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**Crisis Management in the Local Communities Through the
Development of Human Capital**

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Abstract. Purpose. The study's significance is driven by the need to ensure economic stability and social cohesion in local communities significantly affected by military aggression. The article examines crisis management in communities through human capital development, using the example of the Buchansk District. It is emphasized that the development of human potential must be systematic, as it serves as the foundation for recovery, long-term growth, and adaptation in crisis conditions. **Methods.** Strategic instruments are analyzed, including expanding access to education, vocational training, employment support, and entrepreneurship development. To justify priority directions, a SWOT analysis of the labor market was conducted, identifying key strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of the local economy. **Results.** Target groups requiring special attention were identified, including internally displaced persons, youth without work experience, pre-retirement age women, persons with disabilities, and residents of rural areas. Examples of the application of educational pathways, retraining programs, career guidance activities, and engagement of entrepreneurs as mentors and investors are provided. Practical recommendations for community leaders include identifying employment issues, developing pilot projects, creating working groups, and attracting external resources. **Conclusions.** The article forecasts that communities transitioning to systematic strategic planning will become centers of sustainable development, strengthen the role of local authorities in shaping employment policies, expand access to financial and technical resources, and develop employment institutions and social entrepreneurship. It is noted that digitalization and innovation will open new employment opportunities, including freelancing, remote work, and micro-entrepreneurship even in the most remote communities.

Keywords: Community Resilience, Crisis Management, Local Communities, Social Capital, Labor Market, Labor Market Asymmetry.



ЗДОБУТКИ ЕКОНОМІКИ: ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ТА ІННОВАЦІЇ

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Анотація. Мета. Дослідження спрямоване на вивчення антикризового управління у громадах через розвиток людського капіталу в умовах воєнного впливу, на прикладі Бучанського району. Актуальність обумовлена необхідністю забезпечення економічної стійкості та соціальної згуртованості в місцевих громадах, що зазнали наслідків військової агресії. **Методи.** У дослідженні застосовано аналіз стратегічних інструментів розвитку людського капіталу, зокрема розширення доступу до освіти, професійної підготовки, підтримки працевлаштування та підприємництва.



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Для обґрунтування пріоритетних напрямів розвитку ринку праці проведено SWOT-аналіз, що дозволив визначити сильні та слабкі сторони, можливості і загрози місцевої економіки. **Результати.** Ідентифіковано ключові цільові групи, які потребують посиленої уваги: внутрішньо переміщені особи, молодь без досвіду роботи, жінки передпенсійного віку, особи з інвалідністю та жителі сільських територій. Наведено приклади освітніх траєкторій, програм перекваліфікації, профорієнтаційних заходів, а також залучення підприємців як менторів та інвесторів. Запропоновано практичні рекомендації для керівників громад щодо ідентифікації проблем працевлаштування, створення пілотних проєктів, робочих груп і залучення зовнішніх ресурсів. **Висновки.** Громади, які впроваджуватимуть системне стратегічне планування, зможуть стати осередками сталого розвитку, посилити роль місцевої влади у формуванні політик зайнятості, розширити доступ до фінансових і технічних ресурсів, розвивати інституції зайнятості та соціального підприємництва. Цифровізація та інновації сприятимуть створенню нових можливостей для працевлаштування — зокрема у форматі фрилансу, дистанційної роботи та мікропідприємництва, навіть у віддалених громадах.

Ключові слова: стійкість громади, антикризове управління, місцеві громади, соціальний капітал, ринок праці, асиметрія на ринку праці.

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Problem Statement. The communities of Buchansk District, situated near the frontline and significantly impacted by military aggression, are now tasked with shaping inclusive local economies that offer meaningful opportunities for all



residents regardless of age, experience, or socio-economic status. This requires more than ad hoc interventions: it calls for the systematic development of human capital as a foundation for community recovery, cohesion, and long-term resilience.

Strategic human capital development entails expanding access to education, vocational training, employment support, and entrepreneurial infrastructure. Moreover, it involves strengthening community inclusion, fostering innovation, and building adaptive capacity in the face of ongoing demographic and economic disruptions. In post-conflict territories, investment in human capital not only addresses immediate social needs but also serves as a transformative mechanism for sustainable development.

Communities in the Buchansk District have already demonstrated promising dynamics through the launch of local business initiatives, the growth of micro-enterprises, support for craft production, IT services, educational startups, green tourism, and social innovation projects. However, these developments remain fragile without adequate institutional frameworks, strategic vision, and capacity-building support at the local level.

As final beneficiaries of the ongoing development initiative, the communities of Buchansk District stand to gain substantially from an integrated, forward-looking approach to human capital formation. Such a strategy is vital not only for effective crisis response but also for securing inclusive economic growth and fostering locally driven transformation in the post-war recovery period.

Analysis of recent research and publications. In the context of prolonged crises such as the russian-ukrainian war, local communities have increasingly emerged as key actors of resilience and inclusive economic renewal. Theoretical and empirical literature emphasizes that local leadership must not only react to pressing challenges, such as unemployment, inequality, and displacement, but also strategically design opportunity ecosystems that enable all residents, regardless of



status or background, to participate in community life and the local economy (Folke, 2006; Flora, 2016) [1; 2].

A central element of such strategies is the development of human and social capital, which underpins resilience and adaptive capacity. Aldrich and Meyer (2015) argue that social capital, reflected in trust, networks, and civic engagement, plays a decisive role in a community's ability to recover from shocks [3]. Similarly, Carra highlights how investment in both human capital and institutional capacity enables war-affected territories to adapt and rebuild through inclusive governance and innovation [4]. This is supported by Folke (2006), who frames resilience as the ability of socio-ecological systems to absorb disturbances and reorganize without losing function [1].

Recent Ukrainian studies also provide compelling evidence in this regard. Keudel and Huss (2024), analyzing 204 local self-government units through surveys and interviews, identify three mechanisms of polycentric governance, knowledge diffusion, resource mobilization, and experimental innovation, that contribute to the robustness of decentralized responses during wartime. Their findings emphasize the importance of personal communication and digital tools in enabling social innovation and maintaining cohesion under stress [5].

The practical dimension of strengthening community employment strategies is further illuminated in global labor policy literature. Card, Kluve, and Weber (2018), in a comprehensive meta-analysis of active labor market programs (ALMPs), demonstrate that targeted interventions, such as vocational training, wage subsidies, and mentoring, can be highly effective, especially for vulnerable groups like youth and the long-term unemployed [6]. These insights are particularly relevant for the Buchansk District, where community strategies are expected to balance inclusive labor market access with digital integration and local entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the role of infrastructure, services, and institutional continuity is emphasized in war conflict-related planning. Hay, Karney, and Martyn (2019)



propose a systemic approach to post-conflict infrastructure reconstruction that prioritizes continuity of essential services and adapts to community needs [7]. UNESCO and the World Bank (2018) similarly stress the role of cultural and human-centered approaches in city recovery [8].

Manuilova, Nesenenko, and Luniova (2024) conducted a comparative analysis of management strategies combined with expert surveys to generate recommendations, applying modeling and forecasting methods to assess the long-term effects of managerial decisions under martial law, and found that innovative governance strategies enhance crisis effectiveness, particularly when focused on flexible planning, advanced technologies, business-NGO partnerships, citizen engagement to unlock new market opportunities in communities [9].

This article also further enriches the academic discourse on the specified topic by examining particular methods highlighted in prior research by the authors [10].

In sum, the literature points to the importance of community-driven, flexible, and innovation-based strategies that combine social support, economic activation, and digital inclusion. These strategies must be embedded in strong local governance systems capable of adapting to uncertainty and addressing both immediate needs and long-term development goals.

This is especially relevant in the Buchansk District, a region that combines both territories with active economic development (e.g., Irpin, Bucha) and remote settlements where barriers to employment, mobility, and access to services persist.

The full-scale war and the subsequent post-war transformation have profoundly reshaped the socio-economic structure of Ukrainian society, particularly in terms of employment, internal migration, and access to labor resources. These changes have significantly deepened social disparities among various population groups, especially between those who have retained stable employment and those who lost their income sources due to hostilities or displacement.



In this context, the competence of local governance becomes a key factor in stabilizing communities: local authorities are in a unique position to initiate and implement effective strategies aimed at retaining youth, attracting investment, integrating internally displaced persons (IDPs), and ensuring decent living conditions. Each successful managerial decision in the field of employment contributes to the reduction of social tension and the enhancement of public trust in local authorities.

Thus, the development of strategic anti-crisis initiatives at the community level must be grounded in a deep understanding of residents' needs, the effective management of available resources, and the capacity to respond swiftly and decisively to emerging challenges. A strong community begins with a strong local strategy, focused on sustainable socio-economic development under conditions of uncertainty and risk.

Identification of Previously Unaddressed Aspects of the General Problem. Despite the growing body of research devoted to socio-economic transformations in the context of the digital economy, several critical aspects remain insufficiently explored. In particular, there is a lack of in-depth analysis of the strategic role of local self-government in shaping adaptive employment policies under crisis conditions caused by war and technological shifts. The relationship between human capital development and institutional change at the community level, especially in areas affected by military aggression, has not been adequately studied.

One of the most urgent issues is the integration of vulnerable population groups such as: internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, and inexperienced youth, into local labor markets amid limited resources and increased competition. Additionally, approaches to the digitalization of employment processes and the formation of new institutions for social entrepreneurship at the local level remain undefined. There is also a lack of comprehensive research on the



effectiveness of educational and professional trajectories implemented within communities as tools for long-term economic stabilization.

Therefore, an in-depth analysis of strategic human capital management instruments at the local level considering digitalization, social vulnerability, and post-crisis recovery needs is required. The present study is aimed at addressing these gaps.

The aim of the article is to analyze and propose effective approaches to crisis management in local communities through the strategic development of human capital, using the example of communities in Buchansk District.

Presentation of the main research material. Established in 2020 as part of Ukraine's administrative-territorial reform, Buchansk District in Kyiv Oblast comprises 12 territorial communities, including the urban centers of Bucha, Irpin, and Vyshneve. With a population exceeding 352,000, the district presents a heterogeneous socio-economic landscape that combines densely urbanized areas with rural peripheries. This diversity creates both opportunities and challenges for local employment and economic development.

Despite its substantial potential for employment growth, the labor market in Buchansk District remains structurally uneven, socially segmented, and geographically inaccessible for certain groups. This situation places increasing responsibility on local governments to act not only as adaptive agents in times of war-induced disruption but also as initiators of systemic transformation through the design and implementation of localized employment strategies.

For community leadership, this necessitates a shift from reliance on external investment and centralized assistance toward building a self-sustaining local economy. Priority actions include initiating and coordinating community-based projects that generate employment, provide upskilling opportunities, foster social inclusion, and reduce isolation. Local governance must assume a strategic role in



human capital development by ensuring access to education, supporting grassroots initiatives, and forging partnerships with businesses and civil society organizations.

An effective local employment strategy, therefore, is not merely about providing jobs “by default,” but about creating enabling conditions in which residents are motivated to stay, work, and thrive. Such goals require not only administrative capacity but also visionary leadership and a commitment to long-term, people-centered development.

To effectively translate this vision into actionable policy, it is essential to ground strategic planning in an evidence-based understanding of local labor market dynamics. A context-sensitive assessment enables local authorities to identify existing assets, structural constraints, emerging opportunities, and external threats. In this regard, a SWOT analysis offers a practical analytical framework to evaluate the current state of the labor market in Buchansk District and to inform targeted interventions that align with both immediate needs and long-term development priorities.

Table 1.

SWOT analysis of the labor market of Buchansk District

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
-Geographical proximity to Kyiv is an opportunity for economic cooperation, subcontracting, and pendulum employment. -Developed infrastructure in individual communities (roads, internet, logistics). -Activity of some communities in the field of self-employment, craft production, tourism, and digital services. -Experience in implementing projects for the employment of internally displaced persons (IDPs), retraining, and social entrepreneurship. -Presence of employment centers, opportunities for retraining.	-Uneven availability of jobs between central and remote communities (Irpin/Bucha and villages). -High outflow of youth and qualified personnel due to lack of career prospects. -Limited scale of small business - unable to create jobs on a massive scale. -Low level of digital literacy among part of the population (especially 50+). -Low awareness of citizens about available educational, financial, and career opportunities.



<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
-Development of local microbusiness in villages (agroprocessing, green tourism, crafts, educational services). -Expansion of digital employment (freelance, remote work, digital hubs). -Possibility of involving donor, government, private programs to support employment of IDPs, youth, women. -Institutionalization of training (retraining centers, career counseling, social entrepreneurship schools). -Creation of intermunicipal clusters: “working ecosystems” (production - training - logistics).	-Worsening economic inequality due to uneven recovery from hostilities. -Low level of trust in local employment programs. -Community dependence on external investors or unstable subsidies. -Further degradation of local labor potential in the absence of active policies. -Competition between communities for labor resources without a common strategy.

Developed by the authors based on sources: [11,12]

The results of the SWOT analysis (see Table 1) can inform tailored strategic approaches to employment development at the local level. When formulating employment strategies, it is important to incorporate place-based characteristics, for instance, promoting cooperative enterprises in rural areas or supporting digital hubs in urban centers. In project planning for investors or donor organizations, local authorities should emphasize community strengths while explicitly addressing weaknesses that are being mitigated through targeted projects and allocated resources.

Furthermore, intermunicipal cooperation can be enhanced by clustering communities that share similar opportunities or face common threats, enabling resource pooling and joint planning. In the case of Buchansk District, several sectors demonstrate strong potential for employment generation, including construction and real estate (linked to post-war infrastructure recovery), logistics and transportation (supported by proximity to Kyiv), as well as education and healthcare (with increasing demand for skilled professionals).



Service and trade sectors are also recovering, particularly through the revitalization of small businesses, while the growth of IT services and remote employment reflects a shift toward digital labor markets. New opportunities for employment and career advancement are also emerging through civic initiatives and support from national and international partners. These dynamics highlight the need for local strategies grounded in empirical assessment and designed to foster inclusive, sustainable economic development.

Opportunities for civic initiatives in Buchansk District are expanding as communities seek to strengthen local economies and employment resilience in response to ongoing crises. Support for small-scale, craft-based production such as: soap-making, artisan baking, and textile workshops can contribute to the creation of new jobs and the revitalization of micro-enterprises. Targeted assistance to IDPs, including mentorship schemes and joint digital service projects (e.g., courses in copywriting, graphic design, and targeted advertising), facilitates their social and labor market integration.

Community-based cooperatives also represent a promising avenue for grassroots economic development. Agricultural initiatives such as berry cultivation, mushroom farming, and greenhouse operations can be organized collectively, offering shared income opportunities and strengthening social cohesion. Additionally, training programs in digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and vocational skills, particularly those designed for vulnerable groups such as IDPs and persons with disabilities, enhance employability and social inclusion through participatory, socially-oriented workshops.

In crisis-affected communities, viable employment pathways include jobs within local enterprises and institutions. Manufacturing and service-based firms, as well as schools and healthcare facilities, continue to require skilled personnel. Civil society organizations also play a growing role by implementing socially oriented projects that create employment while addressing community needs.



Self-employment and entrepreneurship are increasingly promoted through locally coordinated initiatives. Residents are encouraged to launch micro-businesses with the help of national or international grant support. Emerging opportunities include service provision in areas such as IT, digital marketing, private tutoring, and the production of eco-friendly goods and handmade products.

Complementary support mechanisms include grant programs like “Own Business,” which provides up to UAH 150,000 for start-ups, retraining and upskilling initiatives facilitated by the State Employment Center, and participation in international internships and online professional development courses. These multifaceted interventions reflect a growing recognition of the role that localized, inclusive economic strategies play in mitigating labor market disruptions and strengthening community resilience during protracted crises.

In times of protracted crisis, such as war-related disruption and economic instability, communities must diversify and localize employment options to maintain socioeconomic resilience. Viable employment pathways within crisis-affected localities include work in local enterprises and institutions. Manufacturing and service-oriented businesses continue to operate in select sectors, while educational and healthcare facilities face ongoing demand for qualified personnel. Additionally, civil society organizations that implement social projects can offer temporary or project-based employment, particularly in humanitarian and development contexts.

Self-employment and entrepreneurship are increasingly recognized as essential mechanisms for income generation and community revitalization. Local initiatives supporting entrepreneurial education and mentoring can empower residents to start their own businesses, often with the help of local and international grant programs. Sectors with relatively low entry barriers such as: IT services, graphic design, digital marketing, tutoring, eco-product manufacturing, and handmade crafts are particularly conducive to small-scale enterprise formation.



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Resident support programs further expand employment opportunities by providing access to financial and educational resources. Notable examples include the “Own Business” grant program, which offers up to UAH 150,000 for micro-entrepreneurship development; retraining and vocational programs facilitated by the State Employment Center; and participation in international internship schemes or online professional development courses. These options not only help mitigate unemployment but also promote inclusive labor market access and foster long-term human capital development at the community level.

Practical tools for employment policy formulation and support for vulnerable population categories involve a two-pronged approach: identifying target groups and implementing specific intervention instruments.

The primary target demographics for support initiatives include: IDPs, youth lacking professional work experience; individuals of pre-retirement age; women re-entering the labor market after an extended absence; persons with disabilities; residents of rural areas who face limited labor market access.

The implementation of support is facilitated through a range of strategic instruments placed in Table 2.

Table 2

The implementation of support is facilitated through a range of strategic instruments

Instrument	Description
Vulnerable Group Mapping	This involves creating community-level social profiles and interactive needs maps to identify and understand the specific challenges faced by target populations.
Mentorship and Coaching Programs	Establishing partnerships with local entrepreneurs and educational institutions to provide guidance, skill transfer, and professional network development for individuals seeking employment.
Targeted Training Vouchers	Providing vouchers for education or reskilling, which can be financed through international development programs



	such as those offered by the United Nations (UN) or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Community-Based Career Counseling Centers	Creating accessible advisory services either directly managed by the community or in partnership with state employment centers to offer personalized career guidance
Public Works with Social Impact	Implementing temporary employment programs that yield direct benefits for the community, such as urban greening projects, maintenance of social infrastructure, or conducting digital surveys of the population
Grant Acquisition for Targeted Employment	Actively pursuing and implementing grant-funded projects aimed at supporting the employment of specific vulnerable groups, such as IDPs, women, and persons with disabilities, through initiatives like the "eRobota" program or grants from the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Table 2 demonstrates how a variety of strategic instruments enable the effective implementation of support at the community level. Building on this, the following step focuses on the development of crisis-response strategic initiatives in human capital advancement and community potential mobilization to ensure economic resilience and sustainable growth.

In the context of today's challenges Ukrainian communities must rethink their role in developing human capital is not only through short-term responses, but via strategic, long-term approaches. It is essential to view the community as a "space of opportunities", where every resident has access not only to employment but also to continuous development, self-realization, and decision-making participation.

Such a strategic vision requires building a comprehensive ecosystem that includes education, entrepreneurial support, and partnerships with businesses and civil society organizations. Active engagement of residents in planning processes through focus groups, strategic sessions, and public consultations ensures that



community development priorities are shaped collectively and grounded in real needs.

In the authors view the key tools for strengthening human capital at the local community include. Human capital audits, analyzing existing knowledge, skills, and competencies of residents. These can be implemented via online surveys, consultations with employers, and the creation of interactive citizen profiles. Educational pathways and reskilling programs, developed using local educational institutions and online learning platforms such as Prometheus and Coursera, enabling flexible upskilling opportunities for individuals of all ages. Career guidance programs for youth and students, developed in collaboration with local businesses and employers to build a skilled, market-oriented future workforce. Engagement of entrepreneurs as mentors and investors in human capital through internships, mentorship initiatives, and business incubator programs. Local employment strategies, integrated into broader community development strategies to address specific labor market needs.

For community leaders aiming to implement effective human capital initiatives, the following practical steps are recommended by authors:

1. Identify key employment-related challenges in the community through SWOT analysis or sociological surveys.
2. Develop 1–2 pilot projects based on real needs, such as reskilling programs for women aged 45+ or micro-grant schemes for self-employment.
3. Create a permanent *Human Capital Development Task Force*, including representatives from business, education, youth, and civil society.
4. Actively seek external resources such as: international technical assistance, grant programs, and private-sector partnerships.

In the coming years, communities that shift from reactive responses to systematic strategic planning in employment, education, and social integration will become drivers of sustainable development. Amid growing decentralization, post-



war reconstruction, and labor shortages, human capital becomes the primary asset of every community.

It can be expected a strengthened role of local governments in shaping employment, reskilling, and entrepreneurship policies. Access to financial and technical resources will expand through international assistance, state programs, and cooperation with businesses. In parallel, the development of local institutions such as: career hubs, employment centers, and social enterprises will provide platforms for the meaningful inclusion of vulnerable population groups. Meanwhile, digitalization and innovation will foster the emergence of new forms of employment, including freelance, remote work, and micro-entrepreneurship, even in the most remote villages.

Conclusions. The relevance of the study is determined by the need to form effective crisis management mechanisms in local communities affected by military aggression. It has been established that the strategic development of human capital is a key factor in restoring social cohesion, economic resilience, and sustainable development. A SWOT analysis of the local labor market identified the main strengths and weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, as well as target groups requiring targeted support.

It has been determined that the effective implementation of crisis management strategies involves a comprehensive application of educational programs, retraining measures, mentoring, support for social entrepreneurship, and the engagement of stakeholders in planning processes. Emphasis is placed on forming an integrated human capital ecosystem that includes education, entrepreneurial support, and digital transformation.

It is forecasted that a systematic approach to human capital development will strengthen the role of local authorities in shaping employment policies, facilitate the expansion of resource bases, and create institutional support. It is noted that further research should focus on the impact of digitalization on local labor markets,



mechanisms for integrating vulnerable groups, and adaptive models of human capital management in post-conflict conditions.

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