caused by a number of factors, for example, life expectancy (because people are living longer, they might continue working for an additional 20 to 40 years). Continuous learning and skill improvement are essential for this longer work life in order to stay competitive and flexible in a changing labour market. The shifting attitude and connection to work is another important determinants. Nowadays, people regularly switch vocations and occupations throughout their lives, making the conventional paradigm of working for one firm or in one sector less prevalent. To adapt to new industries and gain new abilities, this transformation necessitates continual education.

The necessity for LLL is also affected by the quick development of AI. Workers must constantly improve their skills as AI technologies change businesses, particularly in automation, data analysis, and technology-related fields. The continuous need for skills update and renewal makes LLL essential for adapting to the digital age.

Table 1. Determinants Affecting Lifelong Learning in Ukraine

1.	Global Determinants
1.1	Life expectancy growth
1.2	Expectations of extended presence in the labor market (for an added 20-40 years)
1.3	Changes in attitude and connection to work
1.4	Inequity in education
1.5	AI-related factors
1.6	Refreshing and upgrading technology related skills
2.	Determinants resulted from the Russian war aggression
2.1	Learning losses and gaps caused by years of Covid and full-scale war
2.2	Job losses on the occupied and front-line territories
2.3	New skills required for relocated people to find jobs
2.4	Reintegration of veterans

All these global factors mentioned above are compounded by challenges resulted from the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war which caused significant learning losses and gaps. The global Covid-19 pandemic affected educational continuity and the full-scale war has further aggravated these gaps leaving many individuals without the necessary skills to meet labour market demand. Job losses are another major concern, especially in the occupied and frontline territories. Many people in these regions lost their livelihoods and the need for reskilling and retraining to find employment

in new locations and industries is more urgent than ever. This also applies to mothers forced to leave their jobs to move to safer regions with their children, to people returning from occupied territories, to veterans returning to civilian life, who require reintegration programs to transition into the workforce effectively. One promising development in Ukrainian LLL landscape is the adoption of the draft Law "On Adult Education" in January 2023. In its first reading it addresses the organizational, legal, and financial concerns related to adult education (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023). It encompasses non-formal, informal, and formal education and is intended to aid in professional growth and enable adjustment to societal socioeconomic shifts. This law aims to fit the changing demands of Ukrainian citizens while taking the nation's social and economic concerns into account by guaranteeing adults' right to LLL. However, there is not much progress since 2023 in this regard and final adoption of the Law is still pending.

Presently, LLL in Ukraine is largely driven by universities, whose institutional evolution reflects broader international theories of higher education transformation. Schuetze and Slowey's participation model (Schuetze & Slowey, 2000) underscores how universities worldwide have adapted their structures to accommodate non-traditional and adult learners, a pattern clearly visible in Ukrainian HEIs that have established dedicated LLL units to support flexible, short-cycle, and community-oriented learning opportunities. These developments also align with the concept of the "engaged" or "porous" university elaborated by Preece (2017), who positions HEIs as embedded social actors with permeable boundaries between the universities and the communities they serve. In the Ukrainian context, which is marked by war-related disruption, displacement, and urgent recovery needs, universities increasingly operate as community anchors, delivering retraining programs, digital upskilling, and civic education initiatives that respond directly to local resilience priorities.

Furthermore, the emergence of specialized LLL centers in Ukrainian universities reflects broader organizational models of continuing education, where their units facilitate partnerships with

civil society, local authorities, and international donors. These partnerships mirror global trends in which LLL provision is embedded within multi-level governance systems linking universities to national policy agendas and transnational funding instruments.

Finally, LLL in Ukraine increasingly embodies principles identified in post-conflict education and resilience theory, which highlight the role of universities as stabilizers and innovation hubs during national reconstruction. This is the foundational international framework for education in emergencies, conflict, and recovery, initially published in 2004, and its modern version is 2024 edition (INEE, 2024) This framework defines clear principles of resilience, protection, capacity building, and recovery within education systems, including universities, and it is used globally by UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, EU, USAID, and researchers in crisis-affected education. Through internationally funded social projects and workforce development initiatives, Ukrainian universities are assuming the role of catalysts for human capital renewal, regional recovery, and long-term societal resilience, thereby positioning LLL as a core pillar of Ukraine's reconstruction and modernization trajectory.

Case Studies: University-Led Lifelong Learning Models in Ukraine

From the effects of war to technological improvements, LLL in Ukraine faces both local and global challenges. Nonetheless, LLL has a great chance to aid in Ukraine's development and recovery through foreign assistance, university-led projects, and legislation. So, let's discuss few types of LLL units' models through real-world cases of Ukrainian Universities.

Case 1: The University of the Third Age

The University of the Third Age (U3A movement) is education and training of people who are in their third age of life, mainly retired. U3A movement is promoted internationally and there is no single model which fits all countries and institutions. In Ukraine one of the most successful cases

of U3A is demonstrated by Poltava University of Economics and Trade (PUET, n/d). This is the social project of the private higher education institution which delivers programs and courses for people of 55+ age (and the oldest students is 93) free of charge. PUET U3A applies structured approach with tutoring which includes study programs in IT, languages, psychology, social media, law, local history and geography etc. The students may also choose optional classes in sports, dances, and arts. The social impact at regional level of the U3A is substantial and includes support of physical, psychological and social abilities of seniors, their networking, psychological and other comprehensive support during the war.

Case 2: The University Centre for Lifelong Learning

It is quite popular among Ukrainian universities to have a separate structural unit "The Centre for LLL" which covers issues most relevant to adult education. It may include professional development, active citizenship, support of unemployed people, development of digital skills, etc. Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University (ZPSU) demonstrates the best practices in this regard (ZPSU, n/d) Dimensions of adult education cover active citizenship and democracy, healthcare and well-being, life skills, social cohesion, justice and equality, employment and work; transition to digital technologies; migration and demographic changes; sustainability; European and international politics; inclusive development, recovery, and peacebuilding. An important part of LLL Centre is psychological training, first aid training, psychodiagnostics, support in needs identification. ZPSU also has study programmes and training courses for professional orientation which are the way of reintegration from military service to civilian life and of adoption of veterans' skills to civic professions.

Case 3: The University hub connecting stakeholders

Another LLL model adopted by Ukrainian universities is a format of a platform or hub to connect education & science, business, government, local societies, other stakeholders. For instance, there is the Centre «Volyn Business Hub» at Lutzk National Technical University. They have a substantial toolkit to connect stakeholders to promote LLL. For instance, there are learning vouchers issued by State Unemployment Fund for 45+ old people, as well as for veterans, disabled people, and relocated. Such vouchers are accepted by the Centre to enroll unemployed people to the short courses in IT, artificial intelligence, inclusivity, mental health, etc. There is also a joint project 'SHE' which aims to support women of age 40+.

Case 4: NGO-University-Local Authorities Partnership

It is also worth to pay attention to the model, which is not a formally University structural unit, but which is initiated and highly impacted by the University representatives. Formally, such centres have the status of non-governmental organizations, but they are organized by the University professors or initiated by Universities in their collaboration with local authorities. One of such successful centers is Lifelong Learning Centre (Education for Life, n.d.) established in Sumy (30 km from the Russian border) in 2015-2016 as a response to the evacuation of students from the Crimea branch of Sumy State University and resettlement of their families. One of the Center's goals is to contribute to the development of a democratic civil society and to the growth of lifelong learning. They also related their activities to SDG4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (Lifelong Learning Center, n.d.). In 2024 Sumy became a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and Lifelong Learning Centre has contributed to this achievement significantly. When the full-scale war has started the Centre has introduced activities and training focused on psychological first aid, reintegration of veterans, stress management to meet local community needs. Also, the course 'How to Talk to Veterans' was developed. The Centre also organizes events supporting post-war

recovery. In collaboration with Sumy State University and international partners, it hosted the large-scale event “Adult Education as a Driver for Development and Post-War Recovery in the Sumy Community” (Lifelong Learning Center, 2023) .

Case 5: The School of Professional and Lifelong Education

Another effective model of organising LLL is establishment of university’s unit (School) which provides both formal and non-formal education for different categories of adult learners including professionals. For instance, such a School of Professional and Lifelong Learning is established by National University ”Kyiv-Mohyla Academy” during the full-scale war in 2023 (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, n.d.). It provides both formal and non-formal learning: Bachelor and Master programmes, trainings, certificate courses for adults. One of the examples is Master study programme on municipal governance policy and education management for adult professionals. The School also delivers thematic trainings based on needs analysis, professional development courses, trainings on veterans’ reintegration. The unique approach of this School also includes programmes of support for Heros’ children like ‘Individual trajectory of the leader’.

Conclusion

The transformation of the world order today is in a phase of bifurcation, containing two probable models of the world. The article proves that a world which values partnership agreements, transparent rules of the game in world politics, the right to self-determination of the Man and the sovereign State, based on the value of human life and freedom of choice, depends on the effectiveness of the dialogue of States and Societies as equal subjects. The subjectivity of Society is the result of citizens' awareness, which is determined by the level of their political culture, education (including civic), and readiness for LLL. In such a world, peace after the war is a state

better than the previous one, and the results of the war are recognized, recorded and unambiguously accepted by all subjects of world politics.

The results of this publication were the author's clarification of the interpretation of the categories "LLL" and "adult education" content, trends of uncertainty were identified and factors were clarified that, among others, affect the need to develop a state policy in adult education. Analysis of state policies in terms of legal regulation and cases of LLL implementation in 5 countries of the world (USA, Canada, UK, Singapore, France) allowed the authors to draw the following conclusions.

The world experience of lifelong learning has a deep history and extensive practice of application in various fields and for various target audiences. First of all, it can be stated that Lifelong Learning has become a real global trend of state educational policies of developed jurisdictions. Studying the most interesting world practices, depending on their peculiarities of origin, approaches and geographical location, we can identify several models in which the Lifelong learning approach is implemented:

1) *The Anglo-Saxon model*, natural to the USA, Canada, and modern Great Britain. This is a model with no or minimal state coordination or regulation. And more initiatives of smaller administrative units are implemented, which are more flexible to local challenges and needs. The state helps to meet the educational needs of specific vulnerable groups (the homeless, migrants, the poor, the unemployed, “first-time entrants”, etc.) only partially and in a targeted manner at the central level. We can expect changes to this model in the near future due to the transformation of domestic policy by the Trump administration. Interference in the autonomy of leading American universities has already exacerbated the conflict between the state and American society, so the commercialisation of educational services, both by the state and by universities, will become a trend that is dangerous in terms of the loss of quality of education. In the US, Canada and the UK, adult

education is already being integrated into life through corporate development programmes, online courses and professional certifications.

2) *The European continental model*, which is shown in the article on the example of France. This model is characterized by greater regulation by the state and a system of creating opportunities and is aimed at wide access of residents to educational services. The experience of France shows the effective allocation of resources at both the national and local levels. Non-state actors, mainly civil society and educational institutions, also play an important role. State support of the system ensures accessibility, but requires significant investment and coordination efforts. It is to be expected that European countries will actively shape policies that ensure expanded access to lifelong learning, including tax breaks, education vouchers, online platforms, and recognition of informal learning. According to the Education and Training Monitor 2025, on average only about 40% of adults have participated in learning in the last 12 months, although the goal is to increase this to 60% by 2030. Therefore, we should expect LLL to be implemented in more flexible formats (modular courses, evening/distance learning formats, microcredit programmes) and to expand its target audiences to include older workers, small businesses and the unemployed.

3) *The Asian model*, which is shown on the example of Singapore. It is characterized by centralization and inclusion in strategies at many levels. It is perceived as a conscious part of the economy and the state here acts as a regulator and investor. The level of involvement of citizens and businesses is high. As part of the SkillsFuture initiative, Singapore will strengthen measures to motivate and support self-learning, in particular through local communities and CDC programmes for the continuous upgrading of skills among residents of all ages. One of Singapore's latest changes is the Training and Adult Educator Professional Pathway: from 1 April 2026, teachers of all SkillsFuture-supported courses must be registered and regularly upgrade their qualifications; Requirements include a minimum of 40 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) and 80 hours of practical work every two years to maintain certification. Adult education in these

countries will become more differentiated, targeted, and data-driven, strengthening its impact on employment, employee competitiveness, and company innovation. For example, the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) is developing new centres and tools that link educational programmes to the real needs of the labour market: National Skills Framework 2.0 (an updated map of skills and tasks for economic sectors) - to better align courses and programmes with changes in the labour market.

4) During the ongoing war in Ukraine, LLL has become even more important, addressing emerging societal challenges and supporting the affected population. There is historical evidence that wars led to an increase in the demand for LLL as new 'non-traditional' categories of students emerge, including veterans, internally displaced people, people with mental disorders, and individuals seeking reskilling for war-related professions. Beyond conventional education, LLL also fosters social cohesiveness, networking, and mutual support, offering psychological relief in times of distress.

New learning demands generated by the war include tactical medicine, first aid, psychological support, drone operation, HR assistance for veterans, and personal security. Furthermore, the spread of fakes and false information has highlighted the importance of media literacy and fact-checking skills.

LLL plays a crucial role in post-war society rehabilitation addressing the challenges of transitioning to a peaceful life and assisting people in adapting to changed realities. LLL programs give people the skills they need for psychological health, social cohesiveness, and reintegration into the workforce. Restoring the economy and infrastructure is one of LLL's main priorities. LLL promotes workforce development, aids in the reconstruction of vital sectors, and fosters entrepreneurship by offering chances for vocational training and reskilling.

In Ukraine, adult education is already being incorporated into scientific discussions and analytics, for example at conferences and in professional publications, where lifelong learning,

professional retraining, and the use of IT technologies in andragogy are discussed. Financial support, regional initiatives and cooperation with business will be important.

Environmental restoration is also required for post-war reconstruction, and LLL programs can support ecological rehabilitation, sustainable development, and responsible resource management. Another crucial aspect is the reintegration of former occupied territory, which require specialized educational programs that support displaced people and promote social and economic stability. Lifelong learning serves as a foundation for consistent rehabilitation and national resilience by encouraging adaptability and innovation.

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