

ANALYTICAL REVIEW

RESILIENCE AND FUTURE LITERACY FOR IMPROVED CRISIS MANAGEMENT

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Resilience and Future Literacy for Improved Crisis Management

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This analytical review is based on the presentations and discussions that took place at the Resilience League's Spring School entitled 'Future Literacy for Improved Crisis Management'. Taking place from 21 to 23 May 2025 in Kyiv Oblast, this educational initiative comprised over 10 information and training sessions. More than 30 participants from the public sector, security agencies, emergency services, the media, expert communities and civil society organisations shared experiences and deepened their knowledge of strategic planning, emergency response, long-term foresight, community resilience, crisis management and communications. The aim was to apply this knowledge to the planning of future actions in Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories (TOT), particularly Crimea, after their liberation.

The Spring School aimed to adapt international experience to the Ukrainian context by developing a sustainable vision for the reintegration of liberated territories, particularly Crimea, based on community resilience strategies and cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation.

The **Resilience League** is an international cooperation platform, initiated in Estonia in 2016, that brings together the Baltic states and Ukraine to develop expertise in resilience against hybrid threats. The Resilience League unites experts together in a professional network to strengthen societal resilience.

The Resilience League International Spring School, titled 'Future Literacy for Improved Crisis Management', was organised and held in collaboration between Resilient Ukraine and School of Mediapatriots, as well as the media initiative Crimea Daily. The event was supported by the Mission of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea / Crimea Platform Office, the Council on Cognitive Deoccupation of Crimea, and the Embassy of Estonia in Ukraine.

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Introduction

The concept of future literacy can be defined as the collective ability to shape the future for more effective functioning under uncertainty. This requires the establishment of collaborative future modelling, the development of a shared language and the allocation of shared responsibility.

Resilience is not just about withstanding challenges, but also about the ability to change, adapt and collectively design the future, the best vision of which must be imagined in society today to achieve a different tomorrow. (Dmitri Teperik, Director General of Resilient Ukraine)

The future is shaped by three interconnected and complementary forces: *the inertia of the past; the momentum of the present; and the vision (pull) of the future.*

- **The inertia of the past** – the burden of history, societal traditions and barriers to change;
- **The momentum of the present** – current trends, mutual trust in decision-making;
- **The vision (pull) of the future** – a landscape of visions, innovative ideas, images, strategies and dreams.

The key lies in harnessing these forces effectively. Which development vector should be prioritised, and how should this be decided? The concept of resilience can help here: the ability to not only navigate change, but also confront it by **adapting and transforming in the process**. This also involves taking responsibility for the shared future through crisis management and strategic communications.

These and other issues formed the focus of the Resilience League International Spring School, in which participants could:

- improve future literacy skills and knowledge about community resilience to enable more effective crisis preparedness in Ukraine's liberated territories following prolonged authoritarian occupation. The deoccupation of Crimea and other TOT will trigger numerous complex, long-term stabilisation and reintegration processes, affecting not only the physical and legal domains, but also the informational and cognitive spheres;
- influence the formation of practical policies and proactive advocacy on civil security and socio-psychological characteristics of reintegration strategies through multilateral, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approaches to preparing for future crises in challenging conditions;
- raise awareness of the long-term challenges involved in implementing the coordination, collaboration and communication tools required for Ukraine's effective post-war recovery and the successful reintegration of TOT.

The International Spring School is a living laboratory in which all participants are co-authors of future policies and practices. It is a laboratory of meaning-making. (Andrii Zahorodskyi, Communications Mentor at Resilient Ukraine)

Future Literacy

Developing future literacy skills is a complex, long-term process. However, the key tools for mastering these skills include, among others: *long-term strategic planning, foresight, ontology, and resilience building through risk assessment and analysis.*

Long-Term Strategic Planning

The success of this tool depends on the ability to:

- account for the variability of time and space;
- work with identity;
- overcome distrust in the society and the state;
- form new cultures of coexistence and cooperation (i.e. a culture of resilience).

When it comes to long-term planning, it is crucial to understand that time is **a variable category**. How it is perceived depends on individual and collective circumstances. For some, time represents intensive development, while for others it signifies stagnation or isolation. Therefore, planning must consciously acknowledge this variability.

To better understand the fluid nature of time, the works of the philosopher Zygmunt Bauman on 'liquid time' and changing perceptions of time are invaluable.¹ Without this understanding, effective long-term planning is impossible, whether the timescale is 10, 20 or 50 years. Strategic thinking is essential for organisational and political management, and without it, these areas are limited to short-term actions, as is currently the case in Ukraine, where due to the high level of risk, uncertainty and lack of security, long-term planning is almost impossible. However, this also creates **opportunities for rapid transformation and adaptation**. For instance, Ukraine's military can develop and refine new technologies in weeks or months, whereas Western societies take years.

Long-term strategizing also requires consideration of a society's unique spatial experience, since different experiences give rise to different models of social and political behaviour. The key concept here is '*path dependence*': societies do not form in isolation, but result from accumulated historical, geographical and cultural experience. Ukraine is a spatially complex entity containing steppe, forest, mountains and sea. Each landscape has shaped distinct survival and interaction logics. Therefore, differences in spatial experience create different cultural codes, which complicates the implementation of unified national development models. While this diversity makes implementing single models difficult, it also provides flexibility, adaptability, and the capacity to survive amid constant change. **Maintaining resilience requires internal consensus around new rules that are collectively accepted**. Only such rules, if truly understood and accepted by society, can bridge deep differences in regional value systems and historical experience.

A major challenge here is the widespread distrust of the state, which stems not only from its institutional inefficacy, but also from historical memories of the state as a punitive entity. The fear of the state in Ukraine is a legacy of the Soviet era. This directly affects the development of subjectivity. In Western Europe, subjectivity develops through institutional participation. In Ukraine, however, it is more an internal conviction, often existing outside of state frameworks. On the one hand, this is a

¹ Bauman, Z. (2007). *Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty*. Polity Press. ISBN 978-0-7456-3986-4

source of freedom. On the other hand, it poses a challenge to state legitimacy and policy implementation. However, the solution to distrust lies in culture, which is the most stable element of any state system. Amid constant change, war and instability, culture becomes the basis for long-term strategies. Even more so, it fosters a culture of resilience based on cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation in the face of constant uncertainty and evolving security landscapes.

Despite the chaos and uncertainty, we have the ability to adapt, collaborate, and shape the future. This is Ukrainian society's greatest resource. (Yevhen Hlibovytsky, Director of the Frontier Institute)

Therefore, Ukraine's future strategy must analyse how key factors — such as time, security as well as trust — interact, and consider the resources available for action.

Moreover, in his book 'Managing the Future', Georgiy Pocheptsov writes about shaping change as movement towards the future by **mastering intellectual space**. This can create new opportunities in physical, informational, and cognitive spaces. Visionary ideas and science fiction can be seen as a kind of idea bank that is distinctly nationally oriented and contains not only one's own path variants, but also those of one's adversaries.²

Foresight

Foresight is a forward-looking tool for prediction and creation. It's a methodology that enables the design of desired realities, not just forecasting. Its uniqueness lies in requiring participants to assume the role of '**future-shapers**'. It is crucial for all members of Ukrainian society, from officials to activists, to take responsibility for creating shared visions of desired futures, forming pictures of these futures and detailing them, and periodically reviewing progress towards desired outcomes.

Foresight involves **scenario modelling and planning**. Strategic modelling involves analysing drivers — objective processes that shape the future regardless of our will. For example, artificial intelligence is already creating new realities. Strategic modelling compiles long lists of drivers (60–100), which are then clustered by area: technological, political, social, cultural, and so on. The interactions between these drivers are then analysed over set periods (5, 10, 15 or 20 years). Logical models (e.g. decision trees) are used to produce key future scenarios. For example, the U.S. National Intelligence Council's 2021 Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World report outlines five possible futures, two of which currently seem most plausible.³

- *"A World Adrift"*: national and corporate interests dominate global and planetary priorities, and international institutions are disintegrating;
- *"Separate Silos"*: a fragmented world of competing economic and security blocs (the US, China, the EU, etc.), organised around different narratives, worldviews, and values.⁴

² Pocheptsov, G. (2019). *Managing the Future*. (in Ukrainian). Kharkiv: Folio. ISBN 978-966-03-8608-2

³ National Intelligence Council. (2021). *Global trends 2040: A more contested world*. www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/GlobalTrends_2040.pdf

⁴ Voytovsky, K. (2021). *On possible trends in global development until 2040* (in Ukrainian). National Institute for Strategic Studies. <https://niss.gov.ua/sites/default/files/2021-06/az-global-trends.pdf>

Subjectivity in scenario modelling means that scenarios not only reflect reality, but also shape it. This is because publishing particular scenarios can influence perceptions of desired futures. Foresight always allows for **revision, critique and rethinking**. This is valuable for understanding the baseline context for modelling desired futures. Scenario planning helps to identify broad trends and navigate the future.

Ontology

Ontology is concerned with fundamental perceptions of reality. In the context of future literacy, it is the core understanding of one's own and others' meanings, as well as the ability to develop, adapt and diversify them. Ontology development requires subjectivity — taking responsibility for shaping one's own meanings and the future in general.

Ukraine's leadership in an ontological war must be conscious and constructive. If Ukraine wants a place in the future, it must not just resist but actively shape it (Dmytro Zolotukhin, Executive Director, Post-Information Society Institute)

A key challenge is whether Ukraine can offer the world its own ontology — a compelling new model of the future that could become the new centre of reality. This requires taking responsibility for becoming cognitive leaders — a collective intellectual force that articulates new agendas, not just for ourselves, but also for our partners and adversaries. Currently, nobody knows what a sustainable, humanistic and balanced future will look like. This requires new terms and concepts, such as '**cognitive superiority**' — the ability to impose one's own reality framework. In other words, it is a new language for the future and a new form of semantic weaponry. The ongoing war is an ontological war, where victory goes not to the physically stronger, but to the version of reality that gains more trust and is better organised.

In their 2018 monograph 'Ontology of War and Peace: Security, Strategy, Meaning', Boris Parakhonsky and Halyna Yavorska wrote that cognitive influence tools are intensifying, including persistent, reproducible narratives, thereby shifting the balance between physical and mental-cognitive reality components. Controlling mental spheres — **perception structures and event interpretations** — means controlling lived reality. In turn, controlling reality means controlling people's worlds, including socio-political spaces, historical time, and life resources. Cognitive conflict territories are expanding globally through the proliferation of war discourse. The multiple possible scenarios, ranging from moderately optimistic to negative, require strategic thinking that can articulate uncertainty while revealing logic towards defined goals.⁵

Resilience through Risk Assessment and Analysis

Resilience is the ability of society and the state to adapt quickly to changes in the security environment while maintaining stable functioning, particularly by minimising vulnerabilities, both internal and external.⁶ This is a practical and measurable concept that can be used as a forecasting tool for

⁵ Parakhon, B., & Yavorska, G. (2018). *Ontology of war and peace: security, strategy, meaning* (in Ukrainian). National Institute for Strategic Studies. <https://niss.gov.ua/publikacii/monografii/ontologiya-viyini-i-miru-bezpeka-strategiya-smisl>

⁶ The definition is provided in accordance with the Decree of the President of Ukraine 'On the Decision of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine of 14 September 2020 'On the National Security Strategy of Ukraine' of 14 September 2020 No. 392/2020 (in Ukrainian). www.president.gov.ua/documents/3922020-35037

positive and negative scenarios, based on risk management approaches. This approach is codified in the international standard ISO 31000, which involves identifying, assessing and analysing risks, and developing mitigation scenarios.⁷

The Resilient Cities Network is one example of an initiative that uses resilience as a tool for future planning and risk anticipation, developing long-term risk-awareness strategies.⁸ For example, Bristol's resilience strategy already incorporates migrant integration and youth engagement as forward-looking measures to prevent potential negative trends such as intercultural misunderstandings and youth outmigration. Thus, city social institutions are not just reactive, but also plan development in consideration of **vulnerabilities affecting community cohesion**.⁹

Blind spots in resilience often emerge not from gaps in the data, but from deficits in imagination and institutional reluctance to challenge dominant assumptions based on outdated practices rather than brave strategic forecasting. (Dmitri Teperik, Director General of Resilient Ukraine)

The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies uses the MetaFore tool to identify emerging issues before they escalate, thereby improving resilience planning by incorporating diverse forecasting perspectives.¹⁰ Similarly, international organisations are integrating future risk analyses into their resilience development plans. For example, a European regional report outlines climate resilience approaches based on risk assessments, while another international report analyses resilience policies in the context of risks to Ukraine's post-war recovery.¹¹

⁷ International Organization for Standardization. (2018). *ISO 31000:2018 risk management – Guidelines*. www.iso.org/standard/65694.html

⁸ Resilient Cities Network. *What is urban resilience?* <https://resilientcitiesnetwork.org/what-is-urban-resilience>

⁹ Resilient Cities Network. *Bristol resilience strategy*. https://resilientcitiesnetwork.org/downloadable_resources/Network/Bristol-Resilience-Strategy-English.pdf

¹⁰ De Spiegeleire, S., Van Duijne, F., & Chivot, E. (2014). Towards foresight 3.0: The HCSS Metafore approach - A multilingual approach for exploring global foresights. In *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Future-Oriented Technology Analysis* (Brussels). <https://doi.org/10.13140/2.1.2054.5605>

¹¹ European Environment Agency. (2024). *Preparing society for climate risks in Europe: Lessons and inspiration from Climate-ADAPT case studies* (Briefing No. 08/2024; TH-AM-24-011-EN-N). Publications Office of the European Union. www.eea.europa.eu/publications/preparing-society-for-climate-risks-in-europe
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2024). *Project report – Local resilience building in Ukraine: Recommendations*. www.undrr.org/publication/project-report-local-resilience-building-ukraine-recommendations

The Resilience Concept as an Approach to TOT Reintegration

The concept of resilience has a long history of definition across disciplines. Originally used in material physics, the term describes the ability of materials to withstand sudden, intense stress without breaking. This concept has transferred to other fields, focusing on the capacity for recovery after stress. A more detailed definition describes the capacity to absorb shocks and improve recovery following emergencies or attacks on infrastructure, economies, social cohesion, values, or lives.¹²

Although societal resilience is widely recognised as promoting future stability and democratic development, it is crucial to explore human nature and identify characteristics that enable **adaptation and transformative capacity**. Trust and social connections strengthen societal resilience against cognitive threats, while a sense of belonging and networking foster resilience at various levels.¹³

It is extremely important to understand that the future is not the result of an arbitrary process — it is shaped by specific actions taken by people. Paternalistic expectations of reintegration without action breed vulnerability, whereas smart proactivity and passionate vision ensure resilience and security. (Dmitri Teperik, Director General of Resilient Ukraine)

In social life, resilience depends on interaction between different sectors: government, civil society and business, for example. **Resilience only emerges in cultures of trust and mutual understanding**, as basic trust is essential for adapting to crises and maintaining the functionality of governance. The resilience approach is particularly relevant when planning and implementing the reintegration of Ukraine's territories occupied since 2014. These represent crises within crises. Russia's full-scale war since 2022 has created nationwide emergencies across all social spheres, while the over 11-year occupation of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk exacerbates the situation as these territories drift further away from Ukraine every day. Each TOT has its own unique context. For instance, Crimea differs from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in terms of its ethnic composition, historical memory, and the impact of occupation.

Reintegration scenarios must be adapted to regional contexts, with the overarching strategies being inclusive, interdisciplinary and long-term. (Yulia Tyshchenko, Co-founder of the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion)

For example, during an interactive session, participants at the International Spring School considered the scenario of a full-scale Ukrainian liberation of Crimea.¹⁴ They analysed risks in three areas of reintegration: *social cohesion, effective governance, and informational resilience*.

¹² Iliuk, O., & Teperik, D. (2021). *The universe of resilience: From physics of materials through psychology to national security*. International Centre for Defence and Security. https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ICDS_Analysis_The_Universe_of_Resilience_Iliuk_Teperik_January_2021.pdf

¹³ Linkov, I., Roslycky, L., & Trump, BD. (2019). *Resilience and Hybrid Threats* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd. www.perlego.com/book/5033124/resilience-and-hybrid-threats-security-and-integrity-for-the-digital-world-pdf

¹⁴ The scenario was simplified for training purposes, enabling participants to concentrate on practical exercises involving the identification, assessment and analysis of potential risks to social cohesion, effective governance and information resilience in Ukraine in the event of a kinetic liberation of Crimea.

Participants identified the following **risks to social cohesion** in post-liberation Crimea:

- *A low level of trust* among the Crimean population in the Ukrainian authorities due to a lack of contact over many years and the influence of Russian propaganda.
- *A difference in worldview, values and educational practices.* This creates a deep cultural divide between residents of Ukrainian-controlled territory and Crimea.
- *Tensions* between those who will return to Crimea from Ukrainian territory and those who moved there in 2014 and remained after the end of the occupation.
- *Growing tensions due to imperfect legislation on responsibility for collaboration.* Legal conflicts regarding responsibility for collaboration have already arisen during the eight months of occupation of Kherson, so after 11+ years of Russian control over Crimea, these problems will be much deeper and potentially more destructive for the reintegration process.
- *A gap exists between the language of communication and life experience.* For example, Crimean residents who have had no contact with the Ukrainian language and culture for decades may perceive its use in courts, the media or everyday life as a big barrier to establishing contact and trust.
- *Legal uncertainty regarding the return of property.* Those whose property has been confiscated or expropriated may encounter obstacles in reclaiming it, even in the absence of direct claims, as the number of internally displaced individuals seeking to return to the peninsula increases. This is particularly due to limited resources and territory.
- *Subversive activities* of pseudo-civil society organisations created or transformed during the Russian occupation. These quasi-structures have received, and may continue to receive, funding from Russia, and will allegedly continue to engage in human rights, environmental, or cultural activities. After deoccupation, these structures may quickly change their rhetoric and adapt again to claim the role of the 'civil society sector', while still being instruments of malign external influence.

Risks to effective governance in de-occupied Crimea:

- *Acute shortage of human resources.* There will be a significant shortage of qualified people who can start working in the de-occupied territories quickly. This is particularly true with regard to regional characteristics: the state does not have comprehensive knowledge of the specific requirements and is therefore unable to predict the exact number of specialists that need to be trained and recruited.
- *Information vacuum and management complexity.* A lack of up-to-date information about the situation on the ground will lead to a lack of understanding of the context and the logistical, humanitarian and political challenges, making management extremely difficult.
- *A communication vacuum between state authorities and the local population.* Without stabilisation and trust-building measures in advance, Ukrainian government agencies will be isolated and may encounter high levels of resistance or distrust among the local population.
- *Physical absence or unsuitability of premises for housing government agencies.* Infrastructure may be destroyed or unsafe due to mining. There may be no suitable conditions for headquarters, medical units or rescue services. This will not only complicate organisational work, but also reduce the population's trust in the newly created or restored authorities.
- *The impact of demographic engineering* designed to change the population's composition and complicate future reintegration must also be considered. In the case of Crimea, such a policy was pursued throughout the occupation. This poses a significant risk to the reintegration of the peninsula, as new residents may have no connection to Ukraine and may ignore its laws and identity. This would complicate the process of restoring the state's presence.

- *Sabotage against Ukrainian officials* who organise local administration can be another threat. The existence of such threats creates conditions for intimidation, sabotage, and the destruction of trust.

Informational resilience risks in de-occupied Crimea:

- *Lack of access to Ukrainian media.* Although it is likely that Russia will be forced out of Crimea, it will leave behind a destroyed information infrastructure, including towers, cables and antennas. This will cause problems for broadcasting, communications and information coverage on the Crimean peninsula.
- *Vulnerability of communication systems:* lack of internet and radio communication; sabotage of communication channels by remaining or active sabotage groups or Russia's agent network in Crimea.
- *Cognitive dissonance:* Ukrainian media are likely to adopt a positive tone regarding the return of Crimea, while the socio-economic situation may be difficult or even critical in reality. The resulting contradiction between the media image and the actual experience of peninsula residents could lead to a lack of trust in the state, societal polarisation and a foundation for further information attacks.
- *Low effectiveness of Ukrainian media consumption:* The media consumption habits of Crimean residents, who have been exposed to powerful Russian propaganda for 11+ years, may be problematic. Even with good intentions, the Ukrainian state or civil society organisations may misinterpret the context and realities experienced by the peninsula's residents. This could lead to misunderstandings or the rejection of Ukrainian media products.
- *The intensification of Russian or pro-Russian campaigns* focused on allegations of the oppression of the Russian-speaking population in Crimea is another issue. Such campaigns could have a dual effect of destabilising the peninsula by inciting the population to engage in sabotage while simultaneously creating a negative image of Ukraine on the international stage.

Identifying post-deoccupation resilience risks in the spheres of social cohesion, governance and information does not guarantee stability; rather, **deoccupation initiates the complex process** of rebuilding governance, security, an information presence, interethnic dialogue and civic interaction.

As many of these processes will have crisis elements, the concept of resilience may be one of the most effective for macro management principles. Effective cross-sector communication is vital here; if stakeholders are unaware of response & recovery plans or their roles within them, implementation will be severely hindered or rendered impossible.

Crisis Management and Communication Before and After De-occupation of TOT

Crisis Management and Post-War Recovery

A **crisis** is an unplanned event or situation that harms people, property, health, ties etc., and causes system paralysis. New crises, such as deoccupation or reintegration, do not occur in isolation, but instead build upon existing emergencies. This makes traditional planning impossible and requires an adaptive response approach.

It's not just about reacting to current events, but also about planning for the future and improving interagency crisis coordination and cooperation. (Vadim Ivanov, Head of Crisis Management, Social Insurance Board of Estonia)

Basic crisis management involves a continuous four-phase cycle:

1. Preparing for a crisis. Planning for a crisis begins long before it occurs, and thorough preparation can mitigate the impact of a potential future crisis.
2. Crisis response: it is important to mobilise resources quickly during this stage.
3. Post-crisis recovery, including collecting and analysing lessons identified.
4. Learning from experience and integrating this into new crisis management plans to ensure continuous improvement.

In terms of TOT deoccupation crisis management, each post-conflict situation is unique and there are no universal models. However, any recovery strategy should be underpinned by four key principles: **ensuring security, providing basic services, supporting legitimate institutions, and facilitating inclusive dialogue**. These equally vital priorities prevent new crises and enable long-term stability. All approaches must be adapted to specific contexts while adhering to these principles.

Post-war recovery focuses on two key elements: the state and its people. Conflict creates complex interactions between the two. On the one hand, preserving and restoring statehood, sovereignty and territorial integrity is essential. On the other hand, the needs of populations traumatised by war must be addressed. These two realities must be combined constructively. This requires cooperation between state institutions and citizens, including **joint protection models that leverage local resources and social capital**. Crisis management transcends the logic of a single agency — it requires interaction across sectors, both horizontally (between peer institutions) and vertically (from local to national levels). Failing to recognise these connections can lead to uncoordinated actions. During a crisis, it is essential to clearly understand who is doing what in order to **avoid duplication or neglect**.

According to accumulated international experience, crisis management in de-occupied territories typically involves three phases.

The first phase, which lasts up to six months, focuses on urgent **stabilisation and the humanitarian response**. Priority tasks include reducing conflict tensions, starting the process of clearing landmines, providing emergency assistance and ensuring basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and healthcare are available, as well as providing temporary education.

The second phase involves **restoring institutions and strengthening trust**. This period lasts from six months to two years after deoccupation. The main focus is on rebuilding institutions and infrastructure, and restoring trust in the state. This period is crucial, as it is during this time that the authorities' ability to function effectively and perform their duties is established. At the same time, state structures must not only exist, but also work in the interests of citizens. Infrastructure projects, from roads to telecommunications, are important, but it is also necessary to engage with people: to win the 'hearts and minds' of those living in the liberated territories.

The third phase is **democratic development and peacebuilding**. This period can last from several years to a decade, and aims to achieve sustainable peace and inclusive development, as well as strengthening democratic institutions. Activities include security sector reform and continuing disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes. Another important component is working with collective memory, which involves reconciliation programmes, shaping national identity, supporting civil society organisations and the media, and involving citizens in decision-making.

Recovery planning must not be limited to government structures alone. It is crucial to include representatives from various sectors in the process, as they bring different perspectives, experiences and visions to the table. Effective strategies for action can only be formulated by combining the efforts of civil society, the state, the media and other sectors. This approach prevents solutions to management problems from being decided behind closed doors and promotes the creation of sustainable decisions for post-crisis development. (Mati Raidma, international expert on civil protection and crisis management)

Crisis Communication

Effective crisis communication is based on three key principles: timeliness, accessibility of information, and consideration of context. An analysis of such communication, based on the conclusions of cross-sectoral crisis simulation exercises in Ukraine revealed the following issues.¹⁵

- Difficulties arose at the interface between participants' **competencies** when resolving the crisis. Although each participant performed their institutional functions well, the teams were unable to reach an agreement amongst themselves during the critical initial hours of the crisis.
- **Conflicting interpretations**. Participants received the same information, such as news, reports, reactions from the authorities and experts, but interpreted it differently, which complicated the decision-making process.
- The problem of **data selection**: on what basis should decisions be made – official information, emotions, personal experience, information from social media channels or rumours? This issue was exacerbated by an overwhelming amount of messages and uncertainty about what was reliable. The *'experience versus innovation'* dilemma also arose, with conflicts occurring within teams comprising different professionals (doctors, rescuers, entrepreneurs and bloggers) due to differences in personal experience, approaches and views of the situation.

¹⁵ Dmitri Teperik *et al.* (2023). *Lessons of cross-sectoral cooperation: way-forward to a resilient society*. Analytical report, International Centre for Defence and Security. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.33714.00963, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P32RDqfK79h6UWVzIZFebSKPzyMoqxqg/view>

The same event can lead to radically different explanations, which is a key issue in real crisis situations. People do not just see events differently; they also make decisions based on their own interpretations. It is precisely these differences in perception that create challenges in crisis management. (Andrii Zahorodskyi, Communications Mentor at Resilient Ukraine)

In complex situations, especially crises, standard protocols often fail. Therefore, it is vital to form teams capable of **generating unique, cross-sector solutions**. This could form the basis of future deoccupation and reintegration councils in Ukraine to advance successful crisis communication, particularly in de-occupied territories.

1. *Avoid focusing on narratives of success* while ignoring systemic gaps in information. This is particularly important in the context of deoccupation and reintegration planning, where decisions cannot be based solely on successful examples or narrative convenience. Instead, they must take into account the blind spots and completeness of the data.
2. *Use critical thinking to verify the sources of statements*. This dispels unnecessary illusions and enables the formulation of more realistic deoccupation and reintegration strategies based on an analysis of various scenarios.
3. *Reflect on personal associations and analyse personal beliefs*. This approach is important because it allows to analyse how previous experience influences ideas about the future. It also demonstrates how personal and professional narratives can influence not only forecasts, but also strategic guidelines when it comes to regaining control over temporarily occupied territories, including Crimea.

Therefore, it is important to reconsider previous experiences and learn to analyse without the influence of cognitive biases. The work of Emre Soyer and Robin M. Hogarth can help with this.¹⁶

In the context of adaptation to deoccupation, crisis communications should not only inform, but also support a sense of belonging, recognise psychological trauma, and promote the restoration of individual and community agency. (Oleg Pokalchuk, social psychologist)

After the deoccupation of TOT in Ukraine, the importance of crisis communications will continue to grow, as social adaptation processes become particularly relevant. These processes include the restoration of destroyed social ties, local communities, and a sense of safety and security. People often experience a fear of change and uncertainty about the future, which can make it difficult for them to return to normal life. These emotional reactions create a **high demand for psychological support and stability**. Studies on resilience emphasise that adapting to new conditions after traumatic events is only possible if trust within communities is restored and conditions for individual and collective resilience are in place.¹⁷

¹⁶ Soyer, E., & Hogarth, R. M. (2020). *The myth of experience: Why we learn the wrong lessons, and ways to correct them*. PublicAffairs. ISBN 978-1541742055

¹⁷ Nate, S. (Ed.). (2025). *Ukraine's journey to recovery, reform and post-war reconstruction: A blueprint for security, resilience and development*. Springer Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-66434-2>

Cognitive deoccupation

In order to shape the future through strategic communications, it is important to achieve **cognitive superiority** — the ability to impose one's own worldview on others, particularly with regard to **ideas, senses, mental models and meanings**. A good example of this is the Strategy for the Cognitive Deoccupation of Crimea, which was developed by the Mission of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in 2023. The strategy aims to transform the perceptions and way of life in Crimea, reintegrating its inhabitants into Ukrainian socio-political and cultural spaces while providing reliable guarantees for the prospects of human development.¹⁸

Cognitive de-occupation is a conscious strategic process, not a state propaganda. It is grounded in clear principles and a profound grasp of culture, discourse, and social behaviour. In this process, **communication must be backed up by real political actions**, particularly with regard to education, social affairs and public policy in the TOT. This is how a new space of trust is formed. After all, the Ukrainian state has had to deal with, and will continue to deal with, millions of people who have lived in a cognitive space colonised by Russia for many years. In this space, the false narrative of 'Russian Crimea' was formed, and Ukrainian values and narratives were discredited. Therefore, after deoccupation, a large proportion of citizens will have existed in this informational reality for a long time. Transforming such perceptions is not an instantaneous process – the **deoccupation process must continue at least for as long as the occupation itself lasted**. Furthermore, this change affects not only Crimea and other TOT, but Ukraine as a whole. It is a process of mutual influence in which the state and society also adapts to the new reality by taking the experience of the peninsula's inhabitants into account.

The issue of cognitive deoccupation affects not only people in Crimea, but all Ukrainians, as well as an international audience whose perception of Crimea is often shaped by malign Russian narratives. (Olha Kuryshko, Permanent Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea)

Cognitive deoccupation encompasses the following, among other things:

- *Long-term work on the culture of memory* in Ukraine's TOT to preserve Ukrainian identity. This is achieved not only through official communications, but also by asking a simple question: 'What do they say about Crimea in mainland Ukraine?' The answers to this question influence how those living under occupation perceive Crimea's belonging.
- *Formulation of historical policies regarding Crimea*, particularly with regard to including the peninsula's history and that of its indigenous peoples in Ukrainian memory policy in general. After all, our current reality depends on how history is interpreted.
- *Engagement with Ukrainian youth*. A comprehensive sociological survey on the cognitive deoccupation of Crimea has shown that there is a gap between formal support for territorial integrity (68%) and a personal connection to the topic of Crimea among young people, with the latter figure being less than 30%.¹⁹ It is therefore important to create platforms for young people to communicate about their personal experiences and perceptions of Crimea, in order to establish long-lasting associations between the Crimean peninsula and Ukraine.

¹⁸ Mission of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. (2023). *Strategy for the cognitive deoccupation of Crimea*. <https://ppu.gov.ua/en/documents/strategy-for-cognitive-deoccupation-of-crimea>

¹⁹ Mission of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. (2024). *Results of the study on cognitive deoccupation of Crimea*. <https://ppu.gov.ua/en/rezultaty-doslidzhennya-kohnityvna-deokupatsiya-krymu>

Addressing these and other issues enables to develop a thorough understanding of the peninsula as an integral part of Ukraine — politically, territorially, culturally, mentally and historically. This is an important step in **changing perceptions both within and beyond the country**.

Ukrainian society needs to develop a long-term, consistent and coherent state policy on deoccupation and reintegration of Ukraine's TOT, focusing particularly on the **cognitive dimension of reintegration policies and the restoration of Ukrainian identity in the context of European integration**.

Conclusions

1. The future is not only predicted, but also constructed. This is why it is important to be 'future literate', i.e. to have **the ability to envisage, formulate, plan and create the future together**. This requires:

- long-term strategizing (i.e. working with time as a flexible category, taking regional differences into account and overcoming the trust deficit);
- foresight, i.e. scenario modelling that takes into account objective drivers such as technological, cultural and political factors;
- institutional flexibility and interdisciplinary thinking;
- advancements in ontological leadership and cognitive superiority.

2. A culture of resilience requires the development of a **new language for a shared future**, one that considers not only political and military decisions, but also visions, senses, meanings and new semantic constructs.

3. It is vitally important to avoid cognitive biases when forecasting future threats in order to **anticipate risks, identify weak signals and achieve cognitive superiority**.

- Use structured controversial thinking (e.g. red team analysis) to question basic assumptions and identify blind spots.
- Use collective forecasting and collaborative scenario building to identify new risks and counter institutional 'echo chambers'.
- Form interdisciplinary forecasting teams to better perceive weak signals. Bring together military personnel, sociologists, psychologists, technologists, and cultural experts. Actively involve other participants, such as the youth, artists, local communities, and civilian experts.
- Develop the discipline of 'signals versus noise' — critically separating important weak signals from information noise. Use sensemaking frameworks to correctly contextualise data that does not fit into existing paradigms.

4. Resilience does not arise in isolation. Rather, it emerges at the intersection and interaction of the state, civil society, business, the media, academia and so on. **Leadership in resilience** requires:

- building cross-sectoral networks of interaction (horizontal and vertical);
- ensuring citizen participation in inclusive decision-making;
- being able to respond quickly while thinking long-term.

5. Shaping a new culture of resilience is not about status; it is about creating meaning and a shared future. It involves working across disciplines, building trust and interacting across sectors, and transforming challenges into a **source of solidarity and cohesion**. It is a path of shared responsibility, using the experiences of the past, the impetus of the present, and the vision of the future to build a better tomorrow.

6. A better tomorrow in Ukraine is impossible without the deoccupation and reintegration of TOT, Crimea, in particular. This requires a **series of strategic systemic measures**, including:

- long-term work on the Ukrainian identity of the TOT residents;
- integration of Crimea into the national historical memory of Ukraine;
- formation of a comprehensive policy on the TOT, particularly a governmental strategy for cognitive deoccupation.

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