

Universities and Re-Construction of Cities: the Role of Research and Education

Report of the World Café Sessions

Table 8: University and realization of social function: Life-Long Learning and interaction with local authorities, business, and civil society.

Host: Tetiana Oriekhova, Vasyl` Stus Donetsk National University, Ukraine

Rapporteur: Anna Osmolovska, Educational Academy "UAdvise"

Introduction

To date, 29 educational institutions and 64 separate structural divisions of educational institutions of state, communal, and private ownership have been temporarily relocated because of war in Ukraine. The war has shown that universities are capable of taking on a new mission of the humanitarian and military front in the fight against the enemy, that uses hybrid methods of attacking.

The development of a socially responsible partnership between the university and the local, national and international community acquires a new meaning:

- universities stand up for the principles of democracy, freedom and humanism;
- the development of human capital necessary for the post-war reconstruction of the country;
- the formation of professional expert associations and academic networks, which is the university's contribution to the development of the institutional potential of economy and society;
- volunteering to support socially vulnerable categories of people;
- assistance in the development of flexible adaptation skills to new conditions of the labor market for different age categories: teenagers and adults;
- educational activities on the issues of sustainable development;
- information front - truthful informing the world community about events in Ukraine.

Topics for Discussion:

- What forms does the interaction of universities take with local authorities, business, and civil society?
- What should be the social function of universities in the conditions of growing armed aggression in the world?
- What should be the top priorities and forms of educational activity of universities?

Currently, the State's need for qualified personnel capable of ensuring the post-war recovery of Ukraine's economy and solving acute social and humanitarian problems is critical. Vasyl Stus

Donetsk National University responded to this challenge in 2022 by opening 5 new educational programs: "Management of post-conflict territories", "Rehabilitation psychology in emergency situations", "Ecochemical safety", "Social entrepreneurship" and "Digital business diplomacy". Today, these programs train applicants who have made a conscious choice to work for the restoration of the country.

The opening of educational programs of this kind is the result of the long-term expert activity of university teachers in the field of scientific consulting for local and State authorities, participation in the development of programs and strategies for the development of Donetsk and Vinnytsia regions, cities, united territorial communities, provision of advisory assistance and additional educational business services. These are such projects as "Strategic planning of territorial development", "Tools for monitoring the implementation of development strategies (territories, enterprises, institutions)", "Development of management competencies 3.0" etc.

Universities should understand their mission in **helping graduates to get their first job**. The good practice in this direction is creating the Council of Employers, which unites University and prominent companies of the region.

The problems of **sustainable development, climate change and social responsibility** have become the cornerstones of the educational work. Universities should implement a number of projects with the support of international funds, within the UN programs, in which researchers and students will develop together special training courses and act as experts on issues of community adaptation to climate change.

Universities were, and remain, at the forefront of society's movement towards **progressive development**, they stand in defense of the values of **democracy and freedom**, they shape the values and content of the communities in which they operate, generate and promote the knowledge that countries need. Universities should be **flexible and competitive** as well as their staff to produce very fast responses to the challenges.

Theses and cases from the participants of the Table:

- *Case from St. Andrews University (UK):* Involving educational process experts, who are not academicians, but have special practical skills. Using of the strong local government as a benefit for strengthening university cooperation with local authorities and implementing socially useful projects.
- *Case from the Brno University of Technology (Czechia):* Realization of social mission of university on the level of faculties more that on the level of University. Participation of University in the formation of the Strategy of the City.
- *Case from the University for Continuing Education Krems (Austria):* focusing on urban reconstruction in lifelong learning programs; three types of studying: part-time, online and block learning (on Mondays, for example) for

the convenience of students; hiring PhD-students as researchers; designing socially relevant programs basing on the external surveys and involving the experts.

- *Case from the University of Basel (Switzerland):* helping refugees to recognize their diplomas and degrees.
- *Student`s perspective on the social mission:*
 - Polish student`s context:* classes in Polish for Ukrainian refugees; unofficial networking sessions of Polish and Ukrainian students
 - Ukrainian student`s context:* realization of technical assistance programs aimed at helping Ukrainians in Ukraine; designing telegram-chats “Ukrainian Students Worldwide” in 16 different countries and organizing events aimed at helping Ukrainian students to integrate in local societies abroad; involvement of Ukrainian embassies to these events; engagement of the alumni by universities to educational process for sharing their good career experience with students and making job offers for the best students.
- *General ideas of the participants:*
 - University`s cooperation with local business on social mobility agenda.
 - Crucial role of universities in helping people to improve their skills permanently and to refresh their qualifications (once per two years).