Through the thorns to knowledge

Evaluation of the implementation of the state support policy for applicants to Ukrainian universities from Crimea and occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts

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Content

Executive summary

Quotas are used to help vulnerable groups and level up their opportunities compared to other citizens. Thus, quotas can be considered a tool for reducing social inequality. Studies of education quotas in other countries show that quotas have both positive and negative effects for the society, while positively affecting education and employment of children who used the quotas.

Russia uses university admissions for political purposes in the conflict areas it created. For example, in Transnistria and Chisinau, there are centers for passing the 'EGE' (a unified state after-school exam analogous to ZNO). In the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, transportation of children to the 'EGE' testing points in Russia is organized. Russian universities have quotas for applicants from Transnistria and Ukraine.

In Ukraine, there is Quota 1 for orphans, children with disabilities and combat veterans. The quota makes it easier for them to enter higher education institutions (HEIs) – in particular, it enables them to enroll without passing external independent testing (ZNO), based on the results of exams organized by a university.

Starting from 2016, Quota 2 is available for children from the temporarily occupied territories (TOT). Until July 2020, it only applied to Crimeans and a limited number of universities. Children from ORDLO could pass the exams instead of ZNO tests but after that they were admitted according to general rules. Extending Quota 2 to all universities and children from certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions (ORDLO) spurred public debate.

A frequently cited argument of opponents of the innovation is lower average academic performance due to admitting "weaker" students under the quotas. At the same time the universities that admitted children from TOT feared losing their state-funded places and funding.

These fears did not realize. Children from TOT who applied in 2020 do not have lower entrance exam scores than children from the government-controlled area. In 2020, quota helped 40% of students from TOT to enter a university. The rest had the scores allowing them to enroll into the state-funded places to their chosen specialties at their universities on a general competitive basis. Practically all the children from TOT spent extra hours studying Ukrainian language and history, either with a tutor or remotely at a Ukrainian school. Therefore, we can say that these children are highly motivated and are an asset rather than a burden for a university.

At the same time, preparing for admission, exams, and travel require significant effort and costs which not everyone can afford. Therefore, these conclusions may conceal a survivorship bias, or the results based on different approaches to assessing ZNO and entrance exams at the universities and educational centers.

The state allocated 12,755 budget-funded places at all Ukrainian universities to admit children from TOT on the basis of a separate competition (Quota 2). However, this quota was filled by only 10%. Of about 3,000 students from TOT enrolled into HEIs in 2020, only about 2,000 used the quota, according to the Ministry of Education and Science[1] (MoES), with the rest enrolled based on their ZNO results. Children from TOT mostly chose the universities located near the contact line (Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kharkiv oblasts).

Extending quota-2 in 2020 onto all HEI was a reason for some children from TOT to enter Ukrainian universities. Thus we can expect some increase in the number of applicants from TOT in the next few years.

Simplified procedures for obtaining a certificate of secondary education and for admission into HEIs are an important support tool. They help minimize the number of passages through checkpoints and reduce accommodation costs during the admissions process (a child from TOT spends UAH 15-25 thousand (an equivalent of 1.3-2 average salaries) on travel and accommodation during the admission). The occupation authorities create obstacles for children who want to travel to the government-controlled area and often close checkpoints on the eve of ZNO tests. In 2020, another barrier were pandemic-related restrictions.

At the same time, using a simplified procedure (without ZNO), an applicant can enroll in only one university. Therefore, in order to ensure enrollment, students sometimes choose weaker HEIs than their level of knowledge allows or enroll on a contract basis in order to get transferred to state-funded places later, with the approval from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

Changes to the admission procedure were passed on July 3, 2020, when the admission campaign had already started. Therefore, not all the universities and applicants had time to figure out the new rules. Thus introducing the "second admissions wave" (August 22 -- October 23) looks justified, especially considering the quarantine restrictions. At the same time, all the applicants from TOT who decided to use the simplified procedure during the second admission wave were first enrolled on a contract basis and later transferred to the state-funded places. However, not all the universities did this.

On the one hand, conducting entrance exams at the educational centers and universities instead of ZNO indeed helps in situations when applicants could not leave the occupied territory to take ZNO tests. On the other hand, this format of exams can easily create opportunities for corruption.

[1] Together with those who enrolled on a contract basis and was later transferred to the state-funded "quota" places

Recommendations

In order to minimize subjective factors during the admissions process, we propose to cancel entrance exams. Instead, children from TOT should be allowed to take ZNO tests without a document issued by a Ukrainian school (on the basis of just their birth certificate) and receive their certificate of secondary education based on ZNO results. Children who could not leave the occupied territories at the time of ZNO should be provided an opportunity to pass a test equivalent to ZNO at one of the independent testing centers located not far from the checkpoints. Such a procedure would allow children to apply to up to 5 universities, just like all other applicants. If this procedure is adopted, there will be no need to enroll the children with contracts and then transfer them to state-funded places.

The biggest restrictions for children from TOT applying to Ukrainian HEIs are related to income. Not everyone willing to enroll into a university has the money to come to the government-controlled areas and temporarily rent a place or pay for the dormitory while taking exams and doing all the necessary paperwork. The children's level of preparation and chances for enrollment significantly depend on their parents' income. Not everyone has the money to pay for a tutor and unrestricted access to the Internet to prepare for the exams online or attend a Ukrainian school remotely. We therefore propose to grant children from TOT an opportunity to attend free pre-entry courses and live at a dormitory during the entire admission process and studies.

It is necessary to clarify in the regulations the definition of who should be considered children from the occupied territories – that is, make the children living in the government-controlled areas and studying in the "gray zone" eligible to enroll under Quota 2.

Finally, the government bodies need to communicate more actively with people both in the government-controlled areas and in the occupied territories. To the former, the government should explain the policy of supporting children from TOT, its benefits and costs (which are quite low according to our calculations), as well as what children from occupied territories come through to get enrolled. To the latter, the information about studying opportunities in the government-controlled areas and the admission process should be communicated in a very simple way.

Introduction

In 2021, the children who were 10 years old when Russia occupied Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions will apply to universities. What choices do these children have after finishing school? They can enter educational institutions in the occupied territories, continue studies in Russia or in the government-controlled areas of Ukraine. Boys can also join the Russian army or military groups in ORDLO (the uncontrolled portions of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are abbreviated from Ukrainian as "ORDLO").

Since the occupation in 2014, ever more barriers have arisen to children's preparations for and enrollment into Ukrainian universities. They study in Russian in schools, learn the history of "DPR"[2] and "LPR" instead of the history of Ukraine. Thus in order to obtain a Ukrainian certificate of secondary education required for admission, children must graduate from a Ukrainian school remotely or as external students, as well as cross the contact line to take ZNO tests. In 2020 it was particularly difficult due to the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The occupant administration obstructs children willing to study at Ukrainian universities, making it difficult for them to leave TOT, exerting psychological pressure on them and persecuting their families.
In the first two years after the occupation, Ukraine did not have policies to support applicants from the occupied territories. Children had to enroll into Ukrainian educational institutions under general procedures, which actually left them behind. In 2016, the Ukrainian government introduced privileges and admission quotas for applicants from TOT for a limited number of universities, including those re-located from the occupied territories. In 2020, admission opportunities under the quota and simplified rules were extended to all universities.

This policy provoked a debate in the society. The opponents of the innovations feared that quotas would allow students from TOT with low level of knowledge to enroll into universities. Specifically, that children with worse academic records would "rob" the talented children from the government-controlled areas of Ukraine of "their" state-funded places. The relocated universities feared that due to the extension of quotas to other educational institutions they would lose a significant number of applicants and, hence, state funding, for which they were not ready due to the rapid introduction of the new policies.

Our research shows that those fears proved futile. The level of knowledge of children from TOT is not lower than that of other applicants. Besides, these children mostly choose HEIs located in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This may change over time, when more applicants get to know the new admission

[2] "Donetsk/Luhansk people's republics" — quasi-states created by Russia on occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts

rules, and choose their specialty and university based on their level of knowledge rather than the one in which their peers are already studying.

In the next part, we overview the research on quotas and the experience of other countries in a similar situation (Georgia, Moldova); in the third part, we describe Ukraine's admission policy toward applicants from TOT, then we describe the methodology and findings of our study, and after that conclude and offer recommendations for improving the admission policy for children from TOT.

The rationale for quotas.
Global experience

Quotas are a fairly common mechanism to help vulnerable groups and equalize opportunities for those with different "starting conditions". This mechanism helps break the "vicious circle" of discrimination. For example, think of the quotas for Ukrainian language content on radio and television introduced a few years ago. In this case, the vicious circle looks like "the viewers / listeners are not interested in Ukrainian songs / programs and so the radio / TV stations do not air them". In the case of education quotas, the vicious circle lasts longer and looks like "children from a discriminated group have a lower level of education -- therefore they take lower paid jobs -- therefore their children get worse education too". Thus inequality in the society is preserved. The quotas that help break out of this vicious circle reduce inequality.

Recently, the most discussed quotas have been those for women in the governing bodies, such as parliament (or parties), government, senior corporate management etc. These quotas have their pros and cons. (Quotas: Pros and Cons, Rotman School of Management, 2017). Quotas for women in managerial positions may discriminate against men. Another risk is stigmatization. If the environment perceives women as occupying certain positions only because of a quota and not their personal achievements, they will not be listened to, which will only worsen discrimination.

However, there is evidence that a negative attitude toward "female" quotas persists in those countries where they have not been introduced. In the countries where quotas were introduced, companies are satisfied with this innovation. For example, CEOs of Norwegian companies say that greater engagement of women in management bodies has improved the decision-making process in the organizations. Introducing a significant quota (~ 40%) eliminates the risk of stigmatization, while one woman in the governing body may indeed face a backlash. Introducing quotas for women in the companies does not worsen the financial performance of those firms: studies show either neutral (Casteuble et al., 2019) or positive effect (Pronzato et al., 2016). The situation is similar in politics: introducing gender quotas for the party lists in Italy led to electing more educated politicians (Baltrunaite et al., 2012).

There are also quotas for admission to educational institutions. A heated debate followed the introduction of quotas for vulnerable children at private schools in India (Sarin, Ankur & Gupta Swati, 2013): on the one hand, it is important to integrate such children into the society ensuring fair access to education. On the other hand, private schools are guided by market forces and thus they are interested in recruiting students with the best academic records. The Korean experience shows that quotas can negatively affect the market for educational services (Kim, Jae Hoon, 2016), reducing competition between the universities and consequently -- incentives to provide better services. Despite the high demand for universities in cities and the resulting higher 'quality' of students, graduates there demonstrate worse employment outcomes.

The quotas introduced in Brazil for black students, native Americans and children from poor families had mixed consequences for the education system and positive for children from the vulnerable groups. Thus, the overall academic achievement in pedagogy, history and physics deteriorated, while it improved in agronomy (Pereira et al., 2015). At the same time, the academic performance of black students improved (Francis-Tan, Tannuri-Pianto, 2018). Such students can be role models for other students from the disadvantaged groups.

Introducing racial or income quotas helps reduce discrimination (Andrade, 2004), which has a positive impact on the society. Ensuring greater inclusion and diversity among students (Wells et al., 2016) has a positive effect on their cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Thus universities are interested in attracting students of different backgrounds. On the other hand, education quotas can reduce overall performance. If quotas are used by children with lower academic results, this could reduce the education quality for stronger students. At the same time, research on the educational outcomes for children with special needs in Nigeria showed that academic success depends on the teachers' attitude (Oluremi, 2015).

Quotas in the frozen conflicts: the experience of former Soviet states

In the areas of ongoing or "frozen" conflicts, the quotas become political. The parties usually try to actively attract applicants from the disputed territory by easing enrollment requirements and providing privileges (De Waal, von Twickel, 2020).

Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, all of which went through military conflicts, use different ways of working with applicants from the occupied territories. Russia is actively attracting graduates from these and other countries that used to be part of the USSR. Russia's Compatriots program since 1999 provides former Soviet citizens with financial assistance, social and medical services, the right to free admission to Russian educational institutions etc. when they move to Russia.

It is difficult for Moldova to compete with Russia in the struggle for school graduates from Transnistria. The only bridge connecting children of Transnistria with Moldova is the 8 schools under the Ministry of Education of Moldova teaching in Romanian (the state language of Moldova), while local Transnistrian schools teach in Russian and use the Russian school program. Choosing a Romanian-language school may draw the attention of the unrecognized state's "security service" to the family. It is therefore not surprising that between 2004 and 2020 the number of children studying in Romanian fell from 6,000 to 1,600.

So far Moldova has been unsuccessful in finding a solution for a wider engagement of children from Transnistria. Russia began to introduce quotas for college admissions for local applicants in 2006 and it has been actively increasing them every year. In Transnistria, there is a centre for taking the 'EGE' (Russia's single state exam), and in 2016, Russia opened its first 'EGE' facility in Chisinau.

With the assistance from OSCE, Moldova made concessions to Tiraspol and began to recognize (apostille) diplomas from Transnistria. This allows Transnistrian students to use them to continue studying abroad. As of March 2019, 240 diplomas issued by the Taras Shevchenko University in Tiraspol were validated in this way. Moldova hopes that such small steps will lead to rapprochement with Transnistria. But being poor, Moldova is not able to attract migrants, including students, for permanent residence and serves only as a bridge for further emigration to Europe.

Georgia has been actively trying to attract students from Russian-occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia to study in the country. In 2020, when school graduates had problems crossing the borders and registering for a single entrance exam due to quarantine restrictions, Georgia allowed them to enter its universities without entrance exams. At the same time, the state pays for their education in full. The Georgian government also decided to introduce a simplified admission procedure for Georgian applicants living in Azerbaijan.

The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh has its peculiarities. Back in Soviet times, the Azerbaijani authorities sent there as many students and workers as possible, thereby significantly changing the composition of the region's population. One of the steps in Azerbaijan's "cultural" policy was opening a university in Nagorno-Karabakh with three departments: Russian, Azerbaijani and Armenian. We found little information about any actions on the part of Armenia aimed to attract students from Nagorno-Karabakh. We only know that in certain years Armenia had quotas for local children.

After its attack on Ukraine, Russia drastically increased the number of state-funded student places for Ukrainians, which suggests political reasons behind this step. In 2014, nearly 4 thousand Ukrainians[3] were admitted to Russian universities under quotas, although a year earlier a little more than 300 got enrolled. However, already in 2017-2018 less than 500 students from Ukraine were enrolled under quotas. Starting from 2015, Russia introduced admissions quotas for Crimeans and students from ORDLO, which allowed even children with not very high grades to enter into state-funded places in Russian HEIs.

Russia has also been developing cooperation ties with educational institutions in the occupied territories. The schools in Crimea and ORDLO

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[3] Russian statistics does not count applicants from Crimea as Ukrainians

are gradually altering their curricula, adding the "patriotic education" classes. Because of this, even without much Russian intervention, anti-Ukrainian sentiment in the occupied territories will grow over time.

Higher education was significantly affected by the occupants. A branch of the Moscow State University opened in 1999 continues to operate in Crimea; the Krasnodar University of the Ministry of the Interior of Russia, the Russian State University of Justice, and the legal department of the Academy of Prosecutor's Office of Russian Federation opened their branches on the peninsula in 2014. In the same year, the V.I. Vernadsky Crimean Federal University (that received state accreditation in Russia a year later) was created on the basis of seven local educational institutions and seven scientific organizations.

The universities in the occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts began to receive Russian accreditation a bit later. But thanks to partnerships with Russian universities, already in 2018 there were 4.5 thousand university graduates holding Russian diplomas in the so-called "DPR".

In recent years, Russia has revised its policy on supporting students from TOT. In 2019, the simplified admission rules for applying to Russian universities for Crimeans were cancelled. In the Russian view, Crimea is already integrated and a "regular" part of Russia. We do not have any information about quotas for school graduates from ORDLO in 2020.

"It [the diploma] seems to not be recognized in Russia but they are working on starting to recognize it. But the Donetsk university is synchronizing its system with Russian universities, so Russian-style diplomas will be issued in Donetsk." — a student, 19.

"Those who started studying in Donetsk, they also apply as extra-mural students in Russia (but this is only a paid option), to get a normal diploma," — a student, 19.

Although the Ukrainian government policy of attracting students from TOT is widely discussed in the media and social networks, research on the impact of this policy is limited. Texty.org analyzed how the level of knowledge of children from the occupied territories of Ukraine differs from that of other applicants enrolled in universities in 2020, concluding that applicants from the occupied territories applying to universities in Donetsk and Luhansk regions choose competitive proposals corresponding to their level of knowledge. At the same time, a significant proportion of those applying under the quota in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv and Odesa chose the universities with a higher average competitive score than theirs.

Policy on admission of children from the occupied territories to Ukrainian universities

It is important for the Ukrainian state to get these children to study at Ukrainian universities. This allows to integrate them into Ukrainian society, impact the formation of their value system, "pull them out" of the environment where they are constantly influenced by anti-Ukrainian propaganda and disinformation. These children can eventually become "ambassadors" or role models for other young people in the occupied territories. Also, the right of these children to education, including higher education, is enshrined in the Article 53 of the Constitution — the Ukrainian state is obliged to ensure access to higher education at state and municipal educational institutions.

The Ukrainian government has limited opportunities to support children from TOT willing to receive Ukrainian education. For the most part, we can only provide such support in the government-controlled areas or remotely. For security reasons, Ukraine cannot provide courses, transportation to ZNO tests, consultations, and support in the occupied territories. To the contrast, Russia can freely organize the 'EGE' there, provide transportation, implement information campaigns, etc.

"It was easier for those who went to Russia: they were picked up in a centralized way by buses and taken to a city in the Rostov region where they took the EGE. In Ukraine, you had to do it on your own." — a student, 19.

In order to facilitate access to universities for applicants from TOT, the Ukrainian government launched a targeted policy in 2016. It introduced quotas and admission preferences for applicants from the occupied territories (Table 1), provided them with an opportunity to graduate from a Ukrainian school, including part-time or remotely, simplified the process for obtaining a certificate of secondary education and access to Ukrainian educational institutions; in 2020, it decided to extend the period of admissions to the state-funded places until October 23 (second admission wave) due to the coronavirus.

Timeline of legislative changes

Preferential admission for applicants from the occupied territories was first introduced in 2016. At the time, the admission requirements for applicants from Crimea and ORDLO were different (Table 1).

Crimeans got the opportunity to enroll via educational centers in a number of authorized HEIs under a simplified procedure. Initially, there were 12 of them, with the list being expanded to 35 in 2017. The simplified procedure did not require graduating from a Ukrainian school; in order to obtain a certificate of secondary education, one could pass the exams in Ukrainian language and History of Ukraine at a university's educational center. It was not necessary to do ZNO tests either — one could pass the exam in their major subject at the university into which the applicant planned to enrol. The total score was

determined based on the results of the exams in the Ukrainian language, History of Ukraine and the major subject which a student passed at an educational centre. To enroll under a simplified procedure, the state set Quota 2 for the authorized universities of 20% of the state-funded student places, but not less than 1 place per university. In May 2020, the government expanded the list of authorized institutions to nearly 100. However, the latest changes did not start working because the Parliament passed the Law 744-IX in July of the same year, introducing new uniform rules for all applicants from TOT.

Children from ORDLO had fewer privileges. They could apply under a simplified procedure only to universities in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and to the relocated educational institutions. There was no separate quota for them, and they competed with other students willing to enter these universities.

Both Crimeans and children from ORDLO could apply to only one university (to the maximum of five specialties) under a simplified procedure (Crimeans under Quota 2 — into an authorized university; children from ORDLO — into a university in Donetsk or Luhansk regions, or into a relocated university).

The Law 744-IX of July 3, 2020 introduced the admission quota for children from the occupied territories at all universities. Specifically, the law
    (1) established uniform admission rules under the simplified procedure for children from Crimea and ORDLO;
    (2) introduced Quota 2 for children from the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in all universities and institutions of vocational pre-university education. To ensure access for applicants from the occupied territories under the simplified procedure, all the universities had to create "Crimea-Ukraine" and "Donbas-Ukraine" educational centers[4].

This year, 12,755 state-funded places were reserved in universities under Quota 2 including:
  — 20% of the total state-funded places for each specialty in the universities that were on the authorized universities list until July 3;
  — 10% of state-funded places at universities that were not on the list but created educational centers after the Law 744-IX came into force.

In order to implement these changes, the Ministry of Education and Science had to quickly change the admission rules and communicate them to applicants and universities. At the time, the first ZNO tests had already taken place (they were conducted from June 25 to July 17).

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[4] As a rule, such a center is a person in the admission office accepting documents from applicants from TOT. Until 2020, such "centers" accepted documents only from Crimeans or only from ORDLO students, or from all occupied territories. Starting from 2020, this person accepts documents from all applicants from TOT.

Not all the institutions of higher and vocational education were able to create educational centers "Crimea-Ukraine", "Donbas-Ukraine". Currently, such educational centers function only at 195 institutions of higher and pre-university (colleges, technical and medical schools) education. This is about a third of their total number (according to the State Statistics Service, there were 281 universities, academies, institutes and 338 colleges, technical schools and vocational schools in 2019-2020).

Implementation of these changes had to provide applicants from TOT with the following two ways to enroll into Ukrainian universities: under the general rules and under the simplified procedure into places reserved under Quota 2. To enroll under the general rules, one must graduate from a Ukrainian school and pass ZNO tests. It is possible to enroll into Quota 2 places under the simplified procedure (see Scheme 1 in Chapter 6).

Under the simplified procedure, instead of finishing school and passing ZNO tests, it is possible to pass the exams in Ukrainian language, history of Ukraine and the major subject at the educational centers. Quota 2 can also be used by applicants from TOT who have a Ukrainian school certificate but did not take ZNO tests. In this case, they need to pass three exams at the university. The applicants having ZNO scores can use them to apply at the university under Quota 2 (for details, see Annex 7).

The main difference is that when competing at par with others, the applicants can apply for a maximum of 5 specialties at any higher education institutions (thus it is possible to select a maximum of 5 educational institutions), and under Quota 2, it is possible to apply for a maximum of 5 specialties at only one educational institution -- the one at the educational center of which the applicants passed the exam.

Table 1. Admissions preferences for applicants from the TOT

Privilege	2016 — until July 3, 2020	Starting from July 3, 2020
Opportunity to graduate from a Ukrainian school and take ZNO tests	Children from TOT can study at a Ukrainian school full-time, part-time or remotely. An application from their parents is required to enroll into the school. When studying remotely or part-time, students must come to the government-controlled territory only to take the final state examination and ZNO. Upon finishing their studies, they can obtain a certificate of basic secondary education and a certificate of complete secondary education, take ZNO tests and apply to up to 5 universities of their choice in accordance with the general rules.	
Simplified procedure for obtaining a certificate of secondary education for those who have not studied at a Ukrainian school	Applicants having no Ukrainian school certificate can get it at a school that has a contract with the educational center "Crimea-Ukraine" or "Donbas-Ukraine" attached to a particular university. From 2016 to 2020, the educational centers functioned at a defined list of HEI. According to the new law, they are to be created at every university. To obtain a school certificate it is necessary to pass 2 exams: in the Ukrainian language (as opposed to ZNO tests that include literature) and history of Ukraine. For these subjects, applicants will receive scores, and for the other subjects — the "passed" mark. Based on these exams, they receive a reference (which they need to replace within 3 months with a school certificate at a school "assigned" to the educational center) and can apply for a maximum of 5 specialties only at the university at which the exams were organized.	
Simplified admissions procedure	In 2016, the authorized universities had reserved places (admission quota) for applicants from Crimea. There was a list of universities that children from ORDLO could enter under a simplified procedure (exam), but within general competition. Starting from 2020, the quota and the simplified admission procedure were extended to all the universities and applicants from the occupied territories. The procedure allows to use school certificates obtained by applicants under the simplified procedure (see the line above) only at the university where it was obtained. The admission score is calculated based on the exam scores in Ukrainian language, history of Ukraine and the major subject. The first two scores are based on the results of exams that applicants held to receive a certificate at a school assigned to an educational center. The applicants take major exams at the university. If applicants had a Ukrainian school certificate but did not take ZNO tests, they could pass three exams at the university and enroll based on their results. The final score can also be calculated based on ZNO scores at the applicants' request if they passed ZNO tests. Starting from 2016, the applicants from TOT are to submit paper documents, while other applicants' documents are accepted in electronic form only. It is a necessary step for the early identification of children from occupied territories who have no registration in the government-controlled areas and have not graduated from a Ukrainian school. The surnames and first names of children from TOT in the Unified State Electronic Education Database (EDEBO) are encrypted for safety reasons. Children from TOT must submit to an educational institution their passport, tax code and the school certificate within three months after enrollment if they did not have them at the time of enrollment. If they fail to do this, they may be expelled.	

Privilege	2016 — until July 3, 2020	Starting from July 3, 2020
Admissions quota	ORDLO: No quota. Applicants from ORDLO can take entrance exams under a simplified procedure at the universities of Donetsk and Luhansk regions and at the relocated educational institutions. But they enroll into these universities along the general rules. Crimea: up to 20% at the authorized education institutions but not less than 1 student place. In 2016, there were 12 such institutions on the list, in 2017-2019 — 35, in May 2020 the list was expanded to 100, but these provisions did not come into force due to the adoption of the Law 744-IX.	According to the Law 744-IX, all applicants from the occupied territories can apply under Quota 2. It is to be introduced at all the universities. At all the Ukrainian universities included into the authorized institutions list before July 3, 2020, 20% of the state-funded places had to be reserved for children from TOT (84 universities subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science, 7 to the Ministry of Culture, 4 to the Ministry of Health, 3 to the Ministry of Internal Affairs). At all the other HEIs where educational centers are to be established after the adoption of Law 744-IX the quota is 10% of state-funded places. As of December 2020, 195 universities established "Crimea-Ukraine" and "Donbas-Ukraine" centers and introduced Quota 2.
Free pre-entry courses	With the support of the Ministry of Education and Science, the project of online video lessons https://dostupnaosvita.com.ua/ was launched. However, the program for some subjects is outdated as the videos were made several years ago. There is also a website that helps learn the Ukrainian language http://educrimea.org/	In April 2020, due to quarantine, the school curriculum video lessons were launched (grades 1-4 and 5-11). They were aired on TV and were available on the Youtube channel of the Ministry of Education and Science. The new law entitles children from TOT to free pre-entry courses and allowances during the studies. In the fall of 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science began developing a pilot project. Starting from January 2021, it plans to launch preparatory courses for applicants from TOT.
Extended admission process	There was no second admission wave for children from TOT.	In 2020, the authorities extended the period during which applicants could enroll into universities until October 23 (previously it was planned that children would apply for admission into state-funded places until August 22, and only the "contract" places would be available until October 23).
Financial support	If students enrolled into a state-funded place and based on their scores they are in the TOP 45% at their university, they receive an academic scholarship (UAH 1,300-2,416). Otherwise, students are eligible to social scholarship (UAH 1,180). They can also receive an allowance as internally displaced persons when they turn 18.	

Methodology

In this study, we used two sources of information:
   1) admission data for applicants to Ukrainian HEIs from the occupied territories by specialties, universities and ZNO scores (sources: MoES, Unified State Electronic Education Database (EDEBO);
   2) in-depth interviews with the applicants, representatives of HEI, MoES, and an NGO.

Evaluation of the effects of policy implementation

We studied:
   (1) advantages obtained by students enrolled under Quota 2 compared to those who applied to similar specialties under general competition;
   (2) how the level of knowledge of students enrolled under the quota affected the average level of students in the specialties and at the universities they entered.

We assume that the quota provides an advantage if it enables students to enroll into state-funded places in the specialties which they would not be able to enroll into under the general competition. That is, those specialties where the minimal enrolment score was higher than their own final score.

We define the advantage of an individual student as the difference between his/her final score under Quota 2 and the passing (minimum) score of the students enrolled for the state-funded places in the same specialties at the same universities on a competitive basis. If the advantage is positive, such a student could enter the university on a competitive basis. Therefore, the quota was "useful" only for those whose "advantage" was negative.

We also compared average scores of applicants under Quota 2 and other students in the same specialties at the same universities, to assess whether the level of knowledge of students admitted under the quota differs from the level of knowledge of other students.

To measure the students' level of knowledge, we used the following indicators:

   (1) The average student admission score calculated as the arithmetic mean of their ZNO / entrance exam scores;
   (2) The average entrance score for the specialty (specialty ranking), calculated as the arithmetic mean of entrance scores of students enrolled into this particular specialty program;
   (3) The average university entrance score (university ranking), calculated as the arithmetic mean of the entrance scores of students enrolled in this particular university;

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(4) The average specialty entrance score at a particular university (specialty ranking at a particular university), calculated as the arithmetic mean of the student entrance scores in this specialty program at this particular university.

To compare the average level of knowledge of applicants under the quota and under general rules, we formed balanced samples. The treatment group includes students enrolled under quota. The control group includes students in the same specialties at the same universities enrolled under general rules. We formed the balanced samples of students using a matching algorithm.

The control group had the same number of applicants as the treatment group. We did not include students from TOT enrolled under general rules into the control group. The average entrance score of the treatment group characterizes the level of knowledge of children from TOT, while the average score of the control group is a proxy for the level of knowledge of applicants enrolled under general rules into the same specialty programs at the same universities.

The caveats of this methodology is the difference between grades of ZNO tests and entrance exams. ZNO is a unified exam which is conducted and checked simultaneously for all students, while entrance exams are organized by the educational centers "Crimea-Ukraine" and "Donbas-Ukraine" at the universities. The organization and evaluation of exams may differ, as no one controls the exam process. However, we assume that the exam grades more or less objectively reflect applicants' level of knowledge.

Data

Our data includes over 214 thousand applications from students who entered Ukrainian HEIs in 2020 (Table 2). For each application, we have information about the results on ZNO tests / entrance exams, form of study (state-funded / contract), the name of a university, sphere, specialty and educational programs into which a student is enrolled, quota (if used by a student), application status, licensed and the maximum number of state-funded places, education level, date of admission, and whether the applicant is included into the special admission program. For the purposes of analysis, we grouped the specialties into 4 groups: social sciences and humanities, STEM, medicine, arts and sports (Appendix No.6).

We obtained the data in response to our request to the Unified State Electronic Education Database as of December 24, 2020. This database contains information on 1,284 students enrolled under Quota 2. Overall, about 3,000 students (1.4% of the total number of applicants) were eligible for admission under the quota. In its turn, the Ministry of Education reports

about 2,026 applicants from TOT[5] admitted into Ukrainian universities under the simplified procedure via the educational centers[6]. We explain the difference between MoES and EDEBO data by possible differences in the student categories that the Ministry takes into account in its reports in addition to the applicants marked as "Quota 2" in EDEBO.

Students who applied after the admission process was extended (after August 22, second wave) are not marked as those who used the quota. There are about 300 such students. They may have used a simplified procedure, but the database does not contain any information about this either. Therefore, in our further analysis, we only look at students who applied under the quota during the first wave, as indicated in the EDEBO data.

About 1.7 thousand students did not use the opportunity to apply under the quota and entered the university on the general terms (we know, however, that some of them, especially in the second admission wave were transferred to the state-funded places with the approval from the MoES). Of these, almost 900 students were enrolled with a contract. The Ministry of Education and Science encourages children from TOT enrolled with a contract to apply for transfer to the state-funded places and approves such transfers. This is not reflected in the EDEBO data either.

Estimating the effects and risks of policy implementation based on the interviews

To identify the risks that may arise during the implementation of the policy, we interviewed 14 key stakeholders:
    • 6 applicants to Ukrainian HEIs from the temporarily occupied territories (3 applicants in 2020 (new rules), 2 in 2016 (old rules), 1 in 2015 (before the privileges were introduced);
    • 1 applicant to a Russian higher education institution in 2019 from the temporarily occupied territory;
    • 5 HEI representatives;
    • 1 representative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine;
    • 1 representative of an NGO working with issues related to the occupied territories.

During the interviews, we asked the applicants about their motivation to choose an educational institution in Ukraine or Russia, the attitude of their family toward their choice. We also tried to find out how the admission

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[5]The number of such students <u>was</u> twice lower in 2016.

[6]It is much lower than planned, i.e. 12,755 state-funded student places. According to our data, there were about 23 thousand graduates in the TOT. It is doubtful that over a half of them were willing or had an opportunity to apply for admission at Ukrainian HEIs.

process went to identify barriers that students from TOT face when applying to Ukrainian universities, and the advantages which students received due to the policy introduced in 2020. We also spoke with representatives of universities, MoES and the IDP Coordination Council to understand the difficulties they see in getting applicants from TOT to study in the government-controlled areas, and what they think of the new policy. The questionnaires are provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

We understand that this sample of people for the interviews may lead to incomplete conclusions due to the survivorship bias. We were not able to talk to applicants who wanted to but could not enter Ukrainian HEIs. However, we asked our respondents to tell us stories of someone they know who had a negative admission experience.

Among the key obstacles the applicants named income requirements, while representatives of educational institutions, the MoES and the NGO cited a lack of sufficient information in the occupied territories about the opportunities to enroll into Ukrainian universities.

Table 2. Students enrolled in Ukrainian HEIs in 2020*

number of students (% of the total number of applicants)

	Total	From the government-controlled areas	From the occupied territories
Total (100%)	213 861	210 878	2 983
state-funded	75,080 (35%)	73,276 (35%)	1,804 (60%)
on a contract basis	138,781 (65%)	137,602 (65%)	1,179 (40%)
bachelor's degree	202,759 (95%)	199,989 (95%)	2,770 (93%)
master's degree	11,102 (5%)	10,889 (5%)	213 (7%)
under Quota 2**	1,284 (1%)		1,284 (43%)
based on 11 classes of school	159,841 (75%)	156,949 (74%)	2,892 (97%)
based on junior specialist	54,020 (25%)	53,929 (26%)	91 (3.1%)
applied by August 22	205,990 (96%)	203,305 (96%)	2,685 (90%)
applied after August 22	7,871 (4%)	7,573 (4%)	298 (10%)

* applicants enrolled in the universities to obtain a bachelor's or master's degree
** Quota 2 is a quota for applicants from the temporarily occupied territories

Source: The Unified State Electronic Education Database, data as of Dec. 22, 2020

Results

We do not have exact information on the number of children graduating from schools in the occupied territories, the number of those entering local universities or going to Russia. According to the media in the occupied territories, 10.5 thousand 11th-graders graduated from schools in 2020 in Crimea, over 8 thousand in the occupied territories of Donetsk region and over 5 thousand in Luhansk region. For comparison, the number of school graduates in the government-controlled areas was over 200 thousand.

Although Quota 2 included 12,755 student places, nearly 1.7 thousand students did not use it enrolling instead on the general terms (according to EDEBO). Of these, 881 students study with contracts (i.e. they pay for their education). 298 contract students entered the universities after the official admissions process (in the second wave). According to the Ministry, these students could be transferred to state-funded places while studying.

"Those of my acquaintances who applied last year, they didn't use the quotas, everyone was scared, those quotas were like "[if] we have some places left, we'll consider you". It didn't feel like it was guaranteed — everyone wanted to be admitted on the general terms." — a student, 21.

"My parents decided in favor of ZNO because it is a reliable method. And then I kept an eye on the admissions situation, called the hotline. I asked if I passed ZNO, whether I needed to take an exam at the university, but they couldn't answer me." — a student, 19.

Where are the applicants from TOT studying?

Most of the students from TOT enrolled in the universities of Luhansk and Donetsk regions, adjacent regions, Kyiv, Odessa and Lviv. Most students got enrolled in the same regions under Quota 2 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The number of students from the TOT enrolled in the universities in 2020, by region

Number of the students from the TOT

Legend:
- 0 - 2
- 3 - 7
- 8 - 19
- 20 - 54
- 55 - 149
- 150 - 399
- 400 +
- No data

Region values:
- Volyn 5
- Rivne 6
- Zhytomyr 11
- Kyiv City 773
- Chernihiv 15
- Sumy 15
- Lviv 78
- Ternopil 3
- Khmelnytskyi 6
- Kyiv 24
- Poltava 31
- Kharkiv 538
- Luhansk 412
- Ivano-Frankivsk 6
- Zakarpattia 6
- Chernivtsi 5
- Vinnytsya 27
- Cherkasy 16
- Kirovohrad 2
- Dnipropetrovsk 72
- Donetsk 600
- Odesa 177
- Mykolaiv 16
- Zaporizhia 75
- Kherson 62
- Crimea
- Sevastopol
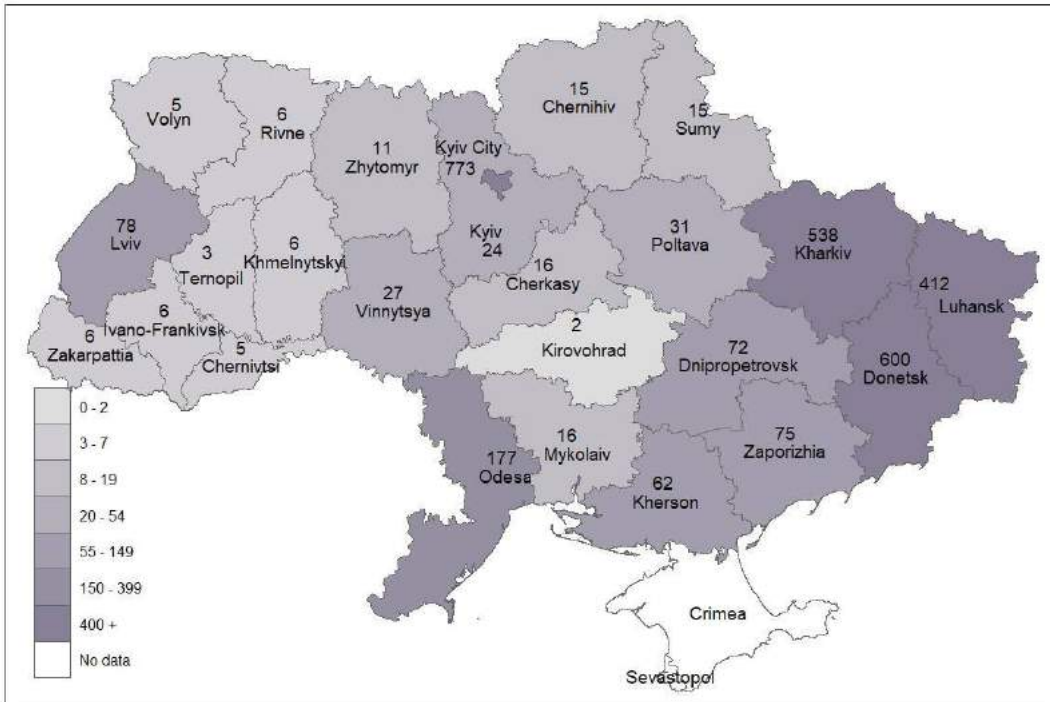
Number of the students from the TOT enrolled under the quota

Legend:
- 0 - 2
- 3 - 7
- 8 - 19
- 20 - 54
- 55 - 149
- 150 - 399
- No data

Region values:
- Volyn 1
- Rivne 1
- Zhytomyr 0
- Kyiv City 316
- Chernihiv 4
- Sumy 0
- Lviv 34
- Ternopil 0
- Khmelnytskyi 0
- Kyiv 1
- Poltava 6
- Kharkiv 291
- Luhansk 175
- Ivano-Frankivsk 0
- Zakarpattia 0
- Chernivtsi 0
- Vinnytsya 6
- Cherkasy 0
- Kirovohrad 0
- Dnipropetrovsk 20
- Donetsk 296
- Odesa 67
- Mykolaiv 6
- Zaporizhia 19
- Kherson 40
- Crimea
- Sevastopol

Source: The Unified State Electronic Education Database, data as of Dec. 22, 2020, the authors' calculations

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Nearly 70% of students enrolled under Quota 2 are concentrated in 20 universities, 11 of which are located in Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv oblasts. The top three choices of students are Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University, the National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute" and V.I. Vernadsky Taurida National University.

The aforementioned 20 universities also enroll nearly half of students who did not use Quota 2 or the opportunity to enroll after the admission process (i.e. in the second wave). These universities enrolled 45% of contract students (398 out of 881) who were eligible for preferential admission but did not use it. Instead of trying to enroll under quota through one of the 195 education centers created by universities and study on a tuition-free basis, those students chose to study on a fee-paid basis, even though the ranking of the universities they chose was quite low. Specifically, almost 40% of students who study with contracts have a better level of knowledge (average entrance score) than the average level of applicants in their specialties across the country.

The popularity of the universities located close to the contact line can be due to several reasons. First, applicants may be trying to stay closer to their place of living or study where they have more of their fellows fearing adverse treatment by peers. Secondly, the universities that are popular with students from TOT may be the most customer-oriented. Third, students may not be aware of the preferential admission opportunities at other universities, or they may have difficulty figuring out how to use the privileges.

"In the 11th grade, I was told I had to finish the 9th grade in a Ukrainian school, so I had to do 3 years in one." — a student, 17.

"The communication was terrible. It was written in detail about how to enroll without ZNO, but what if a child had ZNO [scores] was not clear." — a student, 17.

"I applied on a quota basis as someone having registration in Donetsk region. There were many difficulties because I was there during quarantine, I didn't know when to go to take ZNO. Then, Zelenskyi announced a simplified admissions system for children from TOT. It was unclear, if I passed ZNO tests, whether I'd be able to enroll under the simplified system."— a student, 19.

During the interviews, we found that universities were trying to get budget funding for those students who did not use the quota but were enrolled with a contract instead. To do so, they applied to the Ministry of Education and Science for permission to re-allocate the quota places from other specialties with less students than expected. Representatives of the relocated educational institutions said during interviews that in this way they were

trying to give all applicants a chance to study in the government-controlled areas. But sometimes one has to wait several months to get an approval from the Ministry, and the children who cannot pay for tuition leave the university during that time. In its turn, the MoES notes that it helps get the budget-funded places for full-time students. And for those enrolled in distance learning and returning to the occupied territory, very few state-funded places are provided.

Are the scores of applicants from TOT higher or lower than those of other applicants?

The comparisons below are based on the assumption that entrance exams are organized and graded in a similar way at all the universities, that they are objective and correctly assess the students' level of knowledge. How valid is this assumption?

Figure 2 shows that the distribution of the last digit of grades on the Ukrainian language exam of applicants under Quota 2 differs from the distribution of grades of all other applicants (most of them were enrolled based on their ZNO results). Specifically, about 35% of the grades of applicants under Quota 2 end in a zero, with only 12% in the case of other students. The scores ending in 5 are also found more often with the Quota 2 applicants than with other applicants. This may be due to the fact that exams are graded by people rather than automatically, and people round the grades for simplicity. In any case, this places the children taking ZNO tests in an unequal position with those who take exams at the educational centers. Because even a few tenths of a point can be important for admission.

We do not have evidence of systematic inflating or understating the scores for the students from the TOT, so we will stick to our assumption.

Figure 2. Distribution of the last digit of exam scores in Ukrainian language of applicants under Quota 2 and all other applicants

Source: The Unified State Electronic Education Database, data as of Dec. 22, 2020, the authors' calculations

The admission scores of students who used Quota 2 are slightly higher than average scores of other applicants to Ukrainian universities (Figure 3) and are a bit lower than average scores of those enrolling into state-funded places. However, some children from the government-controlled areas enrolled into budget-funded places have a lower level of knowledge than those enrolled under Quota 2.

Figure 3. Average admission scores of the students in 2020, by categories
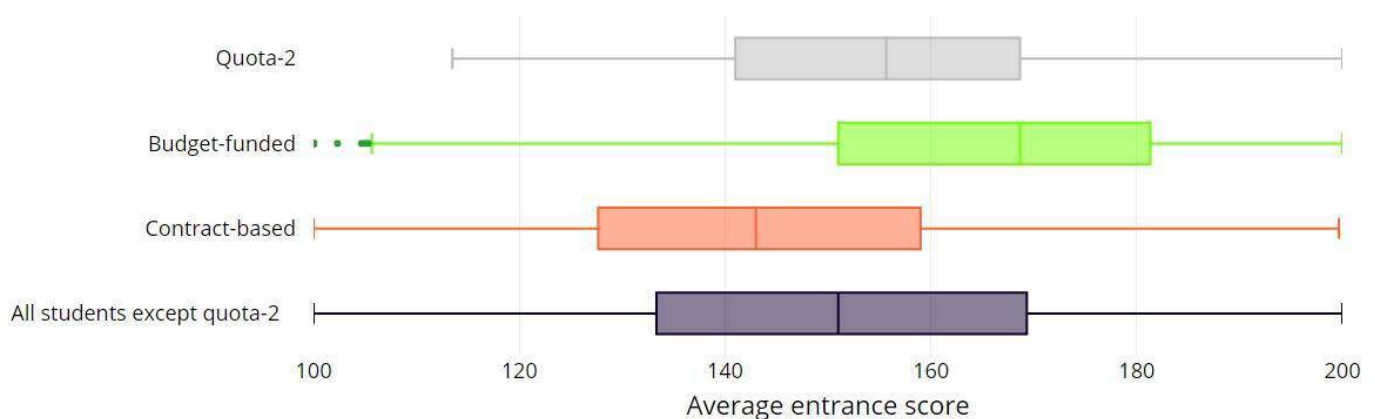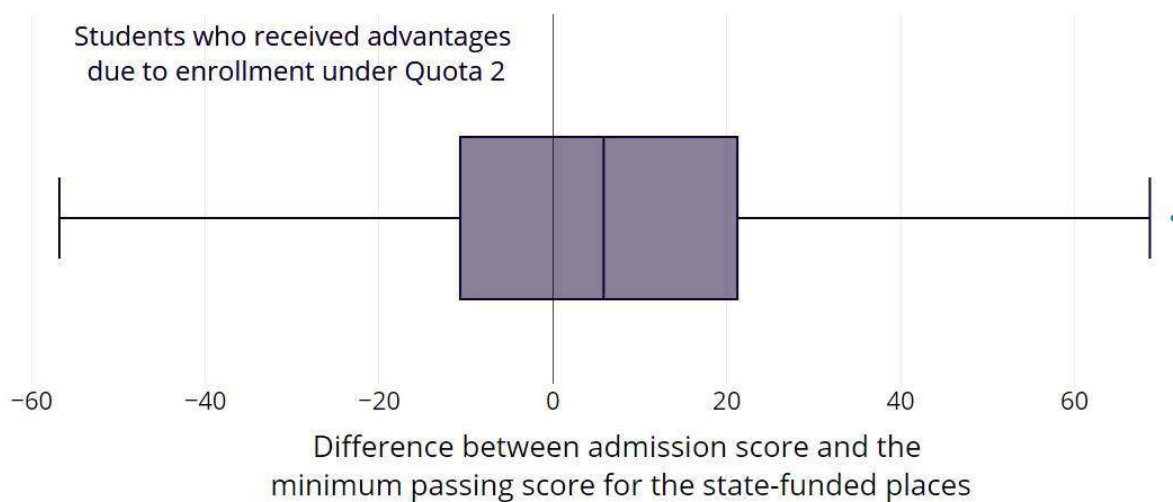

Source: The Unified State Electronic Education Database, data as of Dec. 22, 2020, the authors' calculations

The students applying under Quota 2 often have a higher admission score than the passing score for their specialty at the universities of their choice (Figure 4). With these ZNO scores, they could have competed for the budget-funded places with their fellow students on the general terms. Nearly 58% of them (786 out of 1,283 students) could have enrolled for the budget-funded places at their preferred specialties at universities of their choice.

Looking at exam scores, admission under the quota provided preferential treatment to about 42% of students (539 out of 1,283). That is, without Quota 2, these students would not have gotten into the state-funded places for their priority specialties at universities of their choice.

However, it was often more important for the applicants to be able to use a simplified procedure for obtaining a school certificate than taking entrance exams.

Figure 4. Distribution of students' advantage (the difference between admission score of students enrolled under Quota 2 and the minimum passing score for the budget-funded places in their specialties at their universities)

Source: The Unified State Electronic Education Database, data as of Dec. 22, 2020, the authors' calculations

The average score of students enrolled under quota positively correlates with the university ranking (Figure 5). Similar trends are observed in various fields of knowledge — in social sciences, STEM, medicine, and arts. The most popular among the strong students enrolled under the quota were such specialties as management, law, medicine, and economics.

Figure 5. Correlation between the average admission scores under Quota 2 and average general scores by universities*
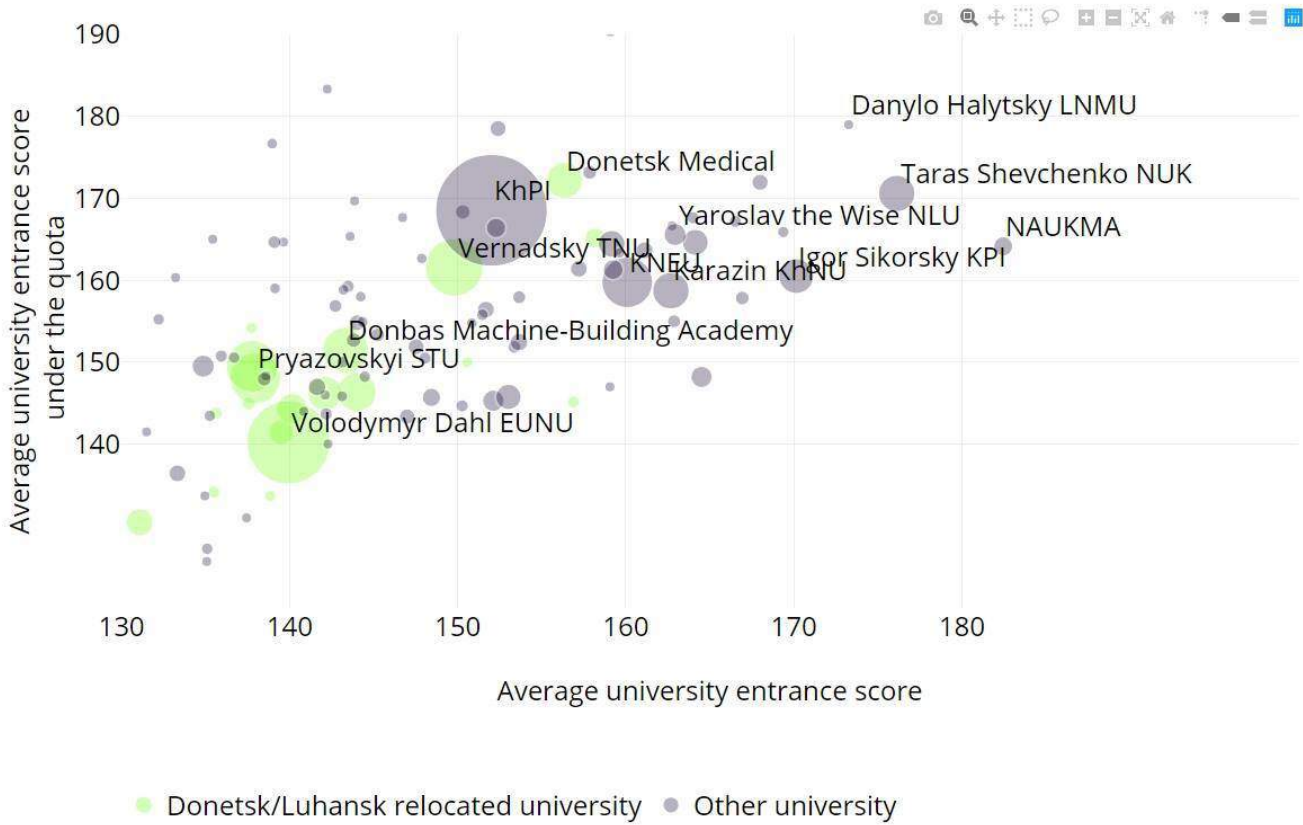
* the circle size is proportional to the number of students enrolled under the quota
Source: The Unified State Electronic Education Database, data as of Dec.22, 2020, the authors' calculations

Figure 5. Correlation between the average admission scores under Quota 2 and average general scores by universities*
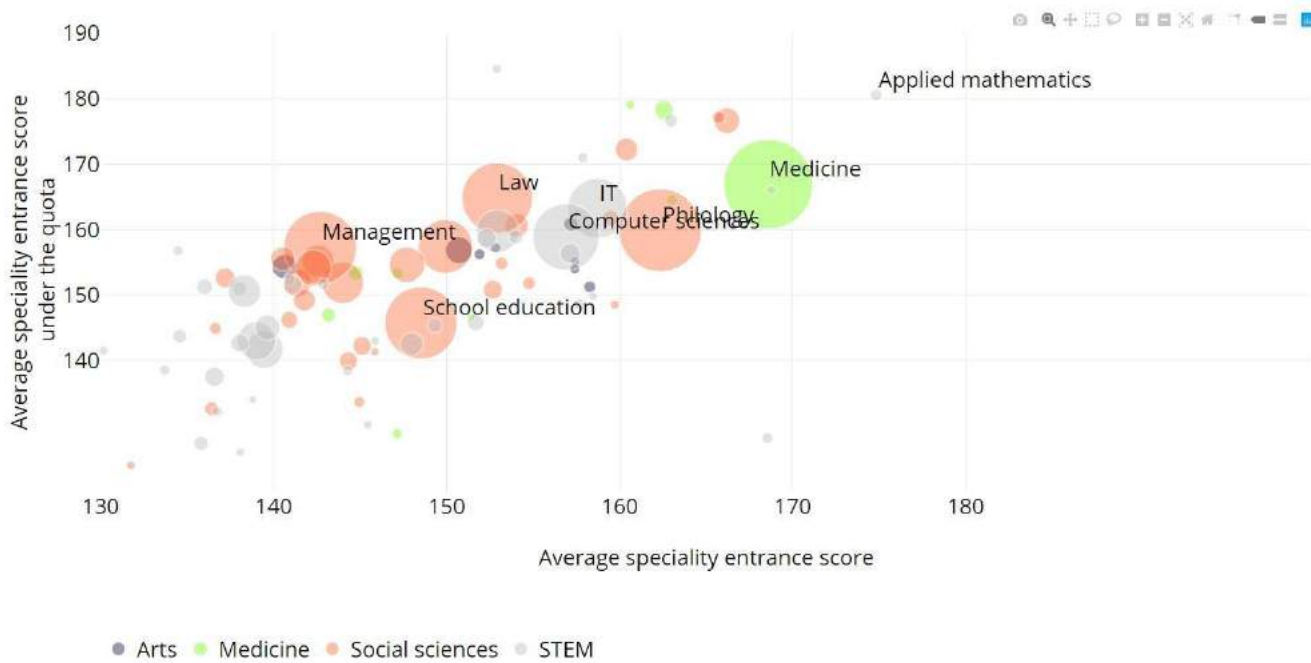
* the circle size is proportional to the number of students enrolled under the quota
Source: The Unified State Electronic Education Database, data as of Dec.22, 2020, the authors' calculations

The interviews with applicants showed their responsible attitude towards enrollment into Ukrainian universities. Everyone we spoke to studied with a tutor in at least one subject. In addition to their main school, most of them also studied at a Ukrainian school remotely and took online courses to prepare for ZNO tests. Extending the quota to all HEIs prompted some students to decide to enroll into Ukrainian universities.

"Many did not apply in Ukraine because they were not sure about passing ZNO and had to complete three school grades. In addition, the quota used to cover bad, uninteresting universities."- a student, 17.

"Before the quota system was extended, I was not going to apply in Ukraine, because those were universities that had a shortage of students or relocated from the occupied territories. Prior to the extension, the quota worked for unattractive universities." — a student, 19.

The average scores of applicants under Quota 2 are higher in most subjects than the average scores of other applicants (Table 3). However, to understand how different the level of knowledge of students from TOT is from that of students who choose the same specialties at universities of similar rankings, we constructed a balanced sample (Table 3). We included students from the government-controlled areas into the control group.

Based on comparisons of the balanced samples of students enrolled in the same specialties at universities with a similar ranking, we found no statistically significant difference between these scores in all the subjects except for History of Ukraine. Children from TOT have slightly higher scores in the History of Ukraine. The difference in grades in History can be explained by the fact that children from TOT spend a lot of time studying History of Ukraine in preparation for their entrance exams. Our respondents noted that this is one of the most difficult subjects for them because it is not taught in the occupied territories, and the curriculum of Ukrainian schools has to be studied "from the very beginning".

This suggests that admitting children from TOT under Quota 2 does not worsen the overall level of applicants, and, in some cases, even allows to attract stronger students.

"Most of the people leaving Donetsk are outstanding students and they're very motivated, because they've been getting ready for it for a long time." — a student, 19.

Sample of students*	Enrolled on a competitive basis	Enrolled under Quota 2	t-test (p-value)
Complete sample, number of persons	212529	1283	
Average entrance score, mean (SD)	148.2 (22.1)	155.2 (18.1)	< 0.001
Ukrainian language, mean (SD)	153.3 (25.2)	155.6 (22.0)	0.001
History of Ukraine, mean (SD)	142.9 (24.8)	155.8 (22.3)	< 0.001
Mathematics, mean (SD)	146.6 (26.3)	151.8 (23.3)	< 0.001
Biology, mean (SD)	150.4 (25.9)	159.7 (20.2)	< 0.001
Chemistry, mean (SD)	153.1 (26.6)	168.4 (16.1)	0.02
Balanced sample, number of persons	1283	1283	
Average entrance score, mean (SD)	153.1 (22.8)	155.2 (18.1)	<0.001
Ukrainian language, mean (SD)	155.6 (25.0)	155.6 (22.0)	0.653
History of Ukraine, mean (SD)	146.7 (24.7)	155.8 (22.3)	<0.001
Mathematics, mean (SD)	149.3 (25.8)	151.8 (23.3)	0.284
Biology, mean (SD)	157.8 (26.1)	159.7 (20.2)	0.880
Chemistry, mean (SD)	158.1 (27.9)	168.4 (16.1)	0.731

* for more details on the sample structures, see Appendix No.5 and Appendix No.6

Obstacles to enrollment of children from TOT into Ukrainian universities

Language issue

Unlike most Ukrainian children, students at Crimean and ORDLO schools have to make a lot of effort to study the Ukrainian language, literature, and History of Ukraine on their own. Even if Ukrainian language was taught at school, most of the instruction is in Russian making it necessary for them to learn the terminology for ZNO tests in mathematics, physics, chemistry, or geography on their own or with the help of tutors.

In Crimea, in the 2019-2020 school year, only 206 children studied in Ukrainian (nearly 13 thousand in 2012-2013) and 207 thousand studied in Russian (155 thousand in 2012-2013). Currently, there is officially only one school in Crimea with Ukrainian language of instruction. The occupation authorities of ORDLO introduced two "official" languages: Russian and

Ukrainian, continuing to teach Ukrainian at schools for some time. In 2020, they amended the so-called "Constitutions" retaining only Russian as the "official language". Teaching Ukrainian became optional, done at the request of parents. Unfortunately, not all parents want their children to learn Ukrainian.

"To get the children to study in Ukraine, studying the language, studying history should be available, like online courses or something. Many people may simply not have enough money to pay for a tutor." — a student, 17.

During the interviews, most of the respondents said they preferred to take ZNO tests in Ukrainian because they used it to prepare for the exams. They also explained their motivation to study Ukrainian by their future plans to build a successful career in Ukraine. Yet, in their private lives, they often speak Russian.

"I didn't get enrolled in Russia because I couldn't accept the attitude of the people and that country." — a student, 21.

"I was very much surprised that people may have different views on certain issues but can do something together and not have internal censorship in their conversations about politics. I was overwhelmed by it. There's more freedom here." — a student, 19.

The applicants said that they did not have language problems with the members of admission commissions during the admission process, regardless of whether they spoke Russian or Ukrainian (i.e. the admission commissions staff did not insist that the students switch to Ukrainian). Despite that, during the interviews university representatives spoke about applicants having such stereotypes before admission.

"The students have many questions regarding the Russian language: "They kill for using Russian here." — a university representative.

Lack of information

During the interviews, the respondents noted that in the occupied territories it is quite difficult to get information about enrolment into Ukrainian HEIs, as the university websites do not always update information on a timely basis.

Another problem is the form of information provision. It is complicated not only for 17-year-olds, but sometimes also for their parents and even experts who draw incorrect conclusions from reading the regulations. Informing in a simple and explicit way would help the applicants. For example, "Kharkiv University has 40 state-funded places for children from TOT. To enroll, it is necessary to provide a birth certificate. The university will help you with all the other documents". And add the contacts of the admission commission.

In 2020, regulatory changes added to these difficulties in the midst of the admissions process. Not all the universities were able to create educational centers, and the applicants did not understand until the last minute whether they would be able to use the simplified admissions procedure. Therefore, those who were able to take ZNO tests decided to play safe and pass them. Probably, this was the reason for a significant underuse of the places allocated under Quota 2.

Because Law 744-IX was passed during the admission process, the government bodies and universities began to quickly adapt their regulations to the new rules. The rules for entering and leaving Ukraine also changed often. It was difficult for applicants from TOT to keep track of these changes. An additional problem was that, according to the respondents, disseminating information about admission to Ukrainian educational institutions is "considered a criminal offense" in Crimea. Therefore, during the admission process applicants found themselves in an information vacuum, and had to invest considerable effort into filling it. Thus, applying to the educational institutions where people with similar problems were already studying helped obtain information more easily.

"To begin with, the information campaign [needs to be improved]. The hotline said you should directly contact the HEIs, where admission centers were set up. But at that time there were no centers yet. At the time, they replied that there was a law but no by-laws. That is, we know what should be the result but it's unclear how it should be organized." — a student, 19.

"There should be more communication with children from TOT. There is no unified portal with complete information. Some information was only on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science, some only on the university websites... the hotlines didn't work for children from TOT." — a student, 17.

"I had a feeling that they [the admission commission] didn't really understand what to do, because I came at the beginning of the admission process. I was told to provide a certificate that I studied disctantly at a Kramatorsk school. Since I took two ZNO tests, they didn't know whether I was eligible to apply under this quota. But they quickly resolved the issue, reassuring me that I would get enrolled. It's a human factor. I understand that they used me to work out an algorithm." — a student, 19.

Biased attitude of educational institutions' staff

Children who enrolled into Ukrainian universities sometimes faced a bias already at distance learning schools. The negative narrative was supported by the media. It is therefore not surprising that some representatives of admission commissions openly said that children from TOT "would never be able to enroll" into state-funded places at their institution due to the intense competition, and that "they should accept it". Perhaps, the problem would not be so acute if the media and officials told about what it takes the children from TOT to get enrolled and about their motivation instead of spreading false information that "separatists will come to Ukraine". At the same time, many admission commission members were friendly and trying to help.

"The Admission Commission [representative said:] "You see, your granddaughter will never get into a budget-funded place with us, we have a very tough competition. You need to accept it and let it go. Find another university. No matter how hard she was preparing, it's an external school…" — a student, 17.

"I even came in advance to find out whether it made sense to apply – they told me to come. Everything was quite nice. Sometimes we encountered nervous women, but overall they were helpful." — a student, 21.

"When at school, we sometimes encountered biased attitude. There was a shortage of books and we were told to go to where we came from to get the books." — a former student, 22.

"If a child could not come for the exams, we would set an additional date for the exam. Examination committees are open during the entire admission period, so they don't need to be summoned additionally. In such cases, we met the needs of the child. If they couldn't come in time or couldn't come at all. This year, it was especially true because of the pandemic and closed borders." — a university representative.

Travel and accommodation costs

As there is no official transportation from occupied territories to Ukrainian cities in the government-controlled areas, applicants have to use the services of private drivers whose prices are usually quite high. Sometimes children go to the government-controlled areas accompanied by one of their parents, which doubles the cost.

Another significant item of expenditure is accommodation. In 2020 the occupant authorities in Crimea allowed Crimeans only one trip to the government-controlled territory. Therefore, the children who came to take ZNO tests had to remain in the government-controlled area until the results of the entrance exams were announced.

The situation at the checkpoints with ORDLO was also uncertain and applicants did not take the risk of returning home, fearing that they would no longer be able to leave for the government-controlled territory. During the interview, they estimated their costs during the admissions process at UAH 15-25 thousand. It is obvious that, when applying to the educational institutions near the contact line it is possible to save a little on travel and rent. Sometimes applicants choose to enter universities in the cities where they have relatives.

"At the time of admission, I had virtually no place to live. I lived at my friends' place for a while, then hiked for a few months all over Ukraine and lived in a tent." — a student, 19.

"Some applied in the DNR, mainly those who failed their ZNO tests or those who couldn't afford to live in Ukraine (had no relatives or were short of money)." — a former student, 22.

"Lots of people I know didn't apply in Kyiv or Lviv because they simply didn't have a place to live. It would be nice if it were official and unproblematic to get a dormitory room for the admission period." — a former student, 22.

"Some people can't afford to come even once, let alone travel on a regular basis. Good information is in short supply that would make it possible to not spend [much] money which is not enough anyway." — a student, 21.

"[It would be good] to streamline the process of submitting the documents — for example, make a preliminary submission in the electronic form." — a university representative.

During the ZNO period, the occupant administration often denied the applicants passage through the checkpoints.

In 2020, the quarantine restrictions added to the problem of leaving the occupied territories for the exams. That same year, during the ZNO period, the occupation authorities in Donetsk region closed the only functional checkpoint explaining this by the epidemiological situation. Because of this, only 59 children from the "DPR" (11% of those registered) were able to come for the exams.

Some applicants, including our respondents, spent several hours or even over 24 hours at the checkpoint. One of the respondents said he was under shelling at the checkpoint. In addition to physical inconveniences, children face psychological pressure: they can be persuaded not to enroll into Ukrainian HEIs because "there are also educational institutions in the occupied territories", their belongings can be searched, their photos and mail messages on the phones and computers can be checked. Sometimes

comes to absurd — for example, one of the respondents had to explain at the checkpoint why he was wearing an orange cardigan.

"I had such an idea [of applying to Ukrainian universities], but because of my family I couldn't go to Ukraine. It could have consequences for me. I've got a friend whose parents are in the service and he told me he could be taken hostage. Even if there were very good universities in Ukraine, I wouldn't apply there." — a student in Russia, 19.

"If you say you're going to study, you are asked a lot of questions. They say "we've got a big country, what exactly couldn't you find here?" — a student, 17.

"If I go home now, I'm not sure I can get back here again." — a student, 17.

"Applying for college in Ukraine is considered [in Crimea] a criminal offense." — a student, 17.

Admission under a simplified procedure, when all the necessary exams can be passed in 1-5 days, makes it possible to reduce the number of border crossings and the risk of being persecuted by the occupation authorities.

Simplified admissions algorithm and its risks

An important issue of applying via simplified admission procedure is taking entrance exams at the universities' educational centers. We have outlined the procedure for enrolling into HEIs in 2020 (Scheme 1). Potentially, such a procedure could create opportunities for corruption, although the university representatives would disagree.
"In my opinion, corruption risks are minimized, we can accept anyone with a minimum final score if the quota is not filled. The procedure is completely transparent. If the quota is not filled, then there is virtually no competition or conflict of interest. If an applicant meets the criteria and passed the exam with a minimum passing score, then we cannot refuse him/her. We could refuse only if he/she provided false information." — a university representative.

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Scheme 1. Admissions procedure for applicants from TOT in 2020
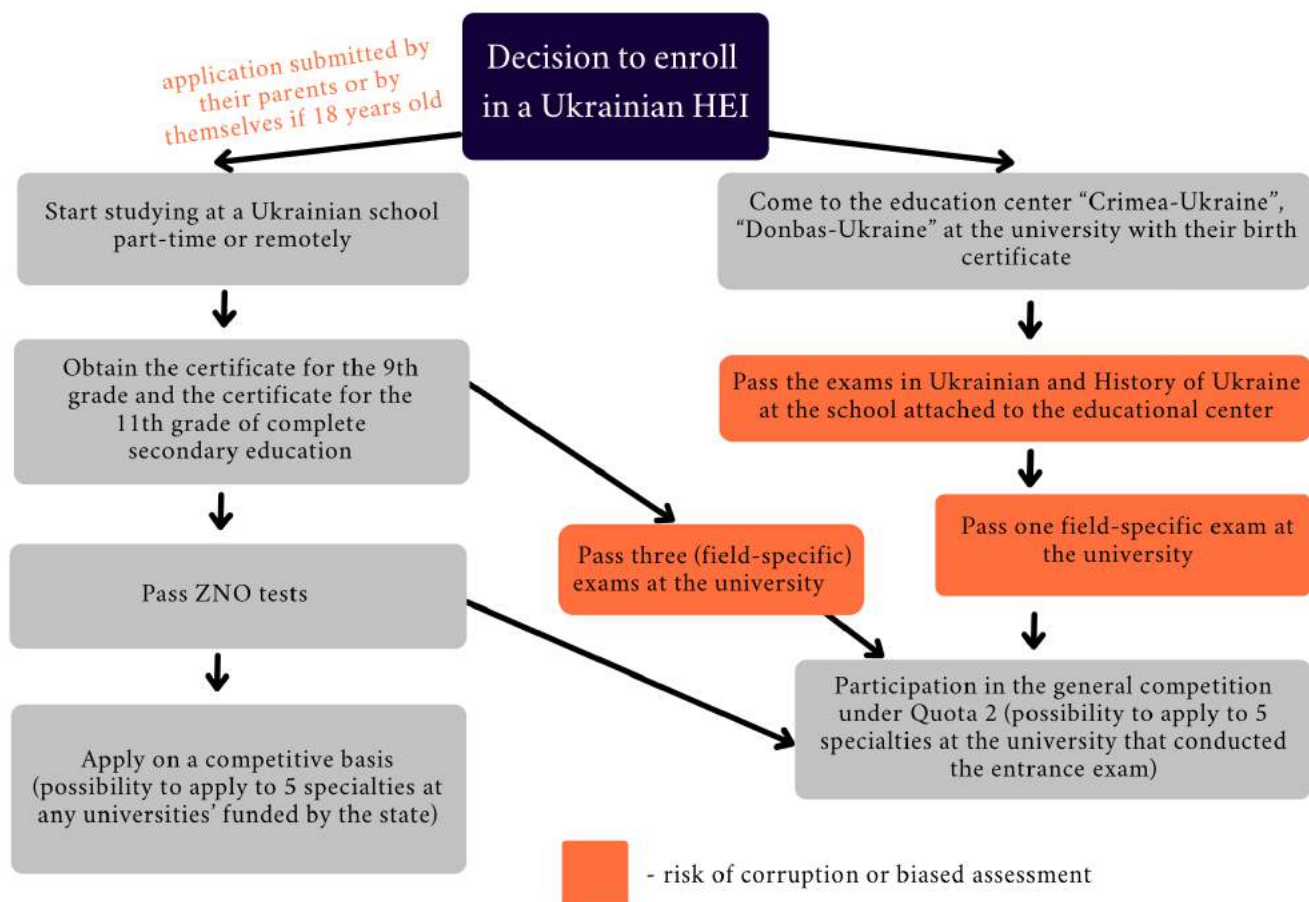
The scheme shows that as of 2020, applicants from the temporarily occupied territories have two critical points where admission into Ukrainian HEIs does not completely depend on them.

The first point is the application to a Ukrainian school that has to be submitted by the child's parents before the child is 18. If they have anti-Ukrainian views, the child loses the opportunity to get a Ukrainian school education. In this case, in order to enroll into a Ukrainian university, the child has to use a simplified procedure for obtaining a certificate of completion of general secondary education under Quota 2 (right part of the Scheme 1).

The second critical point is the entrance exams to HEIs under a simplified admissions procedure. The grades of the three exams organized by educational centers depend on the examiners' attitude and desire to admit students from temporarily occupied territories. Besides, if there is a competition for the budget-funded places under the quota, there is a risk that exam organizers start taking bribes for assigning a higher grade.

Conclusions

The Ukrainian government policy helps applicants from TOT enroll into Ukrainian HEIs. Among the key policy measures are an opportunity to study at Ukrainian schools remotely or part-time, without having to leave the occupied territories, and to obtain Ukrainian documents of completion of secondary education, a simplified entrance exam procedure, and the admission quota to enroll into state-funded places.

The state allocated 12,755 places at all Ukrainian universities in 2020 to admit children from TOT within a separate competition, but this quota was filled only by 10%. Children from TOT mostly entered the universities located not far from the contact line. Some students who did not exercise their right to apply under Quota 2 and enrolled on a contract basis can be transferred to the budget-funded places.

Assuming that exams organized at educational centers adequately reflect the applicants' knowledge, the quota does provide admission preferences to the students from the TOT (550 applicants in 2020, or 42% of all the applicants under Quota 2). The rest had the scores that would allow them to enroll into state-funded places in their chosen specialties at their universities under the general procedure. However, an important support tool is the simplified procedures for obtaining a certificate of secondary education.

They help minimize the number of entries into / exits from the occupied territories, passages through the checkpoints, as well as reduce the time of the admissions process, and, consequently, the accommodation costs during the admission period. The students whom we interviewed spent UAH 15-25 thousand for travel and accommodation during the admission.

Judging by the scores they got on entrance exams, the level of knowledge of the students from the occupied territories does not significantly differ from that of the students from other regions. However, it is important to keep in mind that preparation, exams, and travel require significant effort and funds which not everyone can afford. Thus, the most motivated graduates from the occupied territories and those with sufficient means to pay for tutors and travel are most likely to enroll into Ukrainian HEIs. After all, it is much easier to get enrolled into educational institutions in the occupied territories or in Russia.

Recommendations

What can the Ukrainian state do to attract more young people from the occupied territories? Communicate, in the first place — on the one hand, explaining to Ukrainian society the benefits of such a policy, and on the other hand, getting the information about further education opportunities across to schoolchildren in the occupied territories.

The policy shortcoming is replacing ZNO tests with entrance exams conducted at the universities. On the one hand, it really helps in situations when the applicants cannot leave the occupied territory on the eve of ZNO tests (as the occupying power often blocks the exit from the TOT during this period). However, this format of exams can easily create a corruption environment.

Below are some recommendations that we think can help improve this policy. Facilitate access to ZNO tests for the children from the TOT and replace university entrance exams with independent testing

Facilitate access to ZNO tests for the children from the TOT and replace university entrance exams with independent testing
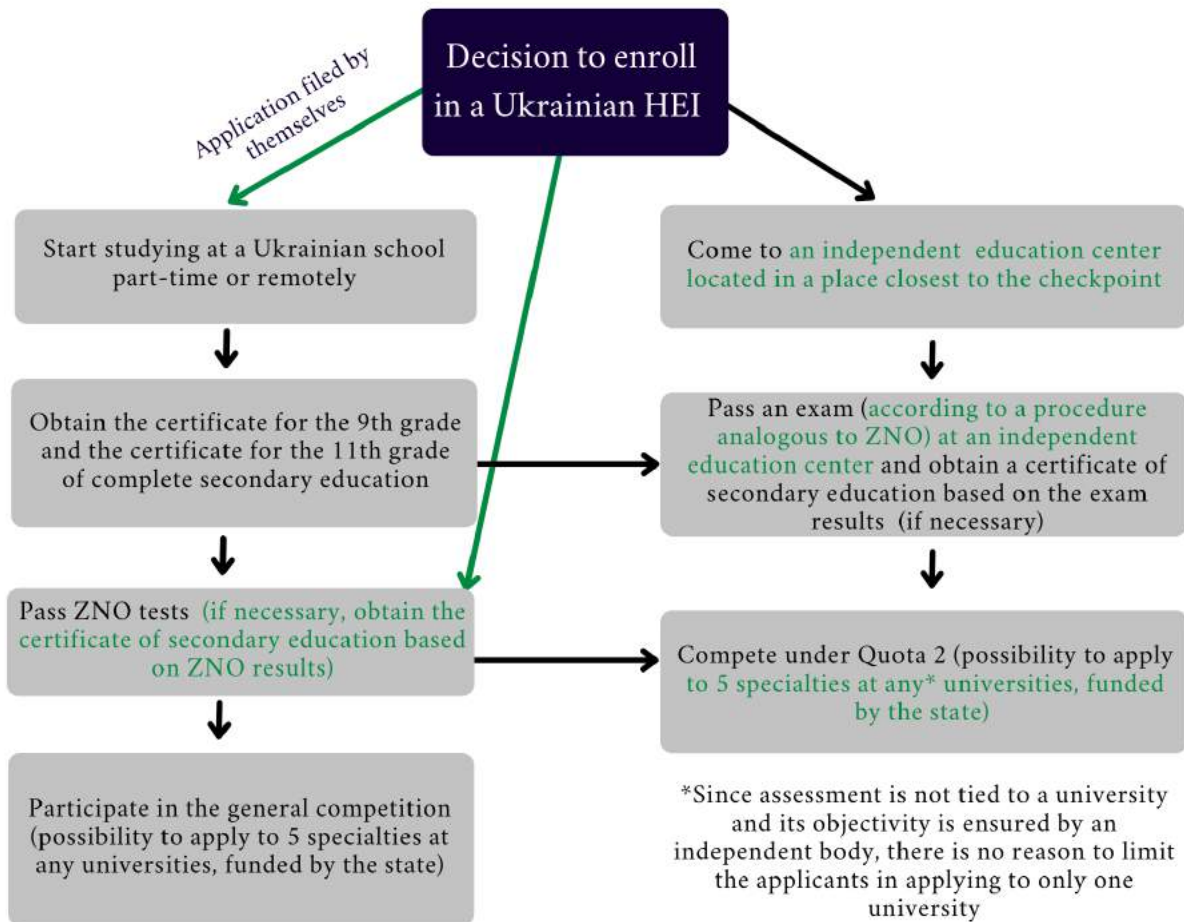
The recent extension of the simplified system to all the universities was an adequate response to the challenges of the crisis year, when many registered ZNO applicants from TOT simply could not make it to the testing centers. However, in the long run this system is unstable because it is highly influenced by subjective factors. It is hard to say whether the applicants' knowledge is assessed equally by professors at different universities and, furthermore, whether such grades are comparable to ZNO grades. Some examiners may provide higher grades to a student to help him/her move out of the occupied territories, and some may provide lower grades if they are biased against people from TOT. ZNO excludes subjective factors.

We advise to provide children an opportunity to take ZNO tests regardless of whether they studied in a Ukrainian school, and to obtain a certificate of secondary education under a simplified procedure based on their ZNO results. In this way they will be provided with an objective assessment of their knowledge and will be able to enroll on a competitive basis in five HEIs rather than one.

If children from the TOT are unable to travel to ZNO tests, we suggest that they should be allowed to apply under the simplified procedure using Quota 2. At the same time, it is necessary to replace the exams organized at universities by an independent testing analogous to ZNO. If testing centers are located near the checkpoints, this would significantly reduce the applicants travel and accommodation costs during the admission process. The students who do not have support from their parents for studying

at Ukrainian schools should be allowed "free attendance" (remotely) of the schools without an application from their parents. The proposed system is shown in Scheme 2.

Scheme 2. Admissions process proposal for the applicants from TOT

Decision to enroll in a Ukrainian HEI

Application filed by themselves

Start studying at a Ukrainian school part-time or remotely

Obtain the certificate for the 9th grade and the certificate for the 11th grade of complete secondary education

Pass ZNO tests (if necessary, obtain the certificate of secondary education based on ZNO results)

Participate in the general competition (possibility to apply to 5 specialties at any universities, funded by the state)

Come to an independent education center located in a place closest to the checkpoint

Pass an exam (according to a procedure analogous to ZNO) at an independent education center and obtain a certificate of secondary education based on the exam results (if necessary)

Compete under Quota 2 (possibility to apply to 5 specialties at any* universities, funded by the state)

*Since assessment is not tied to a university and its objectivity is ensured by an independent body, there is no reason to limit the applicants in applying to only one university

Cancel the non-transparent system of enrolling on a contract basis with a subsequent transfer to the state-funded places; provide students from TOT with financial support based on transparent rules

If the first recommendation is implemented, extending to five the number of universities where students can apply significantly increases their chances of enrollment into state-funded places. Thus, the process of enrolling students on a contract basis and later transferring them to state-funded places becomes redundant.

Clearly children will gain from such changes. But how will they affect the state budget? According to the MoES, the average cost of a state-funded place is UAH 43,000. That is, if the 2020 quota had been filled by 100%, it would have cost about UAH 548 million a year or 1.2% of spending on higher education in 2020[7]. About half of the school graduates from TOT could be

[7] At the same time, an average contract price is UAH 16.5 thousand. Therefore, if financing of education is not reformed, it makes sense for the state to provide these students with grants to study on a contract basis.

enrolled. In 2020, the total number of applicants from TOT was four times lower.

We expect more students willing to study at Ukrainian HEIs after the quota was extended to all universities. Providing an opportunity to take ZNO tests or analogous tests without having a Ukrainian school certificate (as we suggest) would further increase the number of students eligible for state-funded places. However, taking into account the difficulties faced by applicants, it is unlikely that their numbers will grow considerably.

Providing state-funded places for extramural students from TOT is not advisable since they very often live in the occupied territory during their studies and do not intend to integrate into the Ukrainian society.

Provide children from TOT with an opportunity to attend free pre-entry courses to soften income inequality

Although amendments to the law On Higher Education initiated by the President make children from TOT eligible to free pre-entry courses and scholarships while studying there, in practice this norm is not working yet. On November 9th 2020 activists sent an open letter to the Ministry of Education and Science reminding that the funds for such courses were not budgeted for 2021 and requesting this to be corrected. In late November, the Ministry responded that it was working on a list of universities where pre-entry courses for children from TOT would be organized and was intending to launch a pilot project in January 2021. Experts think that for courses to be meaningful rather than a mere formality, they should be located in areas near the contact line. The possibility of organising online courses should also be considered (currently, they are planned as a full-time study with pandemic-related restrictions).

Today, in order to master the Ukrainian curriculum at a sufficient level, the parents of children from TOT have to hire tutors. How can the state help them with that? For example, by launching an online platform with volunteer tutors. Summer educational camps can be a good instrument for improving the knowledge of children from TOT according to the Ukrainian educational program, getting them to know their peers and creating social ties in the government-controlled areas.

Keep the children in the occupied territories informed

We advise to use plain language that can be understood by a senior school student in the information materials on algorithms of possible actions and alternatives available to the applicants. Additional instructions can provide information on how to get to exam venues, where one can live during the admission, how to obtain the necessary documents, whom to contact in emergency situations. These materials can be distributed at the checkpoints.

Admission consultations should be organized at schools where children from TOT are studying remotely or part-time. Through these schools, webinars and Q&A sessions can be organized for the potential applicants. Getting to know current students from TOT and representatives of educational centers attached to the universities will be important, as they can provide useful advice.

Provide dormitories during the entire admission and study process

Today, the state recommends that universities provide applicants with dormitory rooms during admission exams. However, for the students from TOT this period is not enough to complete all the formalities. The students often have to come in advance because the occupation authorities do not let them leave the occupied territories just before the exams. Applicants also have to submit documents in person (offline). This is necessary for identification purposes. Thus they need accommodations during this period. Since the government does not refund such costs, not all the universities follow the recommendation on providing dormitories.

Providing the cost of a dormitory for the entire admission and study period can be an essential tool for attracting children from TOT. This will relieve them from having to go home several times during the admission process, renting housing in the government-controlled areas during the time of admission or going back home due to a lack of money during their studies (since much of the scholarship goes to covering the cost of dormitory). On average, government spending on dormitory will amount to UAH 6,000 per year per student from TOT (at different HEIs, prices range between UAH 300 and 1,000 per person per month)[8] .

During the pandemic, evicting from dormitories was a great challenge for children from TOT. Left homeless during the distance learning, most of them went home to the occupied territories, from where the exit was blocked. One of the students said that he could not return to his place of study from Crimea because he was "turned back" at the checkpoint. We think it is appropriate to guarantee such children the right to stay at the dormitories during the quarantine, despite the restrictions applying to other students.

Clarify in the regulations the definition of children from the occupied territories, as well as the boundaries of the occupied territory

The legislation allows using the simplified admission procedures and the quota to children who graduated from a school after April 14, 2014 and live in the non-government-controlled areas or near the contact line. However,

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[8] That is if the quota had been filled by 100% in 2020, providing these children with dormitory lodging would have cost UAH 76.5 million per year.

sometimes children who live in the government-controlled area study in the "gray zone". We suggest to clarify the definitions in such a way as to make children residing and/or studying in the occupied territory or in the "gray zone" eligible to the simplified admission procedure.

Communicate with the Ukrainian society

It is important to explain to people why the state supports applicants from TOT. In Ukraine, there are different admission quotas or privileges for applicants, e.g. preferential enrollment for students who attended pre-entry courses, rural coefficients etc. And people do not perceive these privileges as negatively as those granted to the applicants from TOT. We think that if society knew what obstacles the applicants from TOT have to overcome to get enrolled, public attitudes would change for the better.
Unlike Russia, Ukraine is not present in the occupied territories. We can help our fellow citizens living there only when they come to the government-controlled areas. And if we want to eventually return these territories it is worth doing this at every occasion.

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Appendices

Appendix No.1. Questionnaire for the applicants to Ukrainian and Russian HEIs

Question	Who was asked the question	
	Applicants to Ukraine	Entrant to Russia
When did you learn about the opportunity to enroll in Ukrainian HEIs? Where? (in social networks, on specialized websites, from acquaintances, …)	+	+ (Russian HEIs)
Did you analyze the advantages and disadvantages of studying in Ukrainian / Russian HEIs?	-	+
When did you decide to come to Ukraine and why?	+	+ (to Russia)
Did you tell your relatives / friends / acquaintances about your intentions? (If not – why; if yes, what was their reaction?)	+	+
What do the teachers at schools say about enrollment in HEIs (Do they advise on enrolling in HEIs in the occupied territories, in Russia, in Ukraine, or they do not talk about it)?	+	+
Is there any HEI advertising in the DNR / LNR / Crimea? Which universities are advertised?	+	+
How can one find out about the admissions rules in Ukraine ? (the MoES or university website; I called the university; I learned it from friends / acquaintances)	+	+ (to Russia)
Rate your communication with the university's admissions committee — were the committee's staff open-minded, ready to help or vice versa?	+	+
Do you have a Ukrainian passport? How did you get it? If not, did you face difficulties when enrolling for admission?	+	+ (Russian passport)
How did you get a Ukrainian certificate of secondary education?	+	-
How did you prepare for the exams in Ukrainian and History? (tutors, distance learning at a Ukrainian school, on my own)	+	-
(For those who studied at a Ukrainian school remotely): Did you like the teachers? Did you (not) have connection problems or problems with the republics' authorities"?	+	-
Did you have any problems leaving / entering the occupied territories?	+	+
Approximately, how much money do you need to spend on the admissions process (travel, food, accommodations, tutors)? Are these refunded?	+	+
Why did you choose this HEI (based on the profession of your interest; you chose the university you had chances to enter; just to leave the occupied territories)?	+	+
What is required to enter HEIs in Russia (what documents)? What is the admissions process?	-	+
How did you prepare for the Russian EGE exam?	-	+
Did you take ZNO tests?	+	-

Question	Who was asked the question	
	Applicants to Ukraine	Entrant to Russia
Did you apply to HEIs based on ZNO or entrance exams conducted at the HEI? Why?	+ (except applicants in 2015)	-
(If you applied not based on ZNO): How did you choose the quota under which you applied?	+ (except applicants in 2015)	-
(Based on ZNO) Did you apply to several HEIs or just one ?	+	+
(For those applying based on the exam:) How was the entrance exams procedure organized? Did the staff have a friendly attitude?	+ (except applicants in 2015)	-
Rate the exam's difficulty on a scale of 1 to 7? What was the easiest part? What was the hardest part?	+	+
If all the exam questions are 100%: What percentage of the questions seemed very easy to you? What percentage made you think for a while before answering? What is the percentage of questions you were able to answer only because you had studied with a tutor or extra hours on your own? How many questions were you not able to answer at all?	+	+
If you had taken the exam in Russian, you would have done much better / a little better / just as well / worse (harder)	+	+ (in Ukrainian)
Filling out the documents in Ukrainian was difficult / easy.	+	+ (in Russian)
Would you like to have an opportunity to study in Russian in Ukraine? Yes / No	+	-
Did the HEI staff ask you to switch to Ukrainian during the admissions process? I spoke Ukrainian / yes / almost never / sometimes / no	+	-
Did you have a language barrier during the admissions process? (when obtaining the certificate, filling out documents or during entrance exams)	-	+
Did anyone demand a bribe during the admissions period? Did any of your acquaintances give bribes? Have you heard that someone got enrolled in the university through bribes?	+	+
Is there anything that can be improved in the admissions rules for the applicants from the temporarily occupied territories?	+	+

Appendix No.2. The questions asked of the representatives of the universities that had the educational centers "Donbass-Ukraine" and "Crimea-Ukraine", the representative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and the representative of an NGO

Question	The questions asked of		
	Representatives of educational institutions	Representative of the Ministry of Education and Science	Representative of an NGO
What problem was law 744-IX supposed to solve? What positive effects did the law's drafters aim to achieve? What did the bill change and how did it affect the preparations for the admissions process for the MES / HEIs / applicants?	-	+	-
Were there public discussions organized with regard to the bill? What were the results of those discussions, if any? Did they influence the finalized text of the law?	-	+	-
Were you (as HEIs) involved in developing the policy of attracting students from the TOT?	+	-	-
How good was the communication on the part of the Ministry of Education and Science on the new admissions rules of July 3 for applicants from the TOT?	+	-	+
Did you (as HEIs) communicate with the schools teaching children from the TOT? Do you (as HEIs) provide career guidance for students from the TOT?	+	+	-
How was online training organized — how many students from the TOT did it cover? Do children have difficulty connecting to the lessons? Do the teachers discuss with the children enrollment in HEIs?	-	+	-
Did you talk to applicants from the TOT about the changed admissions rules? Through what channels? Was there enough time?	+	+	+
Under what quota should applicants from the TOT apply for admission?	-	+	+
Was the enrollment procedure clear to the students from the TOT (according to the new requirements)?	+	-	+
What questions did HEIs have? And the applicants?	+	+	+
What was the process of creating the educational centers and what are their functions? What is the process of training the head / person responsible for the functioning of the educational center at HEIs?	+	+	-
How much time does the enrollment process for applicants from the TOT last? What are the stages of the process? Is it possible to go through them online? What difficulties arise?	+	+	+
How do applicants from the TOT obtain Ukrainian school certificates? Do they need a passport when enrolling?	-	+	+
How is the registration of the applicants to ZNO tests done?	-	+	-

Question	The questions asked of		
	Representatives of educational institutions	Representative of the Ministry of Education and Science	Representative of an NGO
Was it necessary to update the admission conditions / state order for the HEIs in connection with the adoption of the bill?	-	+	-
Why was the admissions process extended to 23 October for applicants from the TOT?	-	+	-
Is dormitory lodging available for them during the admissions and study process? How is it done under quarantine?	+	-	-
What is the quota size and is it really possible to fill / exceed?	+	+	-
If the number of applicants exceeds the quota — what is to be done?	+	+	-
Who and in what way will transfer the applicants enrolled from 22 August to 23 October on a contract basis to the state-funded places? Under what funding framework?	+	+	-
Do children from the TOT more often enroll on a competitive basis or under quotas? Why?	+	+	+
What documents are required for admission?	+	-	-
How effective is the current quota policy? Can it be improved, how?	+	+	+
Will the number of applicants to HEIs increase in connection with the reform?	+	-	-
Did you (as HEIs) incur extra costs?	+	-	-
Were the extra costs provided for/ incurred due to the changed rules?	-	+	-
Who provides funding to the educational centers at the universities?	+	-	-
Are there corruption risks in the existing procedure? Can they be reduced?	+	+	-
What are the main reasons that children willing to enroll could not do it?	-	-	+

Appendix No.3. Key enrollment barriers in Ukraine as pointed out by the respondents during the interviews

Barrier	Description
Imperfect legislation	Due to the fact that the new law was adopted in haste – being submitted by President on 26 June as urgent and approved by Parliament on 3 July, the government agencies did not have time to update the regulatory framework, and the universities that had not worked with Quota 2 before were not ready to launch the educational centers "Donbas-Ukraine" and "Crimea-Ukraine". Currently, according to the MES website, only 195 HEIs out of more than 400 in the EDEBO database created the educational centers. During the interview, one of female applicants said that the University she applied to (Kyiv Mohyla Academy) established such a center closer to the end of the admissions process, so she did not know until the last minute whether she could enroll under a simplified admissions procedure. The educational institutions, too, have some questions, e.g. who should be deemed applicants from the occupied territory; some children living in the areas considered to be occupied or located on the line of contact study several kilometers away in the government-controlled territory, or vice versa. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and closed borders not all those willing to apply could make it to Ukrainian HEIs in time and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine decided to organize an additional admissions wave for the state-funded places for children from the TOT lasting until October 23, 2020. However, the admissions rules during the second wave changed – the applicants from the TOT were first enrolled on a contract basis and then the educational institution had to write a letter to agree with the MoES their transfer to the state-funded places. Svitlana Kretovych, head of the Main Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, told about this. A similar practice is used when the children get into the state-funded places on a competitive basis. The representatives of the relocated educational institutions said that they admit these children on a contract basis and then make a request to the MoES to transfer them to the state-funded places. Sometimes, the transfers are approved not immediately but in a few months. However, not all HEIs wanted to work according to such rules. Thus, during the interview, the representatives of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv explained that they admitted children from the TOT only on a contract basis without transferring them to the state-funded places during the second wave of the admissions process. This non-transparent system is a disadvantage because the children enrolling on a contract basis might be afraid of remaining there, adding a debt to the university or the risk of being expelled due to nonpayment to their other problems.

Poor communication	Due to insufficient communication with regard to the changes, even the experts made incorrect remarks about the law. In particular, many people believed that the changes passed in the summer 2020 would lead to the recognition in Ukraine of the certificates issued by Russia in Crimea and by the occupation authorities in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The applicants from the TOT and the representatives of Ukrainian educational institutions also complain that often information does not reach the children interested in it. Because of that, they may simply not be aware of the simplified admissions procedure at Ukrainian HEIs or fail to apply in time. Specifically, the respondents said they sat ZNO tests because they could not figure out how the simplified procedure worked and whether they had a chance to enroll under it. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine tried to tackle this problem with the help of an information campaign. The site "We are waiting for you here!" was created and there appeared a video on YouTube explaining the simplified admissions procedure. The Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories joined in to promote enrollment in Ukraine with the video "Don't be dull, just enroll". Yet, it looks like communication efforts are not enough to attract into Ukraine the children living in a hostile information environment for several years.
Threats from the occupying power	After Law 744-IX was passed, representatives of the security agencies in the so-called DNR immediately warned the applicants that the occupation authorities are ready to prosecute them on charges of separatism for their attempts to enroll in Ukraine. One of the reasons was "monitoring the provision of privileged places to SBU employees." The situation does not seem to be better in Crimea. During the interview, one of the female applicants said that campaigning for enrollment in Ukraine is equated to "criminal offense" there.
Costs	The main enrollment barrier in Ukraine for children from the TOT is the property qualification. Since the ORDLO and Crimea authorities block information about enrollment in Ukraine for children from the TOT, finding out about the admissions rules , preparing for the exams and ZNO tests requires that children at least have access to the Internet. In Ukraine, about 15% of families do not have Internet access. We believe that that the situation is somewhat similar in the occupied territories. As mentioned earlier watching videos is not enough to efficiently prepare for the tests. Most of the applicants we talked with during the interview said that they hired tutors in Ukrainian and History of Ukraine. Usually, those were their former teachers of Ukrainian or History of Ukraine supporting their enrollment in Ukraine and whose children also studied at Ukrainian HEIs. The cost of lessons was not very high, however it meant bearing costs over the entire period in preparation for enrollment. It also raises the question of supporting the decision of applicants from the TOT by those around them, i.e. parents. If no such support, especially financial support, is available, it is virtually impossible to get such applicants to enroll in Ukraine. Additional funds were needed to go to the final assessments to a distance learning school and to ZNO tests. As the official transporters do not provide transportation between the occupied cities and Ukrainian cities, those willing to cross the border often have to hire a transporter in the occupied territory to get to the checkpoint, hen cross the border, and then employ one more transporter on the Ukrainian side who would get them to a train station or another long-distance transport vehicle in Ukraine.

| | The services of such transporters are usually quite overpriced — about UAH 500 to get to the checkpoint in the occupied territory and just as much in the Ukrainian territory, to get to the long-distance transportation facility. Also, a certain amount of money is spent on registration documents and notary services (for those traveling from Crimea).

This year, due to quarantine restrictions and closed checkpoints, most children stayed in the government-controlled areas for weeks or even months until the admissions results were announced, to avoid being locked in the occupied territories for a long time. Therefore, the lodging and accommodation costs in another city were added to the typical transportation costs.

The MoES encourages the universities to provide the applicants from the TOT with lodging at dormitories for the examination period. However, it is only a recommendation not backed with funding, therefore, not all the universities were able to do it. Even where the applicants were granted free dormitory lodging, their accompanying person (usually, their father or mother) had to pay the full price in a range between UAH 150 and 1,000 per day. Most respondents estimate the cost of the admissions process in a range between UAH 10 to 25 thousand.

Even after enrollment, the situation for children from the TOT does not improve much. Most of the scholarship award goes to pay for the dormitory. A big financial shock is the need to pay for the lodging there for several months in advance, at the beginning of the studies. During the interview, an NGO representative noted that during this period, charitable organizations often help children from the TOT with foodstuffs.

Understanding the difficulties the applicants have to go through, the management of the universities often provides them with part-time jobs at the educational institutions. Because in a situation of no job or its loss by applicants or their family members, such applicants are often forced to give up on education in Ukraine and return home, to the occupied territory. |
| Restrictions and pressure at the checkpoint | During ZNO, the occupation authorities often deny the applicants passage through the checkpoints. As a rule, the Crimea and ORDLO authorities know in advance the dates of ZNO tests and they do not allow the children through the checkpoints for their duration. Because of this, the children cannot make it to the testing centers to take ZNO tests in time. In 2020, about 1,100 children got registered for ZNO tests and most of them were unable to come to the testing centers. Specifically, in the Donetsk region, only 59 children (11% of those registered) could come to sit the exams. Researchers at texty.org also paid attention that some applicants spent several days on the border between ORDLO and Ukraine receiving threats from the occupying power that if they left the territory of ORDLO they would not be able to come back "until a special order". Therefore, they had to look for other ways to get into Ukraine, in particular through the territory of Russia.

Leaving for the government-controlled areas from Crimea is complicated by the fact that the occupation authorities do not allow the applicants younger than 18 years old to leave the peninsula without being accompanied by parents or having a notarized permission from them. In both cases, it imposes additional organizational and financial constraints on the applicants. Ukraine allows children of 14 years old to enter Crimea on their own if their parents reside in Crimea. |

| | During the coronavirus pandemic, returning home was also a problem for the students from the TOT. Especially, if they are registered in their dormitories and not in the occupied territory where their parents live. One of our respondents shared such experience with us.

In addition to the physical limitations, the applicants come under psychological pressure at the checkpoints from the occupying power. Like several hours of waiting at the border, and then being asked about the purpose of travel and why go to study to Ukraine when there are universities in their native towns. The children from the TOT try to delete all their photos and correspondence before passing the checkpoint, as they are often searched there, their correspondence is read, and their belongings checked.

To slightly reduce the risk, they use the services of transporters because then the "parents know who to call should something happen".

One of the respondents also told us that he got under fire at the checkpoint.

After applying, it becomes easier to pass the checkpoint: with an invitation from Ukrainian educational institutions, it is easier to leave the occupied territory. The government of the occupied Crimean Peninsula allows the students having a confirmation of their studies to cross the border with Crimea any number of times. |
|---|---|
| Negative attitude on the part of the Ukrainian state and society | The applicants from the TOT do not feel too much hospitality toward them on the part of Ukraine. Crossing the border from the Russian side, the applicants got fined by the Ukrainian side for violating the rules of crossing the border (exit from Ukraine) and part of Ukrainian society openly expressed aggression toward the applicants from the TOT who supposedly "rob" someone of their state-funded places at educational institutions (a case in point are the comments under an article about the admissions rules for children from the occupied territories on osvita.ua). Part of Ukrainian society and experts were critical of the new support tools. Specifically, there are fears that they may create risks of corruption and abuse. Not all believe quotas to be a fair decision with regard to the applicants enrolled on a competitive basis.

During the admissions process, applicants are also faced with a negative attitude. They told us that at some schools providing distance learning they ask for bribes for the certificate, and the university admissions committee members noted that it is necessary to accept that the children from the TOT will never get enrolled due to the low level of their knowledge (which, of course, is not true). NGO "Vostok SOS" points out that sometimes the universities illegally require that the applicants from the TOT provide documents not listed in the MoES orders — it could be the passport of a citizen Ukraine, the service record book or the certificate of an internally displaced person.

Fellow students often express dissatisfaction with the fact that children from the TOT took other children's places, especially if they really have lower grades than other applicants. Another trigger leading to disputes is communication in Russian. |

Appendix No.4. Selected quotes from the interview

Motivation	"I didn't enroll in Russia because I couldn't accept the attitudes of the people and that country."
	"I was shocked by the ad "Betting on mayoral election". If I'd stayed in the TOT, I wouldn't have ever seen such a thing. The result is always obvious."
	"I decided to apply in Ukraine because going back to the TOT is a step back, it didn't make any sense."
	"Most people leaving Donetsk, they're outstanding students and very motivated, because they spend a lot of time preparing for it."
	"Normally, the kids start getting ready for enrollment in grade 9. Sharp implementation of the program didn't get people interested, it just made enrollment easier for those who was already planning it."
	"Before the quota system was extended, I wasn't going to apply in Ukraine, because it had universities with student shortages or those relocated from the occupied territories. Prior to the extension, the quota worked for unattractive universities."
	"It was difficult not to learn about Shevchenko [university], it is well-known, it is in the rankings. If I want to work abroad, it will help."
	"At the time, Ukraine offered no privileges and Russia did, that's why I applied in Ukraine not because of it or in spite of it. It felt close, I had friends in Ukraine, I also have acquaintances in Russia. In Russia, people are more aggressive, it's not my thing."
	"I wanted to enroll into a department of general stage management, but I wasn't impressed by the HEIs in Ukraine. My friends started asking me why I didn't consider Mohylianka. I got interested, attended the day of open doors online, then I liked the dean of the law department. I thought I could do law in the field of cinema and media. I applied nowhere else, I applied to 5 specialties, all at Mohylianka."
	"I decided to apply in Ukraine because it felt closer, the people and the spirit."
	"People in Ukraine are more tolerant."
	"I was looking for a university that had a cool community and opportunities. I enrolled based on my first priority."
	"I chose Mohylianka because it has the chair of economics, and UCU only has one economics specialty and great religiosity. I wanted to continue studying economics. Besides, I like Kyiv."
	"Besides staying there, there are three options: going abroad, to Russia and to Ukraine. The prices in Russia are approximately on the same level as in Europe. Ukraine was the best option because I had acquaintances there. It's hard if you know no one and have no place to apply for a IDP aid. We cut off Russia at the financial level."
	"I had technical knowledge. KPI, Kharkiv Polytechnic, NAU suited me. KPI has a good ranking and they have a military department. I didn't feel like serving in the military, and I wanted to find some legitimate way [to avoid it]."

	"I had acquaintances, a place to stay, spend less, overall I had people around me who were ready to lend a hand." "I had such an idea [of applying in Ukraine], but because of my family I couldn't go to Ukraine. There could be consequences for me. I've got a friend whose parents are in the service and he told me he could be taken hostage. Even if there were very good universities in Ukraine, I wouldn't apply there." "There were many of those who didn't apply in Ukraine because they were not sure they'd pass ZNO, and they needed to complete 3 grades. Besides, it used to be a quota for bad, uninteresting HEIs." "I finally made up my mind when I realized that after the ULA I didn't want to go back — it was a step back. I didn't like it in the occupied territories that those around me were not pro-active, they had no initiative. You could be pro-active only in political activities, not as opposition. When I studied at the ULA, I was expelled from my HEI in the occupied territories, so I decided to enter Mohylianka, because I really liked the Mohyla Academy's community." "I was very much surprised that people may have different views on certain subjects but can do something together and not have internal censorship in their conversations about politics. I was overwhelmed by it. There's more freedom here."
The reaction of relatives and friends	"Their reaction is sharply negative." "You're going to Ukraine? Well, that's a bad idea." "My parents are really supportive of me." "As to HEIs, I do not hide anything but can't say I feel comfortable explaining it to, say, my classmates. Overall, the attitude of those around me toward it is quite loyal. Like there's this attitude that if someone is going somewhere it's good already. Some joked about my enrollment in Ukraine, but it wasn't exactly bullying." "People responded to my idea of applying in Ukraine in a very strange way. Instead, Ukrainians took it easier that I had an idea to get enrolled in Russia when I was thinking about it. My parents accepted my desire very well. Grandpa didn't quite understand why I rejected even Moscow. My parents suggested that I apply to both places, but I didn't want to." "My friends from Crimea had a strange and sometimes aggressive attitude toward my intentions to get enrolled in Ukraine." "My friends also mainly enrolled in Ukraine." "My parents were in favor of Ukraine." "Getting enrolled in Ukraine was a decision against the common opinion." "90% wanted to get enrolled outside Donetsk, some got enrolled in Russia — but everyone was understanding."

	"All my classmates were mainly going to get enrolled in Ukraine, there were a couple people who were going to apply in Donetsk because their scores were too low to get enrolled in Ukraine." (applicant in 2015) "The teachers mostly had kids of my age. They tried to get their kids into Ukrainian schools. They offered help, additional lessons — not for free, but very cheap." (the so-called DNR) "When the conflict started, all teachers were for Ukraine. My mom worked at the same school where I studied. One teacher was admonished for saying "Go to Russia, if you like it more there." (the so-called DNR) "No one advised to go to Ukraine. Many teachers said that everyone enters SU (Crimean University). It's very easy to get enrolled there, but they also provide poor education there. Crimea is a military complex, with the education focused on the same. You can study to be an engineer only on a ship. Education in other areas is lagging behind." (Crimea) "In those years you couldn't enroll without ZNO, so ZNO was a must. Our school arranged for us to do distance learning at another school — we did our control tests there. I'm from Donetsk."
Legislation	"Those of my acquaintances who applied last year, they didn't use the quotas, everyone was scared, those quotas were like "we've got some places, we'll consider your case". It didn't feel like it was guaranteed – everyone wanted to be admitted on a competitive basis." (applicant) "My parents decided in favor of ZNO because it is a proven method. And then I kept an eye on the admissions situation, called the hotline. I asked if I passed ZNO, whether I needed to take an exam at the university, but they couldn't answer me." "When in the 11th grade, I was told I had to finish the 9th grade in a Ukrainian school, so I had to do 3 years in one." "The communication was terrible. It was written in detail about how to enroll without ZNO, but what if a child has ZNO [scores], it was not clear." "I applied on a quota basis as someone having registration in Donetsk region. There were many difficulties because I was there during quarantine, I didn't know when to go to do ZNO. Then, Zelenskyi announced a simplified admissions system for children from the TOT. It was unclear that if I passed ZNO tests, whether I'd be able to enroll under the simplified system." "We knew there was public debate of the law and tried to participate in it. Our proposals were not heard. The extended list is not supported by the temporarily relocated higher education institutions." (university)

	"There were cases when a person had a registration in a gray zone but went to school to another city. It was not part of the gray zone. We regarded the application as meeting the requirements. Or, vice versa, the place of study is included in the MoES order 697 but [the applicant] lives 2 kilometers away and the place, doesn't meet the quota requirements. That is, not eligible where they live but eligible where they study. It is not understood from the regulations where the school has to be located. The order should be extended to cover all of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts." (university) "We were not involved with the new changes, but our former colleague is doing in at the MoES." (university) "The Ministry never asked, it just made us face the facts." (university) "Most of our applicants in 2014, 2015, 2016 were from the TOT, and today they come from all over Ukraine. The new rules are designed to avoid discriminating certain universities. We understand that we should be a part of the local market and not just target [applicants from] the TOT." (university) "We didn't understand for some time under what quota these students would enroll. Now, we have solved this question." (university) "[If there is shortage of quota places] they get enrolled on a contract basis first, then the Ministry re-allocates the quotes. [Students get] additional funding from the state, the Ministry approves the re-allocation. Once, a child waited for a state-funded place for one year. And left one month before she would be transferred." (university) "My thinking is that corruption risks are minimized, we can admit all those who want to enroll, who has a minimum final score, if the quota is not filled. The procedure is completely transparent. If the quota is not filled, then in fact there is no competition or conflict of interest. If an applicant meets the criteria and passed the exam with a minimum passing score, we cannot say no to them. We could refuse only if they provided false information." (university)
Attitude in Ukraine	"The Admissions Committee [said:] "You see, your granddaughter will never get into a budget-funded place with us, we have a very big competition. You need to accept it and put up with it. Find another university. No matter how hard she was preparing, it's an external school, Crimean studying…" "They almost were one of the last to create this center. They didn't provide information for a long time. I was put off by such communication at the stage when my scores were still not known. But when I brought my documents, they said: "Come, you're a Mohylianka child." If I'd given up and not brought my documents, I wouldn't have gotten enrolled." "I had a feeling that they [the admissions committee] didn't really understand what to do, because I came at the beginning of the admissions process. I was told to provide a certificate that I did distance learning at a Kramatorsk school. Due to the fact that I took ZNO twice, they didn't know whether I was eligible to apply under this quota. But they quickly resolved the issue, reassuring me that I would enroll. It's a human factor. I understand that they used me to work out an algorithm."

"At [distance learning] school No.8 of Kramatorsk, there was one or two classed like that. There was this deputy principal working in this area, and she helped us a lot with the documents – she printed them out by herself, etc."

"There were some weird moments during our studies. Like in the political science class there were very categorical kids and when someone started speaking Russian the boy was bullied for it (he is from the TOT), then in an act of protest he put up a flag of the occupied territories and he got bullied even more."

"I understand that the number of problems due to the [potential] decision that children will be able to study in Russian may increase. Because there's a negative attitude even because we enroll in Ukraine."

"I felt offended when the media said that children from the TOT get enrolled without ZNO, and not many wrote that there'd be exams conducted for them. Some Ukrainian had an attitude – oh, the separatists will come."

"There was no negative [attitude]. Just as there were no privileges, so those displaced enrolled on a competitive basis like everyone else. There was no compassion either." (applicant in 2015)

"I graduated from a Ukrainian school in a neighboring city. There was no compassion at the time, we had few guys from the fighting zone. We were divided into "our folk" and "those displaced", it was unpleasant. I heard that in other schools, there was a more positive attitude."

"I heard stories about being taken hostage, it was dangerous."

"We were the first who practically implemented electronic admission. We understood that it was difficult for applicants to cross the border. And the electronic system that we developed enabled the applicants from the TOT or Crimea to send their documents, send their documents instantly."

"There was a very good attitude at the admissions office."

"It was pleasant. They said: "you're our person.""

"They say at schools that they won't provide the completion certificate only based on control tests; the schools ask for a bribe for the certificate. It looks like those amounts are big."

"I had high grades, so they didn't suggest that I do ZNO again, but they suggested that my friend do it because she had lower grades. She took ZNO exams again and got a better score."

"I even came in advance to find out whether it made sense to apply – they told me to come. Everything was quite nice. Sometimes we encountered nervous women, but overall they were helpful."
"When at school, we sometimes encountered biased attitudes. There was a shortage of books and we were told to go to where we came from to get the books."

	"The applicants have a lot of questions about Russian: "they kill for using Russian here." (university) "Any child from the TOT is a complicated case. We are interested in these children; we understand why we are doing it. We can compromise [over the level of knowledge] to get the kid out from the occupied territories. We'll give [them] a chance." (university) "If a child could not come for the exams, we set an additional date for the exam. Examination committees are open during the entire admissions period, so they don't need to be summoned additionally. In such cases, we met the needs of the child. If they couldn't come in time or couldn't come at all. This year, it was especially true because of the pandemic and closed borders." (university) "I got faced up with this problem when they evicted everyone due to the coronavirus and the dormitory didn't want to cooperate, although I said I was from Crimea (though I hadn't all my documents ready), that is, it's not about the formalities, it's about their attitude."
Property qualification	"About 15 thousand." [admissions costs] "At the time of enrollment, I had virtually no place to live. I lived at my friends' place for a while, then hiked for a few months all over Ukraine and lived in a tent." "Some applied in the DNR, mostly those who hadn't passed ZNO or those who couldn't afford to live in Ukraine (had no relatives or were short of money)." "Lots of people I know didn't apply in Kyiv or Lviv, because they simply didn't have a place to live. It would be nice if it were official and unproblematic to get a dormitory room for the admissions period." "I had accommodation problems during the admissions process. There were not too many of those ready to rent out an apartment for one month only. I had to find shelter at my relatives' place. Those who don't have them have a harder time." "There are quite serious difficulties. I have a Ukrainian passport. When you have to wait 40 days after the documents, when you can't afford to rent an apartment. I was forced to put pressure on my relatives – three or four people living in a one-room apartment. Also, the health checks for the military commissariat and before studying at the university, I had to come for one month, it was inconvenient if you didn't have a place to live. Maybe it should be when you have dormitory lodging." "I got assistance from the teachers who hadn't left yet. I met with them after classes. I paid for all pre-entry courses, there were no free options available." "Some people cannot afford to come even once, let alone travel on a regular basis. Good information is in short supply which would make it possible not to spend [much] money which is not enough anyway." "Spending was very high. There's no official transportation. It's done through private transporters. We had to rent a place on our own to take ZNO in Kherson… Overall, UAH 25,000. It's just travel, food, and some tiny place. We had to hold out for a month in Ukraine during the admissions process. Otherwise, they wouldn't have let us leave Crimea had we returned."

	"I have relatives in Kyiv. There was no significant spending."
	"800 hryvnias to get to Mariupol, and I have to go back and forth for each exam."
	"Getting the documents ready alone cost UAH 10,000."
	"We have a problem with our own premises, we have no dormitories of our own. So the children often leave because it's a long trip, there can be accommodation problems, because it depends on a good will of other universities." (university)
	"The children pay the HEI for the dormitory; if the children are orphans then the university pays for them. University dormitories tried to evict children in March during quarantine, but we stood up for them." (university)
	"Children often have part-time jobs with us." (university)
Passing through the checkpoint	"There were problems with crossing the border, in particular, due to the pandemic. A new law each day. New exit and entry procedures."
	"I had exit problems due to the coronavirus. According to RF rules, you could exit only once."
	"If you tell them you're going to study, you get asked lots of questions, they say "we've got a big country, what exactly couldn't you find here?"
	"If I go home now, I'm not sure I'll be able to get back."
	"Each time it was a nightmare. Usually some 4 hours of waiting in queues, sometimes we waited 24 hours. Once there was gunfire."
	"I had problems with entry to get home during the first six months, since I had a Kyiv registration, and they wouldn't let me in at the checkpoint."
	"Entry/exit. Several times I was taken aside and asked where and why I was going. It's always an emotional outburst. Very annoying. Because I use a transporter to get in and she is officially registered there, maybe there are less problems, my parents know where to call should something happen. Traveling with the transporters is quite expensive but it's a bit safer. The Donetsk MSS servicemen often pick on you to check your reaction."
	"I have no pictures from the ULA on the Internet because that's my safety. They never asked me to show my phone, they asked for the phone of my girlfriend, they checked my mom's 500 gigas of bookkeeping reports."
Russian policy	"Speaking about enrolling in Ukraine is equated to a criminal offense." (Crimea) It was easier for those who went to Russia: they were picked up in a centralized way by buses to be taken to a city in Rostov region, where they took the EGE together. In Ukraine, you had to do it on your own." (the so-called DNR)
	"In Crimea, the focus was on going to Russia, it's safer."
	"There were large quotas during the first several years. They admitted you immediately after you passed with minimum scores." (Crimea)

	"Nobody ever said a word about Ukrainian HEIs." (Crimea) "MSU opened a branch in Crimea. Because the problem with a Crimean diploma is that it is not recognized even in Russia." "Mainly advertising Russian HEIs or some collaborations." (the so-called DNR) "I failed to enroll during the first year when I wrote my exams, then I got into a college where I spent 10 months and got my certificate. After half a year at the college and half a year at a plant, based on this certificate, I was able to write entrance exams and I got in in 2019, with high scores, I got a dormitory room and the HEI. Entrance exams can be written by those eligible to privileges – disabled persons, college graduates and Crimeans." (Crimea) "About 50% of schoolchildren attended the Ukrainian class as an optional subject. Ukrainian was taught well." (Crimea) "I haven't been [in Ukraine] since 2014. We travel in Russia easily within the country. I haven't been abroad either." (Crimea) "It [diploma] seems to not be recognized in Russia but they are working on starting to recognize it. But the Donetsk university is synchronizing its system with Russian universities, so a Russian type diploma will be issued in Donetsk." "Those who started to study in Donetsk, they simultaneously apply to study externally in Russia (but it's a paid option), to get a normal diploma."
What can be improved	"Courses for those who can afford them. Facilitate the system so that it's not so expensive. Bureaucracy takes up lots of resources." "There should be more information to learn about it. Because the procedures look complicated, exhausting. Lots of documents need to be prepared." "Too many little difficulties. Entry and exit-related costs. It would be nice if all this process could be optimized (for instance, obtaining all required references in one day)." "To get the children to study in Ukraine, studying the language, studying history should be made available, like online courses or something. Many people may simply not have enough money to pay for a tutor." "For starters, the information campaign [needs to be improved]. The hotline said you should directly contact the HEIs, where admissions centers were set up. But at that time there were no centers yet. At the time, they replied that there was a law but no by-laws. That is, we know what it should be like that but how it will be organized is not clear." "Maybe it makes sense to provide dormitory lodging during the entrance exams period – providing accommodations at dormitories until their enrollment in the HEI. Accommodate them not in September but in August." "To start with, lodging for the period of submitting the documents. Many give up enrolling because they simply have no place to live when applying."

72	"There is a problem, it is very hard to communicate with the non-government-controlled territory. Overall, main communication was done when they called or wrote emails. However, I wouldn't say that it was done in a consistent manner. And that's the problem. One of our proposals is we need assistance with informing the applicants in the non-government-controlled territories. Information should be communicated via the channels and radio stations broadcasting there." "I wish that free lodging at dormitories for such students from the TOT were codified by law, for this additional state funding is needed, not the universities' funds. It should be state policy." "Facilitate the submission of documents – for example, arrange for a preliminary electronic submission of documents." "The was a problem due to a lack of information, I had to monitor the sites on a regular basis and call all the time – the hotline didn't work for calls from Crimea." "There should be better communication with applicants from Ukraine because they don't quite understand when they were short of 1% to get enrolled, and they admit children from the TOT here." "Currently, 10% of the state-funded places go to the occupied territories. It's better to not admit all but set a coefficient for exams or ZNO." "There should be more communication with the children from the TOT. There is no unified portal with complete information. Some information was only on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science, some only on the university websites... the hotlines didn't work for the children from the TOT."

Appendix No.5. Information about the 2020 applicants

A sample of students	Enrolled on a competitive basis	Enrolled under Quota 2
Number	212529	1283
Average entrance score, the mean (SD)	148.21 (22.07)	155.24 (18.08)
Area (%)		
Social sciences	116298 (54.7)	650 (50.7)
STEM	65276 (30.7)	446 (34.8)
Medicine	16721 (7.9)	125 (9.7)
Art	14231 (6.7)	62 (4.8)
In particular, by oblasts (%)		
City of Kyiv	49026 (28.2)	316 (24.6)
Kharkiv	23432 (13.5)	291 (22.7)
Lviv	13971 (8.0)	34 (2.7)
Odesa	12525 (7.2)	67 (5.2)
Zaporizhia	8261 (4.8)	19 (1.5)
Dnipropetrovsk	8989 (5.2)	20 (1.6)
Donetsk	3639 (2.1)	296 (23.1)
Kherson	2718 (1.6)	40 (3.1)
Mykolayiv	2693 (1.6)	6 (0.5)
Poltava	5123 (3.0)	6 (0.5)
Luhansk	2397 (1.4)	175 (13.6)
Vinnytsia	2835 (1.6)	6 (0.5)

Appendix No.6. Samples of students enrolled under Quota 2 and on a competitive basis

Stratified by quota2

Full sample	Others	Quota 2	p
Number	212529	1283	
Average score (mean (SD))	148.21 (22.07)	155.24 (18.08)	<0.001
Average specialty score (mean SD))	148.23 (13.58)	151.45 (14.29)	<0.001
ukrainian (mean (SD))	153.33 (25.24)	155.63(22.03)	0.001
history (mean (SD))	142.89 (24.80)	155.78 (22.33)	<0.001
mathematics (mean (SD))	146.60 (26.31)	151.78 (23.36)	<0.001
biology (mean (SD))	150.37 (25.99)	159.67 (20.20)	<0.001
chemistry (mean (SD))	153.07 (26.56)	168.44 (16.12)	0.021
area (%)			<0.001
STEM	65276 (30.7)	446 (34.8)	
Medicine	16721 (7.9)	125 (9.7)	
Art	14231 (6.7)	62 (4.8)	
Social sciences	116298 (54.7)	650 (50.7)	
oblast (%)			<0.001
Vinnytsia	2835 (1.6)	6 (0.5)	
Volyn	3354 (1.9)	1 (0.1)	
Dnipropetrovsk	8989 (5.2)	20 (1.6)	
Donetsk	3639 (2.1)	296 (23.1)	
Zhytomyr	2356 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	
Zakarpattia	2396 (1.4	0 (0.0)	
Zaporizhia	8261 (4.8)	19 (1.5)	
Ivano-Frankivsk	4313 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	
Kyiv	3135 (1.8)	1 (0.1)	
Kirovohrad	1324 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	
Luhansk	2397 (1.4)	175 (13.6)	
Lviv	13971 (8.0)	34 (2.7)	
City of Kyiv	49026 (28.2)	316 (24.6)	
Mykolayiv	2693 (1.6)	6 (0.5)	
Odesa	12525 (7.2)	67 (5.2)	
Poltava	5123 (3.0)	6 (0.5)	
Rivne	2969 (1.7)	1 (0.1)	
Sumy	3578 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	
Ternopil	3085 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	
Kharkiv	23432 (13.5)	291 (22.7)	
Kherson	2718 (1.6)	40 (3.1)	
Khmelnytskyi	2303 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	
Cherkasy	4137 (2.4)	0 (0.0)	
Chernivtsi	2828 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	
Chernihiv	2227 (1.3)	4 (0.3)	

Balanced sample	Others	Quota 2	p
Number	1283	1283	
Average score (mean (SD))	152.71 (22.97)	155.24 (18.08)	0.002
Average specialty score (mean SD))	151.53 (14.27)	151.45 (14.29)	0.885
ukrainian (mean (SD))	155.24 (25.00)	155.63 (22.03)	0.677
history (mean (SD))	148.18 (24.73)	155.78 (22.33)	<0.001
mathematics (mean (SD))	149.66 (26.08)	151.78 (23.36)	0.076
biology (mean (SD))	158.10 (26.07)	159.67 (20.20)	0.466
chemistry (mean (SD))	154.81 (26.34)	168.44 (16.12)	0.069
area (%)			0.999
STEM	445 (34.7)	446 (34.8)	
Medicine	123 (9.6)	125 (9.7)	
Art	62 (4.8)	62 (4.8)	
Social sciences	653 (50.9)	650 (50.7)	
oblast (%)			NaN
Vinnytsia	6 (0.5)	6 (0.5)	
Volyn	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	
Dnipropetrovsk	25 (2.0)	20 (1.6)	
Donetsk	291 (22.8)	296 (23.1)	
Zhytomyr	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	
Zakarpattia	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Zaporizhia	19 (1.5)	19 (1.5)	
Ivano-Frankivsk	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Kyiv	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	
Kirovohrad	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Luhansk	154 (12.1)	175 (13.6)	
Lviv	34 (2.7)	34 (2.7)	
City of Kyiv	315 (24.7)	316 (24.6)	
Mykolayiv	10 (0.8)	6 (0.5)	
Odesa	72 (5.6)	67 (5.2)	
Poltava	6 (0.5)	6 (0.5)	
Rivne	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)	
Sumy	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Ternopil	2 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	
Kharkiv	292 (22.9)	291 (22.7)	
Kherson	42 (3.3)	40 (3.1)	
Khmelnytskyi	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Cherkasy	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Chernivtsi	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Chernihiv	4 (0.3)	4 (0.3)	

1. Admissions chart with the existing barriers

Classic admissions procedure

Stages:

1. Enroll in part-time or distance learning at a Ukrainian school

2. Pass the state final examination for the 9th and 11th grades

3. Pass ZNO exams

4. Apply (via an electronic account, up to five applications to any specialties at any educational institutions based on priorities. The number of applications on a contract basis is not limited.)

5. Start to study at the university

Barriers:

- The application can be written by their parents or persons of age
- Completing the programs of two schools – Ukrainian and in the occupied territory

- Costs: travel, lodging, food
- The checkpoint: limited passage allowed by the occupation authorities
- Being accompanied by a parent or having a notarized permission to leave Crimea

- Costs: travel, lodging, food
- The checkpoint: limited passage
- Being accompanied by parents or having a notarized permission to leave Crimea
- Tutors
- Paid online courses

- Access to the Internet and paying for it

- Paying for dormitory lodging (at least for one month in advance)

Simplified admissions procedure (Quota 2)

All applicant data are encrypted

Stages:

1. Apply to the educational center "Crimea-Ukraine", "Donbas-Ukraine" by phone, email, or via a messenger

2. Come to the educational center "Crimea-Ukraine", "Donbas-Ukraine" with their birth certificate

3. Pass the exams in Ukrainian and History of Ukraine (if they do not have a Ukrainian certificate. If the applicants have a certificate but have not taken ZNO exams, they sit the entrance exam in three subjects at the university)

4. Take the entrance exam at the university (possibility to get enrolled based on ZNO results or combining the results of the entrance exams and ZNO)

5. Apply to the university in person (up to five applications to any specialties based on priorities at one educational institution)

6. Start studying at the university

7. Submitting all the necessary original documents (passport, individual taxpayer identification number, school completion certificate)

Barriers:

- Access to the Internet and paying for it

- Cost: travel, lodging, food
- The checkpoint: limited access
- Being accompanied by a parent or having a notarized permission to leave Crimea

- Studying independently (access to the Internet)
- Tutors
- Corruption/biased assessment risk

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10-20% (depending on the university) of the state-funded places for a particular specialty under Quota 2

- Paying for dormitory lodging (at least for one month in advance)
- Negative attitude on the part of fellow students

- Bureaucratic procedures and queues

2. Admissions chart for the applicants from the TOT in Ukraine from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ

ВСТУП З ТОТ

Спрощена процедура вступу

1 Оберіть ОЦ «Донбас-Україна» або «Крим-Україна» (перелік, адреса, контакти та графік роботи розміщено на сайтах: mon.gov.ua, dostupnaosvita.com.ua, vstup-prosto.com)

2 Будь-яким зручним для Вас засобом зв'язку (електронна пошта, телефон, месенджери) зверніться до одного із освітніх центрів, та залишите своє **повідомлення про намір** вступу до конкретного закладу вищої або фахової передвищої освіти, на базі якого працює обраний Вами освітній центр.

Залиште свою електронну пошту (або інші контактні дані) та отримайте **запрошення для вступу** та довідкові матеріали від ОЦ

3 При перетині КПВВ покажіть запрошення (друкувати не обов'язково, можна в електронному вигляді) – воно є підставою для звільнення Вас і однієї супроводжуючої Вас особи від проходження обсервації та самоізоляції

4 Особисто зверніться до обраного Вами ОЦ співробітники якого допоможуть подати заяву та заповнити освітню декларацію.

Зверніть увагу!

В освітньому центрі Ви маєте можливість подати до 5 заяв та брати участь у конкурсі на місця державного замовлення в межах спеціальної квоти для прийому вступників з тимчасово окупованих територій на основі повної загальної середньої освіти (Квота 2).

ВАЖЛИВО!

Подача документів та зарахування для здобуття ОС бакалавра (магістра медичного, фармацевтичного та ветеринарного спрямування) на навчання за **кошти державного бюджету** в межах Квоти-2 відбувається в **два етапи**: основний етап – до 20 серпня, завершальний етап на бюджет та контракт – до 23 жовтня

5 Рушайте до школи, яка входить до складу освітнього центру, та складіть два іспити: Українська мова та Історія України. Отримайте тимчасову довідку та повертайтесь до закладу вищої або фахової передвищої освіти, до якого Ви подавали заяву

6 Складіть один вступний іспит, який встановлює заклад вищої або фахової передвищої освіти, на базі якого створений освітній центр. Для вступу на спеціальності, для яких передбачено проведення творчого конкурсу, замість вступного іспиту проводиться відповідний творчий конкурс

7 Якщо у Вас є український документ про повну загальну середню освіту, здобуту за дистанційною або екстернатною формою навчання, то необхідно скласти три іспити, визначені Правилами прийому відповідного закладу вищої освіти, безпосередньо в закладі, до якого вступаєте

ДЕРЖАВА ГАРАНТУЄ

При вступі на бюджет:
- Соціальну стипендію
- Підручники на безоплатній основі
- Безоплатний доступ до мережі Інтернет, систем баз даних у державних та комунальних навчальних закладах

При вступі на контракт:
- Пільговий довгостроковий кредит на здобуття освіти

Admissions chart for the applicants from the TOT in Ukraine from Ukrainian Helsinki Union on Human Rights together with the Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea as part of the USAID Human Rights in Action Project.

This memo was prepared by Ukrainian Helsinki Union on Human Rights together with the Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea as part of the USAID Human Rights in Action Project.