



Report

Business–academia openings: collection of examples to foster academic resilience in crisis response

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Consortium

The consortium governing the project is adequately representing a wide range of expertise, as 5 Higher Education Institutions (Tallinn University, Lviv Polytechnic National University, Kaunas University of Technology, University of Tartu, University of Latvia) join hands with a web education specialist (Web2Learn). This mix of knowledge, skills, experiences and networks guarantees a layered approach toward a diverse range of stakeholders.

Name	Country	
1 Tallinn University	Estonia	
2 Lviv Polytechnic National University	Ukraine	
3 Web2Learn	Greece	
4 Kaunas University of Technology	Lithuania	
5 University of Tartu	Estonia	
6 University of Latvia	Latvia	

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List of Abbreviations

The following table presents the acronyms used in the deliverable in alphabetical order.

Abbreviations	Description
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
JSC	Joint Stock Company
LLC	Limited Liability Company
Ltd	Limited Trade Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
WP2A10	Work Package 2 Activity 10

Introduction

In a world where crises often transcend national borders and affect diverse communities, the synergy between academic institutions and the business sector emerges as a pivotal force in crafting resilient responses. This report, under the auspices of the Baltics4UA project, delves into the dynamic collaborations between academia and businesses within the Baltic states, illuminating their collective efforts to address the challenges posed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Through a detailed exploration of various case studies, this study aims to uncover the mechanisms through which these partnerships not only provide immediate relief but also contribute to the broader framework of academic resilience. As the region grapples with the socio-educational and humanitarian needs of Ukrainian refugees, the insights garnered from these collaborations offer valuable lessons on the power of combined expertise in navigating crises.

The report is part of the Baltics4UA project (Supporting Ukraine through citizen engagement at Baltic Universities, 2023–2025, <https://baltics4ua.eu>). The Baltics4UA project represents a strategic collaboration aimed at strengthening Baltic and Ukrainian academic communities' proactive engagement for Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons. One of the key components of this effort is encapsulated in the current study (WP2A10) that emphasises the critical role of business-academia collaborations in enhancing the resilience of universities during times of crisis. This report titled "Business-academia openings: collection of examples to foster academic resilience in crisis response," is dedicated to the exploration and documentation of case studies where academic institutions and businesses have joined forces. Our primary objective is to identify and showcase effective strategies and initiatives that leverage this collaboration to respond to social and humanitarian crises.

This study includes a collection of examples which bring to the fore the potential of citizen engagement within and beyond Baltic universities in supporting Ukraine and its people. Thus, this report zeroes in on the crucial business-academia openings necessary for bolstering the resilience of universities in times of crisis. By weaving together a tapestry of case studies, we endeavour to spotlight the innovative partnerships and ventures that have emerged at the intersection of academia-driven social action and entrepreneurial spirit.

Each case study within this report is a testament to the power of collaboration across sectors in navigating and mitigating the impacts of crises. These narratives not only showcase the practical applications of academic research when supported by business resources but also highlight the profound societal contributions that can emerge from such alliances. From developing cutting-edge technologies to fostering inclusive education models and supporting displaced communities, the examples herein reflect a wide spectrum of how business-academia partnerships can serve as a bedrock for resilience. We invite readers to explore the myriad ways in which these collaborations have paved pathways for innovation, adaptation, and crisis response. This report not only aims to inspire but also to serve as a blueprint for future engagements, urging academia and businesses alike to recognise their shared social responsibility and potential in shaping a resilient, equitable, and thriving global community.

The focus of the report is manifold. Firstly, it aims to illuminate the mechanisms through which business-academia partnerships can serve as a backbone for universities, enabling them to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity. This involves a detailed examination of various initiatives that have been undertaken, with an eye towards understanding their impact, scalability, and the keys to their success. Secondly, we seek to provide a blueprint for future engagements, offering insights into how such collaborations can be structured to maximise benefits for both academia and the wider community. Through this report, Baltics4UA underscores the value of business-academia synergies in building robust, responsive, and resilient educational ecosystems. By spotlighting successful models of cooperation, we aim to encourage more HEIs to embrace collaborative approaches in addressing the complex challenges of our time, thereby contributing to a more resilient and supportive academic landscape for all stakeholders involved.

1. Methodology and data collection

The methodology employed in this report adopts a qualitative research framework, centred around a comprehensive analysis of case studies that exemplify the collaboration between academia and businesses in the Baltic region, particularly in response to crises (Zourou et al., 2023). This approach is grounded in the understanding that qualitative research, with its emphasis on exploring complex phenomena within their specific contexts, is well-suited to capture the nuanced dynamics of business-academia partnerships and their impact on resilience and innovation.

Specifically, to assess the corporate sector's contribution to assisting Ukrainians in the Baltics, we adopted a social action-oriented approach, identifying and classifying activities that deliver societal benefits. Originating from an optimised typology developed by Vytautas Magnus University (2022) in Lithuania, the categories of support actions were expanded to a total of eighteen distinct types. This refined typology aligns with the university's efforts to support Ukrainians, providing a structured means to categorise and understand the nature of assistance being offered (Boichenko et al., 2023). To systematically organise and analyse the data, a structured spreadsheet was utilised, enabling the categorisation and detailed documentation of each initiative. This approach facilitated a thorough analysis of the nature, scope, and impact of the initiatives, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of the initial efforts made by the business and academic sectors in the Baltics. This investigation was conducted in two primary phases of data collection, each delineating a specific period and set of objectives to understand the progression and impact of these initiatives over time.

Phase 1. Initial data collection

The first phase commenced in April 2023, encapsulating a retrospective analysis from the onset of the conflict in Ukraine in February 2022 up to April 2023. This phase was pivotal in establishing a baseline understanding of the initial responses and strategies adopted by Baltic universities and businesses to assist Ukrainians. The comprehensive timeframe allowed for an extensive documentation and examination of the various initiatives developed during the early stages of the crisis. This period was critical for capturing the immediate reactions and the innovative solutions that were rapidly deployed to meet the urgent needs arising from the conflict. At this stage, a total of 14 case studies

were selected and analysed to offer a comprehensive overview of the initiatives across Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

Phase 2. Follow-up data collection

The second phase of data collection was conducted in March 2024, focusing on the initiatives launched from January to March 2024. This phase aimed to capture the evolution of assistance efforts, reflecting on the changing dynamics of the crisis and the adaptation of strategies to meet the evolving needs of Ukrainians. This later stage of data collection was essential for understanding how the collaborative efforts between universities and businesses have progressed, highlighting any shifts in focus, the introduction of new initiatives, or the scaling up of existing projects to address ongoing challenges. At this stage, a total of 12 case studies were selected and analysed to offer a comprehensive overview of the initiatives across Baltic States.

The delineation of these two distinct data collection phases allowed for a dynamic and analysis of the initiatives, providing insights into the immediate and longer-term responses to the consequences of the war in Ukraine (Figure 1).

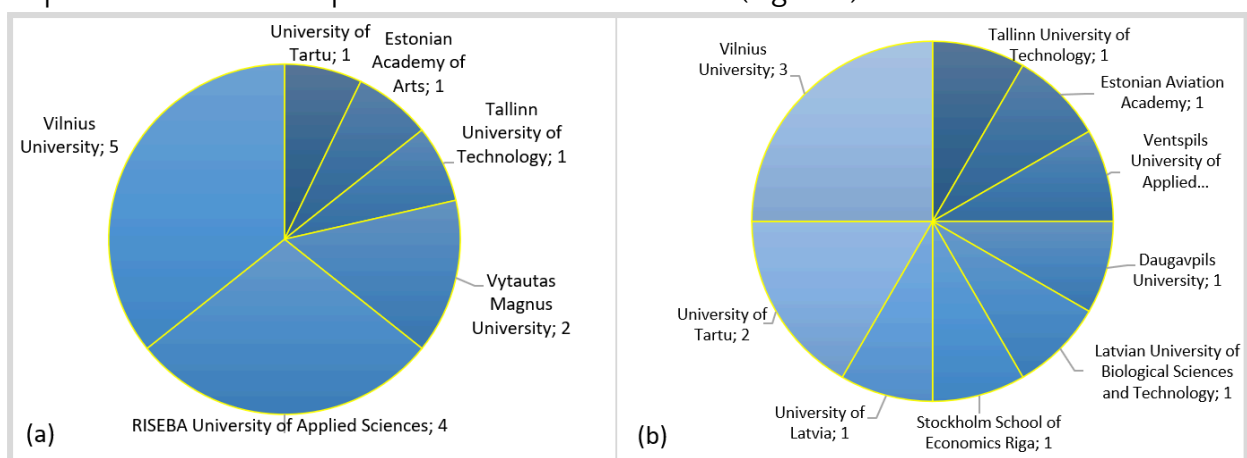


Figure 1: Collected case studies at Phase 1 (a) and Phase 2 (b) by HEIs
Resource: generated by the authors based on the data collection

A total of 26 case studies were meticulously selected and analysed to offer a comprehensive overview of the initiatives across Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. These case studies were chosen based on their relevance to the study's objectives, their representation of a range of collaborative models, and their potential for scalability and impact. The selection process was guided by criteria that prioritised diversity in collaborations, the sectors involved, and the types of challenges addressed.

Our methodology's strength lies in its comprehensive and context-sensitive approach, which enables a deep dive into the specificities of business-academia collaborations in the Baltic region. By leveraging qualitative analysis of carefully selected case studies, the study offers valuable perspectives on the dynamics of resilience and innovation within these synergies, contributing to a greater understanding of their role in crisis response and societal development.

Limitations of the study

The qualitative nature of the methodology, while rich in contextual detail, carries specific limitations in terms of its scope for generalisation. The selection of case studies, although comprehensive, is subject to the availability of data and the transparency of reporting by the institutions involved, which may not capture all relevant initiatives or the full range of collaborative activities. Language barriers present a significant obstacle in this methodology as well, as vital information about joint initiatives is often published in the

native languages of the Baltic institutions, which can impede access and understanding for international researchers.

2. Overview of business-academia collaborations

A total of 26 case studies have been meticulously analysed to gauge the extent and impact of these cooperative ventures across Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. The analysis sheds light on the regional distribution of these initiatives, revealing a slight variance in the level of engagement among the three countries (Figure 2).

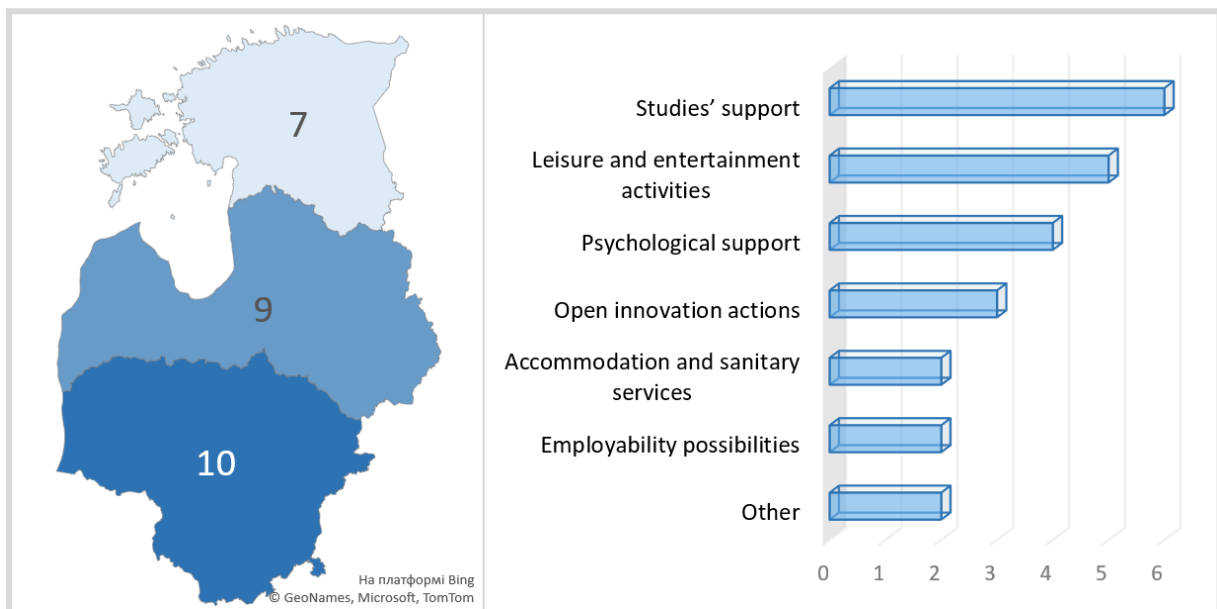


Figure 2: Number of business-HEIs collaboration for Ukraine

Resource: generated by the authors based on the results of the analysis

Country level analysis

1. Latvia

Latvia includes nine case studies, showcasing a robust response to the Ukrainian crisis through academia-business collaborations. This indicates a strong willingness among Latvian universities and businesses to leverage their resources and expertise in addressing the challenges posed by the war. The nature of these collaborations suggests a strategic approach towards not only immediate crisis management but also long-term resilience building within and beyond the academic sector.

2. Lithuania

Lithuania, with ten case studies, stands out as the country with the highest number of documented initiatives. This suggests a slightly more pronounced engagement in Lithuania, reflecting a possibly more integrated network of academic institutions and businesses. The initiatives in Lithuania represent a broad spectrum of interventions, from

research and development projects aimed at addressing specific crisis-related challenges to educational programmes designed to support displaced students and scholars.

3. Estonia

Estonia contributes with seven case studies, indicating a substantial yet slightly lesser degree of involvement compared to its Baltic neighbours. Despite this, the Estonian case studies are indicative of a deeply rooted approach towards harnessing the potential of business-academia collaborations in crisis response. It is possible that these collaborations focus on niche areas or have adopted innovative approaches that could offer unique insights into the dynamics of effective crisis management and resilience building.

The types of actions, according to the provided information, encompass a broad range of support, with "Studies' support" being the most prevalent, followed by "Leisure and entertainment activities," and "Open innovation actions". These represent the highest counts of actions taken, suggesting a significant emphasis on supporting the educational needs of Ukrainians, providing avenues for rest and recreation, and fostering innovative solutions to emerging challenges.

"Psychological support" also figures prominently, indicating a recognition of the mental health consequences of the crisis and the importance of addressing them. Actions like "Accommodation and sanitary services" and "Employability possibilities" reflect a more traditional level of support, addressing the immediate needs for shelter, health, and economic stability. The category labelled "Other" indicates additional forms of support that do not neatly fit into the predefined categories but are nonetheless significant in the overall response. This might include various forms of aid that are unique to the specific needs of the Ukrainian community or innovative responses not previously considered.

3. Case studies

This section presents detailed case studies of business-higher education (HE) cooperation in the Baltics during the crisis in Ukraine. The initiatives are categorised by their main action type (studies' support, leisure and entertainment activities, open innovation actions, psychological support, accommodation and sanitary services, employability possibilities, and others), highlighting the innovative approaches adopted and the partnerships between businesses and academic institutions. Through these cases, we aim to demonstrate how business-academia collaborations have bolstered academic resilience and provided substantial support to affected individuals.

3.1. Studies' support

Each case showcases a distinct approach to maintaining educational continuity for students affected by the crisis in Ukraine.

a. **Norfa (Norfos Mažmena JSC)**

Country: Lithuania

Partners: Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University

Norfa took a generous step by allocating EUR 10,000 for scholarships to support Ukrainian students at two significant Lithuanian universities. This initiative directly mitigates the financial challenges faced by students, ensuring their educational journeys are not disrupted by the conflict in their homeland.

b. CargoGO LLC

Country: Lithuania

Partner: Vilnius University Business School

Recognised for its innovative aspect, CargoGO's involvement highlights the importance of businesses in educational support during crises. Owners of CargoGO and alumni of the VU Business School, Donatas Butinavičius and Jūratė Butinavičienė are contributing financial support to Ukrainian students.

c. Moody's Lithuania JSC

Country: Lithuania

Partner: Vilnius University Business School

Moody's Lithuania's partnership with Vilnius University Business School includes substantial financial assistance of over €40,000, to fund studies of nine Ukrainian students. This initiative is a strategic approach to alleviate the financial burdens faced by students due to the ongoing conflict.

d. Association "TEV"

Country: Latvia

Partner: University of Latvia

TEV, in cooperation with the University of Latvia, organised an international seminar and conference aimed at broadening the educational prospects for participants. This venture underscores the potential for academic institutions to serve as platforms for international dialogue and learning.

e. NGO "Eesti People to People"

Country: Latvia

Partner: Latvian University of Biological Sciences and Technology

Eesti People to People's 'Women Online' initiative offers digital marketing training for immigrant and refugee Ukrainian women in Latvia and Estonia. This programme bolsters participants' digital skills, thus enhancing their employability in the current digital-centric job market.

These initiatives reflect a robust effort to sustain and enrich the educational experiences of Ukrainian students amidst adversity. These case studies illustrate a strategic emphasis on providing targeted support to address specific educational and economic needs. Scholarship programmes, like those initiated by Norfa, are meant to alleviate financial stress, allowing students to focus on their academic pursuits. Such direct aid is crucial in

fostering an environment where educational progress is uninterrupted by external turmoil. The engagement of businesses in educational support, exemplified by CargoGO and Moody's Lithuania, extends the responsibility for academic resilience beyond traditional educational actors, illustrating the role that the corporate sector can play in times of crisis. Professional development programmes and international seminars, such as those organised by TEV and the University of Latvia, broaden the educational landscape, providing avenues for cross-cultural collaboration and skill enhancement. Eesti People with the People's digital training initiative addresses the integration and empowerment of immigrant and refugee women, showing the importance of adapting educational support to the evolving demands of the workforce. These collaborative efforts not only offer immediate relief but also contribute to the long-term resilience of the academic community, ensuring that education remains a pathway to stability and growth despite the challenges posed by crises.

3.2. Leisure and entertainment activities

This form of support plays a vital role in improving mental health and well-being of Ukrainian refugees, fostering a sense of community, and offering a respite from the stresses of displacement.

a. **Natural History Museum and Botanical Garden**

Country: Estonia

Partner: University of Tartu

The University of Tartu made a commendable gesture by offering Ukrainian citizens free admission to its Natural History Museum and Botanical Garden. Additionally, they organised free nature trips bi-monthly, aiming to provide not just relaxation but also promote scientific literacy to the targeted audience.

b. **BoulderHouse (Laipiojimas JSC)**

Country: Lithuania

Partner: Vytautas Magnus University

BoulderHouse, in association with Vytautas Magnus University, extended an invitation to Ukrainian students and educators for free climbing training. Such activities not only promoted physical wellness but also contributed to community building.

c. **Korgas JSC**

Country: Lithuania

Partner: Vilnius University

Korgas displayed solidarity with Ukraine on Independence Day August 24 by illuminating the central facade of Vilnius University with the Ukrainian flag. This symbolic act was a powerful message of support and unity.

d. **1K Aid Fund (Public institution “One K Support Foundation”)**

Country: Lithuania

Partner: Vilnius University

The 1K Aid Fund facilitated a donation of over 500 children's books to Ukrainian children, enriching their cultural and intellectual experiences during difficult times. The event was held at the Writers' Hall of the Faculty of Philology of Vilnius University.

Moreover, the launch of the e-book "Children during the War: Stories of Resilience / Biographies of Resilience / Memories of Resilience" by Ukrainian academics offers insights into the experiences of children affected by the war. This project was backed by the 1K Aid Fund and held at Vilnius University, emphasising the role of academia in documenting and sharing narratives of resilience.

These leisure and entertainment initiatives contribute significantly to the wellbeing of Ukrainian refugees, indirectly supporting their personal and professional resilience. By providing spaces for relaxation and mental reprieve, these activities help maintain a balanced state of mind, which is crucial for learning and academic performance. The initiatives also play a key role in cultural integration and preservation of Ukrainian heritage, which is particularly important for displaced students who navigate new educational systems. Activities like the e-book launch not only offer leisure but also foster intellectual engagement, inviting reflection and dialogue on poignant topics related to the war's consequences on individuals and communities. Physical activities such as climbing at BoulderHouse serve as a reminder of the importance of physical health in supporting mental and academic performance. The combined effect of these initiatives helps build a supportive community for Ukrainian refugees, which is essential for resilience and personal growth during times of upheaval. By addressing the holistic needs of students beyond the classroom, these initiatives enhance their ability to adapt, engage, and succeed in their academic pursuits despite the challenges posed by displacement and crisis.

3.3. Open innovation actions

These actions encompass initiatives that bring together business acumen and academic prowess to address immediate challenges through collaborative creativity and technological innovation.

a. **TSENER (Võru County Vocational Training Centre) and Garage48 Foundation**

Country: Estonia

Partner: Estonian Academy of Arts

In an innovative event (makeathon) named "Future of Wood," TSENER and Garage48 fostered cooperation between Estonia and Ukraine with the goal of rebuilding Ukrainian structures using timber. Participants were expected to generate both physical and digital prototypes, focusing on themes of Modular, Circular, and Climate Neutral Design. This initiative stands out for its contribution to sustainable reconstruction efforts.

b. Involvement of several companies - book fair project

Country: Estonia

Partner: Tallinn University of Technology

This collaboration involved a book fair where publishing companies donated books, the proceeds of which supported Ukrainian students. This was a charity fair and the names of the companies participating in it were not disclosed. The positive effects of this endeavour have highlighted the organisers' eagerness to orchestrate this event again, underscoring their dedication to continuous support.

c. Garage 48 Foundation

Country: Estonia

Partners: Estonian Aviation Academy, Tallinn University of Technology

Garage48's "Defence for Ukraine" (February 7-19, 2023; Tartu, Estonia) served as a hub for Baltic and Scandinavian military and defence schools, tech companies, and the public defence sector to develop innovative defence equipment. The focus on creating practical solutions to urgent defence needs underscores the project's innovative nature.

This section illustrates a strong link between hands-on problem-solving and academic resilience. Through open innovation actions, businesses and universities provided platforms for experiential learning and practical application of theoretical knowledge. The Future of Wood initiative facilitated cross-country collaboration and applied learning in sustainability, which is expected to have long-term educational benefits. It also illustrates how academic institutions can respond to real-world crises with agility and creativity. The Taltech Book Fair Project not only offered financial aid but also promoted literacy and learning, reinforcing the importance of continuous education. The Garage48 Defence for Ukraine project leveraged the collaborative energy of diverse sectors to foster innovation in a high-stakes context, demonstrating how universities can be at the forefront of developing solutions to war-related affairs. These initiatives exemplify how open innovation can bolster academic resilience by providing students and academics with the opportunities to engage directly with contemporary issues, thus enriching their educational experiences and preparing them for future challenges.

3.4. Psychological support

The section addresses the crucial need for mental health support for Ukrainians affected by the conflict. The initiatives by Ideaport Riga, Bite Latvija, and Webmultishop, in cooperation with RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, have established a comprehensive psychological support network.

a. Idea Port Riga Ltd

Country: Latvia

Partner: RISEBA University of Applied Sciences

Ideaport Riga's creation of a Latvian ICT-supported psychological support network provided three-fold assistance: a) in-person mentoring for new arrivals, b) remote support for those in or outside Latvia, and c) assistance for Latvian residents involved in aid groups. The innovative nature of these actions lies in its inclusive and multifaceted approach to psychological aid, leveraging technology to reach a wider audience.

b. Bite Latvija Ltd

Country: Latvia

Partner: RISEBA University of Applied Sciences

Bite Latvija replicated the structure of Ideaport Riga's programme, emphasising the replication of successful models for expanded impact. The innovative aspect of this support lies in the personalised matching of support personnel to Ukrainian families, addressing individual needs.

c. Webmultishop Company LLC

Country: Latvia

Partner: RISEBA University of Applied Sciences

Following the established mentoring model, Webmultishop extended the psychological support network with other business partners, reinforcing the collaborative effort among Latvian businesses and the university. Webmultishop's participation highlights the collective mobilisation for mental health support within the business community.

d. Association "Tavi Draugi"

Country: Latvia

Partner: RISEBA University of Applied Sciences

Tavi Draugi created a psychological support network addressing three key areas: providing direct support to Ukrainians in Latvia, remote support for those in transit or already in Latvia, and support for Latvian residents involved in Ukrainian aid efforts. Though not labelled innovative, this program's comprehensive support structure is notable for its holistic approach.

These case studies reflect a profound acknowledgement and understanding that mental wellbeing is primordial to heal the wounds of the war in Ukrainian refugees and facilitate their road towards academic success and resilience. Psychological support networks contribute to resilience by addressing the well-being of the university community, thus maintaining a conducive environment for learning and collaboration. The collaborative efforts of companies and RISEBA University of Applied Sciences in Latvia demonstrate the effectiveness of partnerships in scaling up mental health support services. The initiatives employed ICT tools to facilitate remote counselling and support, an innovative approach that likely broadened the reach and accessibility of psychological resources. Such support systems are vital for students and their families, enabling them to overcome the mental and emotional challenges posed by displacement and integrate more successfully into their new academic environments. The assistance mechanisms for Latvian residents working with Ukrainian support groups acknowledges the emotional toll on helpers, underscoring the comprehensive nature of these programmes. By addressing the needs of

both the recipients and providers of support, these initiatives contribute to a healthier, more resilient community overall. The consistent theme across these initiatives is the recognition of the intricate connection between psychological wellbeing and the ability to engage fully with academic and social life. By establishing robust support networks, these collaborations have laid the groundwork for enhanced academic resilience among Ukrainian students, ensuring that they are supported not just intellectually, but emotionally as well.

3.5. Accommodation and sanitary services

This section involves initiatives that address the essential subsistence needs of Ukrainian refugees, perceived as crucial for their wellbeing and ability to focus on academic pursuits.

a. **Žalgiris Clinic of Vilnius University Hospital**

Country: Lithuania

Partner: Vilnius University

Dental students from Vilnius University provided free dental care to Ukrainian children, showcasing a practical application of their skills and an immediate response to health care needs. This initiative not only offered essential services but also enriched the students' educational experience through real-world practice.

b. **"LG Electronics Latvia" Ltd**

Country: Latvia

Partners: Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, Daugavpils University

LG Electronics provided household appliances to organisations that had already accommodated over 500 asylum seekers in 2022, including facilities associated with Ventspils University of Applied Sciences and Daugavpils University. By ensuring access to basic home appliances, LG Electronics aided in creating a more comfortable and dignified living situation for Ukrainian refugees. LG Electronics provides support to asylum seekers from Ukraine staying in Riga, Daugavpils and Ventspils.

These case studies of accommodation and sanitary services show how important it is to provide a solid base on which Ukrainian refugees can rebuild their lives, including their educational goals. Secure housing and access to essential services are essential for any individual, particularly for students who need a safe environment to study and learn effectively. The efforts of dental students at Vilnius University go beyond mere provision of care; they embody the spirit of service learning, where students apply academic skills to serve their community, enhancing their professional development and empathy. LG Electronics' support played a crucial role in ensuring the day-to-day living needs of refugees were met. The availability of basic appliances can significantly ease the stress of daily life, allowing students and their families to focus more on academic and personal development. By addressing fundamental human needs, these initiatives significantly contribute to creating an environment where academic resilience can flourish. Providing a

sense of normalcy and stability supports the mental and emotional wellbeing of refugees, which is inextricably linked to their capacity to engage with and succeed in their academic endeavours.

3.6. Employability possibilities

The section explores actions focused on providing Ukrainian refugees with opportunities leading to employment, thereby supporting their economic stability and integration into the host country.

a. **Norfa (Norfos Mažmena JSC)**

Country: Lithuania

Partner: Vilnius University

Norfa actively sought to employ researchers who had fled Ukraine, recognising the value of continuing academic and professional work despite displacement. This initiative not only offered immediate employment but also preserved the professional identities and trajectories of the researchers.

b. **Novatore Ltd**

Country: Latvia

Partner: Stockholm School of Economics Riga

The "Novatore Impact Summit" was a forum where entrepreneurs, investors, and politicians from Latvia and Ukraine could exchange experiences, enhance understanding of the business environment, and strengthen business contacts. Such a summit not only offered networking opportunities but also potentially paved the way for job offers and business ventures that could include Ukrainians.

Employment plays a crucial role in individual resilience, providing not just financial resources but also a sense of purpose and self-esteem. For academic professionals, maintaining engagement in their field of expertise is essential for mental wellbeing and career progression. Norfa's initiative to employ Ukrainian researchers helped maintain the continuity of their academic careers, contributing positively to their personal resilience within the academic community. By preserving the expertise of these individuals, Norfa ensured that valuable knowledge and experience were not lost due to the crisis. The Novatore Impact Summit facilitated the sharing of knowledge and experiences, which is crucial for innovation and economic development. For academicians, such forums can provide insights into industry trends, new research opportunities, and collaborations that can lead to employability and academic contributions. These case studies demonstrate that providing employment opportunities for displaced academics can have far-reaching effects on their ability to adapt and thrive in new environments. The resulting stability and community engagement are critical for overcoming adversity and fostering an environment where intellectual and professional growth can continue.

3.7. Other

This category encompasses diverse initiatives that do not fit neatly into conventional support categories but are nonetheless significant in bolstering the resilience and support for Ukrainian refugees.

a. **NGO “Aitan Kaitsta”**

Country: Estonia

Partner: University of Tartu

At the University of Tartu, the community came together to produce camouflage nets and helmet covers, with their efforts contributing to a significant portion of the NGO Aitan Kaitsta's final delivery to Ukraine. This direct involvement in creating defensive equipment for Ukraine allowed participants to contribute tangibly to the war effort, fostering a sense of agency and collective action.

b. **Think tank "Praxis"**

Country: Estonia

Partner: University of Tartu

The Centre for Applied Social Research at the University of Tartu, in collaboration with the Praxis think tank, conducted a detailed survey of Ukrainian war refugees's experiences and attitudes. This research aimed to understand the refugees' needs, coping skills, and intentions regarding returning to Ukraine. Such data is crucial for developing informed support strategies and policies.

These initiatives reflect a broad spectrum of support that academic institutions and communities can provide in times of crisis, extending beyond the classroom and into society at large. The University of Tartu's contribution to protective gear production is an innovative form of academic engagement that extends the university's social mission beyond education and research, directly affecting the physical safety of individuals involved in the conflict. This initiative enhanced the sense of solidarity among participants and provided an educational experience in logistics, production, and teamwork. On the other hand, the Praxis and University of Tartu's survey offered valuable insights into the experiences of Ukrainian refugees, which can inform future academic and social support programmes. Understanding the population's needs and resilience strategies to take is critical for tailoring assistance effectively and for fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for refugees. Both cases contribute to academic resilience by engaging students and faculty staff in meaningful work that addresses real-world issues. This involvement not only enriches the academic experience but also fosters social responsibility and community engagement within the university. The initiatives underscore the potential for HEIs to act as pivotal agents of change and support in society, especially in times of crisis.

4. Lessons Learned

The lessons learned underscore the importance of cross-sector collaboration, comprehensive support strategies, and the need for adaptability and long-term commitment in addressing the challenges posed by crises. Businesses that engage with academia to address societal issues can make a significant impact, not only in the short term but also in building resilient communities capable of withstanding future challenges.

The first step to take when starting planning your actions is to identify the members of your team who will be in charge of and carry out the actions. Besides collaborators, fellow colleagues and students with whom you are in daily contact can be part of your initiative. What is important is for you to consider engaging a greater number of people working at your institution for two main reasons:

- a. First, it is advised to include as many academic staff and students as needed to successfully implement your action, as there are multiple roles that are to be fulfilled (e.g., team members working on communication and outreach, core team to be engaged in the management and organisation of the action, others to volunteer during the action, etc.).
- b. Second, based on the topic and objectives covered by your action, you may see the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and students of different departments to increase impact and engagement within your academic community.
- c. Inter-institutional collaboration is also beneficial as a way to reach a broader target group. This multi-faceted approach underlines the importance of leveraging a wide network of skills, resources, and expertise to effectively respond to complex challenges, thereby enriching the academic and social fabric of the community at large.

Based on the comprehensive analysis presented in the report, three main lessons learned for businesses in engaging with academia and responding to crises, such as the socio-educational and humanitarian challenges posed by the Ukrainian crisis, include:

- the power of collaborative synergies, because the initiatives highlighted underscore the significant impact that can be achieved when businesses and academic institutions collaborate. These partnerships can extend beyond traditional boundaries, leveraging the strengths of each sector to innovate and respond effectively to crises. Collaboration not only enables the sharing of resources but also fosters a culture of innovation and resilience, amplifying the impact of initiatives aimed at addressing complex societal challenges;
- the importance of addressing holistic needs, because successful initiatives are those that go beyond addressing immediate or surface-level needs, focusing instead on the holistic well-being of individuals affected by crises. This includes not just academic support or employability opportunities but also psychological

support, leisure and cultural activities, and even practical assistance with accommodation and basic needs. Such a comprehensive approach is crucial for fostering a supportive environment where affected individuals can continue to grow academically, personally, and professionally;

- adaptability and long-term engagement, because the evolving nature of crises demands that businesses and academic institutions remain flexible and ready to adapt their strategies and initiatives to meet changing needs. Long-term engagement and the establishment of permanent structures for crisis response within academic institutions are recommended. Businesses, for their part, should integrate corporate social responsibility into their core strategies, maintaining a continuous engagement with academic institutions. This adaptability ensures that the support provided remains relevant and effective over time, contributing to sustainable resilience and recovery.

5.Challenges and opportunities

The diverse array of initiatives analysed here reveals that resilience in crisis is best achieved through collaborative efforts that address both immediate needs and long-term wellbeing. The interplay between practical support and community engagement emerges as a central theme, highlighting the importance of addressing the holistic needs of individuals to foster an environment where academic and personal growth can continue unabated. These insights are vital for shaping future crisis response strategies and for enhancing academic resilience:

- Multi-faceted collaboration is key. The synergistic effect of diverse actions in the collaboration of business and universities based on the development of their network is expected.
- Cultural and recreational activities bolster community ties. Activities such as museum visits, leisure events, and book donations played a crucial role in fostering community among refugees and host populations, which in turn supported mental health and social cohesion.
- Psychological support is integral. Initiatives that included psychological support addressed a critical need among refugees, contributing to their overall well-being and ability to engage in academic endeavors.
- Innovation drives impact. Innovative projects, particularly those in the "Open Innovation Actions" category, demonstrated that creative solutions could be developed rapidly in response to urgent needs, often leading to sustainable practices and products.
- Employment opportunities provide stability. Initiatives that created employment and professional development opportunities for refugees had significant impacts on their economic stability and integration, directly influencing their academic engagement and success.
- Practical applications enhance learning. Opportunities for students to apply their learning in practical, real-world contexts, such as in the production of protective gear, enriched their educational experience and professional preparedness.

- Research and data collection inform effective response. Surveys and research projects that gathered data on the needs and experiences of refugees were essential for understanding the crisis and tailoring responses accordingly.
- Challenges are learning opportunities. Challenges faced during these initiatives, such as logistical difficulties or resource limitations, highlighted areas for improvement in crisis management and inter-organizational coordination.
- Resilience is built on a foundation of basic needs. Addressing fundamental needs like accommodation, sanitary services, and essential home appliances was critical for establishing a stable environment conducive to academic resilience.
- Continuity and adaptability are crucial. Sustained support over time and the adaptability of initiatives to the changing needs of refugees were essential for long-term resilience.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Summing up, we draw upon the collective experiences in the Baltics to underline the fundamental role that business-academia collaborations play in crisis response. It is evident that these partnerships can significantly extend the support available to individuals affected by crises, particularly in the realm of academic resilience.

The comprehensive case studies demonstrate that academic institutions, while primarily centres for education and research, are also valuable community engagement hubs with the capacity to address a range of humanitarian needs. Collaborations with the business sector not only leverage this potential but also amplify it, leading to innovative, sustainable, and impactful outcomes.

From offering psychological support and employability opportunities to facilitating open innovation actions and providing essential services, the collaborations have shown versatility and responsiveness to the complex challenges presented by the crisis in Ukraine. Moreover, the engagement in leisure and cultural activities has underscored the importance of holistic approaches to wellbeing in academic environments.

The report suggests a dynamic landscape of business-academia collaborations in the Baltic region, with variations in the level of involvement likely influenced by strategic priorities, available resources, and possibly the changing nature of the crisis itself. The data for Phase 2 indicates a notable decrease in the number of initiatives across nearly all institutions, with Vilnius University's involvement reducing to three and the University of Tartu being the only institution to increase its participation. This suggests that the University of Tartu may have developed a sustainable model for engagement in business-academia collaborations that allowed it to maintain, if not enhance, its activities in this area. Meanwhile, institutions like the Estonian Academy of Arts, RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, and Vytautas Magnus University did not maintain their previous year's level of activity, which may reflect a shift towards consolidation and continuation of existing projects rather than the initiation of new ones. The decrease in the number of initiatives in the Phase 2 might also hint at a transition from a reactive to a more sustainable and integrative approach to collaboration in the longer term, as immediate

crisis-driven needs are addressed and the focus potentially shifts to enduring resilience and recovery.

The success of these collaborations calls for a set of recommendations. It is advisable for academic institutions to establish permanent structures for crisis response that can be activated as needed, ensuring that the infrastructure for support is readily available. Businesses, on their part, should consider continuous engagement with academic institutions to foster innovation and community support, integrating corporate social responsibility into their core strategies.

The incorporation of real-world crisis response into academic curricula could be beneficial, providing students with practical experience while contributing positively to society. It is also recommended that a formalised network for sharing best practices and resources among businesses and academic institutions be developed to enhance collective efficacy in crisis response.

The resilience demonstrated by the Baltic academic community in partnership with the business sector serves as a compelling model for others. It embodies the spirit of innovation, empathy, and collaboration that is essential not only for navigating present challenges but also for preparing for future uncertainties. Moving forward, it will be crucial to maintain the momentum of these initiatives, continually evolving them to meet the dynamic needs of those in need of support.

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