

UDC 94(477):352.07]:37.014.3(477)“199/20”  
DOI 10.24919/2519-058X.33.317475

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**Bibliographic Description of the Article:** Makarets, S., & Kavylin, O. (2024). The Role of the Local Self-government in the Development of the Education System of Ukraine (at the end of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st centuries). *Skhidnoievropeiskyi istorychnyi visnyk [East European Historical Bulletin]*, 33, 212–226. doi: 10.24919/2519-058X.33.317475

**THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF UKRAINE  
(at the end of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st centuries)**

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the research is to determine the influence and significance of the local governments in the development of education in Ukraine from 1991 to 2023. The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism, authorial objectivity, multifactoriality, historical-genetic, historical-typological and historic-systemic methods. The Scientific Novelty. The impact of local government reforms on the education system in Ukraine in the late 20th and early 21st centuries was studied for the first time. The Conclusions. Therefore, the history of local government educational policy in independent Ukraine can be divided into three periods. The first one (1991 – 1997) was a period of uncertainty regarding the competencies and powers of local government bodies in the field of education due to the variability of legislation, fluctuations between community and state models of local self-government, as well as a severe economic crisis in the country. The second one (1997 – 2014)*

was the period of establishment of the state-public model of local self-government, the distribution of functions for the management, financing and control of education between state authorities and local governments, and the growth of the role of local governments in financing education, which covered 60% of expenditures on educational institutions. At the same time, education funding remained low due to low local budget revenues. The third one (from 2014) is the period of decentralization (administrative), educational, and budgetary reforms, as a result of which the issue of education has become one of the central issues in the activities of local government bodies. This period is characterized by increased investment in education, modernization of the education network, improving the quality and accessibility of education, and ensuring its inclusiveness. Local governments form strategic objectives for the development of education as one of the main ones for the further development of territorial communities, and therefore plan significant expenditures on education – 40–60% of their budgets.

**Key words:** local self-government, decentralization reform, education reform, educational policy, local self-government development model.

### **РОЛЬ ОРГАНІВ МІСЦЕВОГО САМОВРЯДУВАННЯ У РОЗБУДОВІ СИСТЕМИ ОСВІТИ УКРАЇНИ (кінець ХХ – початок ХХІ ст.)**

**Анотація. Мета дослідження** – з'ясувати вплив і значення органів місцевого самоврядування у розбудові освіти в Україні від 1991 до 2023 р. **Методологія дослідження** спирається на принципи історизму, авторської об'єктивності, багатофакторності, а також на загальнонаукові та спеціально-історичні методи (історико-генетичний, історико-типологічний, історико-системний). **Наукова новизна:** вперше досліджено вплив реформ місцевого самоврядування на систему освіти в Україні кінця ХХ – початку ХХІ ст. **Висновки.** Отже, історію освітньої політики місцевого самоврядування у незалежній Україні можна поділити на три періоди. **Перший (1991 – 1997)** – період невизначеності щодо компетентностей і повноважень органів місцевого самоврядування у сфері освіти з огляду на змінюваність законодавства, коливання між громадянською і державницькою моделями місцевого самоврядування, а також важкою економічною кризою в державі. **Другий (1997 – 2014)** – період утвердження державницько-громадянської моделі місцевого самоврядування, розподіл функцій щодо управління, фінансування та контролю освіти між органами державної влади і самоврядуванням, зростанням ролі місцевого самоврядування у фінансуванні освіти, які покривали 60 % видатків на заклади освіти. При цьому фінансування освіти залишалося низьким через низькі доходи місцевих бюджетів. **Третій (від 2014 р.)** – період проведення децентралізаційної (адміністративної), освітньої, бюджетної реформ, у результаті чого питання освіти перетворилося на одне із центральних у діяльності органів місцевого самоврядування. Цей період характеризується зростанням капіталовкладень в освіту, модернізацію освітньої мережі, підвищенням якості і доступності освіти, забезпечення її інклюзивності. Органи місцевого самоврядування формують стратегічні завдання розвитку освіти як одні з основних для подальшого розвитку територіальних громад, а тому планують видатки на освіту у суттєвих розмірах – 40–60 % від своїх бюджетів.

**Ключові слова:** місцеве самоврядування, реформа децентралізації, реформа освіти, освітня політика, модель розвитку місцевого самоврядування.

**The Problem Statement.** The study on the history of the local self-government in Ukraine, as in other countries of the world, involves clarifying its role in organizing the functioning of the main components of community life: economic, administrative, educational, cultural. There is the complexity of conducting this study in several aspects: first of all, since 1991, the local self-government in Ukraine has been experiencing complex transformations associated with constant changes in legislation, a difficult political, economic and financial situation, the implementation of reforms, as well as Russia's hybrid and conventional war against Ukraine; second of all, there is lack of a complete source base, since the vast majority of necessary documents are still in the archives of local self-government bodies and have not been transferred to the central state archives; third of all, there are contradictory conclusions

and assessments of experts on the issues of the local self-government in Ukraine, which are guided by irrelevant methods and operate on selective facts. It should be noted that there are no studies on the activities of the local self-government bodies in independent Ukraine regarding the development of the education sector.

**The Review of the Recent Research and Publications.** The issue on the local self-government reform in Ukraine attracts the attention of the Ukrainian and foreign scholars. The legal and administrative aspects of the functioning of local self-government have been particularly actively studied, which is reflected in the studies by Anatoliy Tkachuk, Robert Aghanoff, Trevor Braun (Tkachuk, Ahranoff & Braun, 1997), Oleksandr Ievtushenko (Ievtushenko, 2013), Yuriy Kovbasiuk (Kovbasiuk, 2014), Anatoliy Matviyenko (Matviyenko, 2015), Tetiana Baranovska (Baranovska, 2016), Larysa Olenkovska (Olenkovska, 2016), Olena Maidanyk (Maidanyk, 2018), and the others. Iryna Drobush studied the social function of local self-government in Ukraine (Drobush, 2017). The local self-government in Ukraine as a subject of education management is described in the monograph by Natalia Vokolova (Volkova, 2014). The historical development of local self-government was analysed by Vitaliy Zablotskyi (Zablotskyi, 2013), Mykola Haliv, Olena Nevmerzhytska, Vasyl Ilnytskyi (Haliv & Nevmerzhytska, 2018; Haliv & Ilnytskyi, 2019), Dmytro Kruhliak (Kruhliak, 2020), Anatoliy Kalyayev and Artem Solomaha (Kalyayev & Solomaha, 2024), and the authors of the monograph “Local self-government in Ukraine (XX – early XXI centuries). Western lands” (Romaniuk, 2023). A historical and comparative analysis of the Polish and the Ukrainian local self-government reforms was carried out by Tamara Sharavara and Anastasia Nekriach (Sharavara & Nekriach, 2023). Some methodological aspects of the issue under study are covered in the studies by Mykola Haliv and Vasyl Ilnytskyi (Haliv & Ilnytskyi, 2021; Haliv & Ilnytskyi, 2023). We should mention the expert analysis of the decentralization reform in Ukraine among the foreign studies, which was conducted by specialists from the Danish Institute for International Studies (Lindegaard & Webster, 2018). Taking into consideration the above-mentioned, in historiography there are no studies on the role of the Ukrainian local self-government in the development of education, apart from the work written by N. Volkova.

**The purpose of the research** is to determine the influence and significance of the local governments in the development of education in Ukraine from 1991 to 2023.

**The Research Results.** The issue on the role of local self-government bodies in the education system development is closely connected with the issue of expanding the competencies and powers of local self-government in Ukraine. Since the proclamation of independence in 1991, Ukraine has been undergoing the gradual establishment of a local self-government system. The country witnessed a struggle and coexistence of two models of the local self-government: the community-based and state-driven models over nearly thirty years. The first model defines the community as the social foundation of the local authority (Drobush, 2017, pp. 59–60). The second model involves decentralization of the state power and the involvement of the community in carrying out some state functions (Maidanyk, 2018, pp. 56–57).

The first regulatory legal act, which regulated the powers of the local self-government in independent Ukraine was the Law “On Local Councils of People’s Deputies of the Ukrainian SSR and Local Self-Government” (Law of Ukraine, 1990), which was adopted in 1990 by the democratically elected Verkhovna Rada. According to a lawyer Olena Maidanyk, the above-mentioned law stated the use of the state-driven model of local self-government

(Maidanyk, 2018, p. 56). According to the law, local self-government bodies were responsible for financing from the local budget the costs associated with maintaining the public educational institutions and managing them. It was specified in one of the articles that local self-government bodies should “increase, within the available funds, the expenditure norms” for maintaining public educational institutions (Zakon Ukrainy, 1990). The term “public educational institutions” referred to preschool establishments, primary, basic, and secondary schools, as well as extracurricular institutions (such as music, art, sports schools, etc.).

In March of 1992, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted a new version of the Law “On Local Councils of People’s Deputies and Local and Regional Self-Government”, which marked the transition to a community-based concept of local self-government (Maidanyk, 2018, p. 56). Although there wasn’t much on the functions of the local self-government bodies in the field of education. However, the Executive Committees of the local Councils were given the right to organize methodological assistance to schools, plan the development of a network of schools and preschool and after-school institutions, based on the standards of provision in the field of public education (Zakon Ukrainy, 1992). In the same year, the institution of Representative of the President was introduced in Ukraine at the levels of districts, regions, cities of Kyiv and Sevastopil (and districts of these cities). The Representative of the President of Ukraine performed the functions of the head of the state administration.

At that time, the Law “On Education” was in force in Ukraine, adopted on May 23, 1991. According to it, the state policy in the field of education was determined by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and implemented by the state executive authorities and local self-government bodies. The state executive authorities and the local self-government bodies were given the opportunity to manage and control the educational institutions’ activities, ensure the development of the network of educational institutions, strengthen their material base, provide social protection for education workers, children, students and youth, organize children preschool and school age registration (Zakon Ukrainy, 1991).

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the law “On the Formation of Local Authorities and Self-Government” in February of 1994 (Zakon Ukrainy, 1994). It did not address education issues, however, according to O. Maidanyk, this law returned to the statist model of the local self-government (Maidanyk, 2018, p. 56). The Constitution of Ukraine, approved on June 28, 1996, guaranteed the activities of local self-government, although some articles laid obstacles to further reform of the local self-government system, in particular regarding the budget system and existence of regional and district councils (Tkachuk, Ahranoff & Braun, 1997, p. 145). In fact, the Constitution affirmed the statist model of local self-government.

Ukraine ratified the European Charter of the Local Self-Government in 1997 after joining the Council of Europe in 1995 (Yevropeiska khartiia, 1985). On May 21, 1997, the Law “On Local Self-Government” (Zakon Ukrainy, 1997) was adopted. The “territorial community of villages, settlements, cities” was recognized the primary subject of local self-government, the main holder of its functions and powers. The representative bodies at the District and Region levels remained Councils, and their executive bodies were the local state administrations. The norms of the law provided for the independence of the local government bodies (along with the formation of the budget), however, de facto the sphere of the local government was clearly regulated, in particular, District and Regional Councils were preserved as an element of management in the regions, while the filling and execution of budgets remained within the competence of the local state administrations (Mistseve samovriaduvannia v Ukraini, 2023, p. 572).

The new law defined the powers of the local self-government bodies (executive bodies of village, settlement and city Councils) in the field of education: management of educational institutions; ensuring the acquisition of complete general secondary, vocational (vocational and technical), professional pre-higher and higher education in state and municipal educational institutions, creating the necessary conditions for the education of children and youth, development of their abilities; promoting the activities of preschool and out-of-school educational institutions, children's, youth and scientific and educational associations, youth centers; organizing medical care and nutrition in educational institutions (Zakon Ukrainy, 1997). The Law "On Local State Administrations" imposed on the local state authorities the obligation to take measures in order to preserve the educational institutions' network (Zakon Ukrainy, 1999). In 1997 and 2005, there were made attempts to develop a legislative framework for implementing territorial and administrative reform in Ukraine, however, political processes and expert conclusions hindered their implementation.

The territorial communities' right to act as public owners of the financial resources mobilised to local budgets as their own revenues is guaranteed in the Ukrainian Constitution and laws. At the same time, local self-government had the right to receive financial support from the state, especially in the implementation of delegated powers. According to the Budget Code of Ukraine, there are the following revenue sources for the local budgets: the tax on the profit of enterprises and financial institutions of municipal ownership, part of the net profit (income) of municipal unitary enterprises and associations, local taxes and fees. However, the share of the local taxes and fees in the local budgets did not exceed 2,3% in Ukraine (Yakymchuk, 2013, pp. 297–298).

The budgeting of Ukraine until 2014, when the decentralization reform was launched, was characterized by a high level of financial resources concentration in the state budget, which reduced the importance of the local budgets and the ability of the local governments to solve the local problems important for the territorial communities. Eventually, the experts stated that due to the lack of the financial resources caused by the limited composition of the local government budget revenues and their annual significant underfunding (in terms of meeting the approved amounts of subsidies and subventions), the financial independence of the local governments was called into question (Yakymchuk, 2013, p. 301).

At that time, the Ukrainian education development took place under the conditions of the contradictory influences of political, economic, cultural and internal factors. According to Natalia Volkova, the main contradictory issues were: inconsistency, insufficient scientific justification of the state policy in the field of education; the lack of monitoring regarding the quality of the carried out reforms, a low level of public participation in reforming education, its management, and assessment of its quality; prolonged economic and environmental crises; demographic changes (declining birth rate, migration, depopulation of settlements); the crisis of the family as a social institution, which led to a deficit of responsible parenthood, the conflict between generations of adults and children; almost unregulated development of the educational institutions' network by the state and local authorities, which led to the decline of some levels of education (preschool, vocational, postgraduate) and did not ensure the quality of specialists' training at other levels (higher education, state and non-state sectors of which grew in the part of the educational institutions of III-IV levels of accreditation rapidly); imbalance of quantitative and qualitative indicators of vocational and higher education with the needs of economy and labour market; the gap in time and content of modernization processes in general secondary and higher education, which led to the unpreparedness of



pedagogical, scientific and pedagogical and managerial personnel to respond to innovations in a timely and adequate manner. The above-mentioned issues jeopardized realization of the most important right of every citizen – to have equal and fair access to high-quality and effective education according to their needs and capabilities (Volkova, 2014, p. 55).

Taking into consideration difficult economic situation and limited financial capabilities by laws and codes, local governments in Ukraine were unable to finance the network of educational institutions fully. There was a significant reduction in the number of preschool, primary and secondary educational institutions, during the first two decades of Ukraine's independence. Hence, the network of preschool institutions in Ukraine decreased by almost 40%; the number of children attending preschool institutions – by 55,5 in 1990 – 2006%; the coverage rate of preschool children decreased from 57% in 1990 to 40% in 2000, increasing to 53% in 2006 (Doshkilni navchalni zaklady, 2010). The statistical data state that there were 2,3 thousand institutions in Ukraine in 1991, 1, 2 thousand institutions – in 2000, 1,1 thousand preschool education institutions – in 2010. The year of the 2005 became critical, as there were only functioning only 1040 preschool institutions in Ukraine (Yak zminylasia osvita v Ukraini, 2011).

The network of preschool educational institutions reduced particularly in villages. The number of institutions decreased by 32,6%, and the number of places in those institutions decreased by 54%; the coverage rate of children with preschool education fell off by more than a third – from 43% to 29%. In cities, the number of preschool educational institutions decreased by 44,5%; the number of places doubled; the coverage rate increased from 64% to 66% (Doshkilni navchalni zaklady, 2010). The reduction in the number of preschool educational institutions in Ukraine led to an increase in their workload. This indicator exceeds the national average in almost 50% of regions – 112 children per 100 places. It should be noted that it was applied to the cities, where the workload of preschool educational institutions was 123 children per 100 places in 2010. In contrast, there were 83 children per 100 places in the rural areas (Volkova, 2014, p. 57).

According to N. Volkova, the reduction of the preschool education network is due to numerous socio-economic factors. First of all, there was a decline in production, which led to the forced transfer of departmental (those operating at enterprises, institutions and organizations) preschool institutions to local government bodies in the early 1990s, and the latter were unable to provide a sufficient level of their financing. Second of all, there was insufficient budget financing of education in general. Third of all, due to a low level of income diverse families could not pay for the children's education in preschool institutions. Fourth of all, there was a high level of unemployment among young people, which created conditions, when young families were able to raise children without preschool institutions (Volkova, 2014, c. 57).

The situation was somewhat different in the sphere of general secondary education institutions. The network of general schools decreased in 1990 – 2010, although 99% of them were municipally owned. To make matters worse, the network of preschool institutions decreased rapidly. Hence, in 1995/94 academic year, there were 22,255 general schools in Ukraine, in 2009/10 academic year – 20,576 (Osaulenko, 2010, p. 444). Thus, 1,679 schools ceased to exist over these 15 years. Although the number of school-age children also decreased. Thus, there were 7,143 thousand people, at the beginning of 1990/91 academic year, and by 2010/11 academic year – 4,299 thousand people, i.e. 1,7 times less. As of the 2010/11 academic year, the teacher-student ratio was 1:8,4 (compared to 1:13,3 in the

1990/91 academic year) (Osaulenko, 2010, p. 444; Zahalnoosvitni navchalni zaklady, 2010). If the decrease in the number of students was a consequence of demographic processes and population migration, then the decrease in the number of educational institutions maintained by local governments was the consequence of a low financial capacity of local governments.

Since the 1990s, the number of vocational and technical education institutions has been decreasing. Thus, the number of vocational technical schools and colleges under the management of the Ministry for Education and Science of Ukraine has decreased from 742 to 505 educational institutions over the 20 years of independence. The number of students has more than halved – from 757 to 361 thousand people (Як змінилася освіта, 2011). A significant part of vocational and technical educational institutions were under the management of other ministries. At the beginning of the 2010/11 academic year the total number of vocational and technical educational institutions was 976 state institutions that trained specialists in 342 professions (492 specialties) in Ukraine. The number of private institutions as of the beginning of 2010 was 924 units with a student population of 88.9 thousand people (Volkova, 2014, pp. 59–60). During the same time, the number of higher education institutions increased dramatically. If in 1990 in Ukraine there were 149 institutes and universities, then in 2010 there were 349 institutes and universities. At the same time, the number of students increased from 881 thousand to 2,139 thousand (Yak zminylasia osvita, 2011). The majority of vocational (vocational and technical) and higher education institutions were state-owned. However, in the 1990s, private and, importantly, municipal institutions of vocational and higher education began to appear. As of 2023, 29 municipal institutions of higher education operated in Ukraine (Dopovid pro yakist vyshchoi osvity, 2024). In Ukraine, perhaps the most famous of them is Borys Hrinchenko Kyiv University, which was founded in 2002.

Financing of education in Ukraine by the state budget and local budgets in 2002 – 2009 is presented in Table 1.

Year	Total budget (mln. hrn.)	State budget expenditures		Local budget expenditures	
		mln. UAH	%	mln. UAH	%
2002	12269,0	4989,3	40,7	7279,7	59,3
2003	14977,7	5735,7	38,3	9242,0	61,7
2004	18333,2	7200,0	39,3	11133,2	60,7
2005	26801,8	9932,8	37,1	16869,0	62,9
2006	33785,0	12122,1	35,9	21662,9	64,1
2007	44333,6	15149,7	34,2	29183,9	65,8
2008	60959,4	21554,3	35,4	39405,1	64,6
2009	66773,6	23925,7	35,8	42847,9	64,2

*The table was compiled by the authors based on official statistical data: Osaulenko, O. H. (Ed.). (2010). Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 2009 rik [Statistical Yearbook of Ukraine for 2009]. Kyiv: Konsultant, 566 p.*

When analysing these data, it should be taken into account that state budget expenditures were mainly directed to financing vocational (vocational and technical) and higher education institutions, as well as subsidies for local budgets to pay salaries to teaching staff of preschool and general secondary education institutions. Local budgets' funds in financing education in Ukraine in the indicated years amounted to 59 to 65%, which is a significant indicator. However, these resources were only enough to support the functioning of the educational sector, not to develop the quality of education.

Under the influence of European educational reforms, a clear understanding of the need to increase the role of the public, as well as local self-government, in the field of education has been formed in Ukraine. Even in the National Doctrine of Education Development, approved in 2002, there was emphasized the need to redistribute functions and powers between central and local executive authorities on the one hand and local self-government bodies on the other (Natsionalna doktryna, 2002). The National Strategy for the Development of Education in Ukraine for 2012 – 2021, approved in 2013, declared the transition from state to state-public administration, a clear separation of functions between central, regional and local government bodies, ensuring self-government of educational institutions and scientific institutions, establishing a harmonious combination of the rights of the individual, society and the state in the field of education (Natsionalna stratehiia, 2013). However, real changes in the sphere of decentralization of public administration, budget financing, and therefore education, occurred after the Revolution of Dignity of 2013 – 2014.

In Ukraine, the decentralization process began in 2014 with the adoption of the Concept of Reform of Local Self-Government and Territorial Organization of Power in Ukraine (01.04.2014), Laws of Ukraine “On Cooperation of Territorial Communities” (17.06.2014), “On the voluntary unification of territorial communities” (05.02.2015) and amendments to the Budget and Tax Codes – regarding financial decentralization. This process made it possible to form, in accordance with the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, a significant, effective and capable institution of local self-government at the basic level – united territorial communities (OTH). By 2020, 1,070 OTHs were established in Ukraine, in which 4,882 communities voluntarily united (Reforma detsentralizatsii, 2020).

Amendments to the Tax and Budget Codes, which came into effect on January 1, 2015, provided local governments with greater financial resources to increase their economic capacity. United communities acquired the powers and resources that cities of regional significance have, in particular, the transfer of 60% of personal income tax to local budgets of OTHs under their own powers. In addition, revenues from taxes remain entirely at the local level: single tax, income tax on enterprises and financial institutions, municipal property tax, and property tax (real estate, land, transport). In addition, OTHs have direct inter-budgetary relations with the state budget (before the reform, only regional and district budgets, as well as budgets of cities of regional significance, had direct relations), to fulfill the powers delegated by the state, they are provided with appropriate transfers (grants, educational and medical subventions, subventions for the development of community infrastructure, etc.). Legislative changes also gave local governments the right to approve local budgets regardless of the date of adoption of the Law on the State Budget. Own revenues of local budgets from 2014 to 2019 increased by 200 billion UAH – from 68.6 billion UAH to 267 billion UAH (Reforma detsentralizatsii, 2020).

The new law “On Education” of September 5, 2017 defined the powers of local government bodies at three levels of the administrative and territorial structure of the state: 1) the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC), regional councils, Kyiv and Sevastopol city councils; 2) district, city councils and councils of united territorial communities; 3) village and settlement councils. All of them are recognized as responsible for implementing state policy in the field of education and ensuring the quality of education in the relevant territory. The Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, regional councils, Kyiv and Sevastopol city councils have the following powers: ensure the availability of complete general secondary education (high school) and professional (vocational



and technical) education; plan and ensure the development of a network of specialized secondary, professional (vocational and technical) and extracurricular education institutions, specialized educational institutions (scientific, military, sports, artistic), postgraduate education institutions, special educational institutions for people with special educational needs, scientific methodological educational and methodological institutions; have the right to establish educational institutions, including for people with special educational needs, as well as to reorganize and liquidate them (Zakon Ukrainy, 2017).

District, city councils, and councils of united territorial communities ensure the availability of preschool, primary, and basic secondary education, as well as extracurricular education. At the same time, they plan and ensure the development of a network of preschool, primary and basic secondary education institutions, and out-of-school education; they plan and ensure the development of a network of specialized secondary education institutions of an academic orientation (city councils with a population of more than 50 thousand – independently; city councils of cities with a population of less than 50 thousand – in agreement with the regional council); have the right to establish educational institutions, reorganize and liquidate them; ensure the availability of preschool and secondary education for all citizens living in the relevant territory, and take measures to ensure the need for preschool and after-school education (Zakon Ukrainy, 2017). The least powers are held by village and settlement councils. They ensure the availability of preschool and primary education, have the right to establish educational institutions, reorganize and liquidate them, and ensure their activities and development (Zakon Ukrainy, 2017).

The reforms carried out have established a mixed model of a local self-government (state-public) in Ukraine. The same model has been extrapolated to the management and financing of the education sector. The state budget in Ukraine provides for: payment of labour with accruals for teaching staff of institutions providing general secondary education (educational subvention); remuneration with accruals for teaching staff of inclusive resource centres (educational subvention); purchase of textbooks; support for individuals with special educational needs in preschool, general secondary and vocational (vocational and technical) education institutions; ensuring the formation of a new educational space; other expenses (budgetary programmes). Local budgets cover the following issues: maintenance of institutions and payment of labour of teaching staff of out-of-school and preschool education institutions, the centre for professional development of teaching staff, and the inter-school resource centre; payment of non-teaching staff of all established institutions; implementation of the development strategy of the general secondary education institution, including the implementation of innovative activities of the educational institution (Yaka rol orhaniv mistsevoho samovriaduvannia, 2023). Therefore, local governments have retained the right to receive educational subsidies. The procedure for distributing educational subsidies between local budgets is determined according to a formula based on the number of students studying in the relevant territory, taking into account the following factors (Zakon Ukrainy, 2017).

At the same time, newly created OTGs were required to establish education management bodies. The law gave local councils the opportunity to choose several options: to establish their own education management body; to establish their own body with delegation of administrative powers to the level of educational institutions; to establish a joint body for several territorial communities; to delegate powers on the basis of cooperation (Terentieva, 2021). Local governments are entrusted with the functions of controlling the activities of educational institutions they establish. Since control of the activities of educational institutions

by the founder is not a form of state supervision (control), there are no consequences for educational institutions, except for taking into account the results of the inspection when forming educational development plans or justified disciplinary measures for the head. Control should not violate the academic, organizational, personnel, and other autonomy of educational institutions. The objects of control are the financial and economic activities of educational institutions, their compliance with constituent documents, implementation of the plan of measures aimed at preventing and combating bowling, and preventing privileges or restrictions (discrimination) (Povnovazhennia, 2021, p. 9).

In accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On Complete General Secondary Education”, local governments must form plans for the development of a network of educational institutions (Zakon Ukrainy, 2020). The plan can be part of the community education development strategy, its appendix, or a separate document (Povnovazhennia, 2021, p. 15). The plan should contain not only the community’s vision for primary schools, gymnasiums, and lyceums of various profiles, but also provide for the creation of inclusive resource centres (IRCs), professional development centres (PDCs), and, if necessary, inter-school resource centres (IRCs). The creation of IRCs is envisaged for territorial communities with up to 7 thousand children in rural areas or at least 12 thousand children (under 18 years of age) in cities or urban areas. To create a CPR, it is necessary to determine the number of professional staff needed by the community. Several communities have the right to create a joint CPR (Povnovazhennia, 2021, p. 21). By the end of 2023, 690 IRCs were established in Ukraine, however, 46 of them ceased operations because they ended up in occupied territory (36 were completely or partially destroyed). Despite the fact that during the Russo-Ukrainian war, a significant number of specialists changed their place of residence within Ukraine or went abroad, the IRCs are provided with teaching staff (speech therapist teachers, special education teachers, rehabilitation teachers, practical psychologists) by 81.7% (4045 people) of the total need (Statystychni dani, 2023).

A significant achievement of decentralization and educational reforms in Ukraine was the increased attention of local governments to the problem of ensuring inclusive education, namely the creation of inclusive groups and classes in educational institutions. According to current statistics, as of December 1, 2023, 6,158 inclusive groups have been created in preschool education institutions, in which 11,285 pupils with special educational needs receive education and socialize. There were 29,321 inclusive classes in general secondary education institutions, where 40,354 students with special educational needs were educated. The number of special classes in general secondary education institutions reached 807, with 7,044 students with special educational needs in them. Over the past five years, the number of students with special educational needs in inclusive classes in general secondary education institutions has more than doubled (Statystychni dani, 2023). Of course, this became possible owing to special programmes financed from the state budget of Ukraine. However, a significant role was played by local governments, which, in their strategies for the development of education in OTHs, set the task of increasing the quality of education.

For example, the development strategy of Haisyn urban territorial community (Vinnytsia region), approved in June of 2021, recognizes one of the community’s weakest points: underpopulated and under-equipped rural schools, underdeveloped extracurricular education. Among the objectives planned for implementation by 2030, the strategy of this community determines: 1) carrying out major repairs, reconstruction, and thermal modernization of preschool and school facilities, taking into account the needs of people with physical

disabilities; 2) equipping preschool and school educational institutions with modern equipment necessary for the educational process; 3) purchasing school buses to organize transportation of students and teaching staff to educational institutions; 4) creation of supporting educational institutions; 5) creation of basic educational institutions; 6) introduction of scholarships for the 50 best students (Stratehiia Haisynskoi hromady, 2021).

An illustrative example is Nemyriv urban territorial community (Vinnytsia region), which, in accordance with the community development strategy approved in 2018, planned to spend UAH 57.5 million on education, which was 41% of its budget. (Stratehiia Nymyriivskoi hromady, 2018). Even higher indicators were demonstrated by Pustomyty community (Lviv region), whose budget amounted to UAH 186 million, of which 58% was planned for the education sector, primarily for improving the quality of education. By 2027, it is planned to “increase educational potential”, which involves implementing, in particular, the following measures: 1) to conduct a study of educational needs and the level of population satisfaction with educational services; 2) to create a database of teaching staff; 3) to establish a Centre for Professional Development of Teachers; 4) to develop a system of bonuses for teaching staff in accordance with the achieved work results; 5) to improve the material and technical base of preschool education institutions; 6) to ensure digitalization of processes in educational institutions, the availability of high-speed Internet in all educational premises; 7) to complete the construction of a school in the village of Semenivka, build another preschool education institution in the town of Pustomyty; 8) to implement specialized training in high school, to establish a lyceum; 9) to ensure unhindered access for people with disabilities to educational institutions; 10) to introduce “full-day schools” (Stratehiia Pustomytivskoi hromady, 2021). Of course, it is still too early to talk about the results of the implementation of development strategies for territorial communities in Ukraine, but planning documents demonstrate the orientation of local governments towards the development of quality education.

It should be noted that state authorities demonstrate their influence on local educational policy, in particular regarding the optimization of the network of educational institutions. The government does not provide educational subventions to finance the salaries of teachers in educational institutions with fewer than 45 students. According to the Ministry for Education and Science, in the 2023/24 academic year, 1,012 gymnasiums and 193 lyceums with up to 60 students operated in Ukraine, as well as 468 gymnasiums and 71 lyceums with up to 45 students. At the same time, there are 31 gymnasiums and 12 lyceums in Ukraine with up to 25 children studying. Potentially, from September 1, 2025, 437 gymnasiums and 59 lyceums will not receive educational subventions, and from September 1, 2026, another 544 gymnasiums and 122 lyceums will not receive them (Barsukova, 2024). Of course, such steps will force local governments to adjust the network of educational institutions.

**The Conclusions.** Therefore, the history of local government educational policy in independent Ukraine can be divided into three periods. The first one (1991 – 1997) was a period of uncertainty regarding the competencies and powers of local government bodies in the field of education due to the variability of legislation, fluctuations between community and state models of local self-government, as well as a severe economic crisis in the country. The second one (1997 – 2014) was the period of establishment of the state-public model of local self-government, the distribution of functions for the management, financing and control of education between state authorities and local governments, and the growth of the role of local governments in financing education, which covered 60% of expenditures on educational institutions. At the same time, education funding remained low due to low local

budget revenues. The third one (from 2014) is the period of decentralization (administrative), educational, and budgetary reforms, as a result of which the issue of education has become one of the central issues in the activities of local government bodies. This period is characterized by increased investment in education, modernization of the education network, improving the quality and accessibility of education, and ensuring its inclusiveness. Local governments form strategic objectives for the development of education as one of the main ones for the further development of territorial communities, and therefore plan significant expenditures on education – 40–60% of their budgets.

**Acknowledgements.** We express sincere gratitude to all members of the editorial board for consultations provided during the preparation of the article for publishing.

**Funding.** Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

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*The article was received April 08, 2024.  
Article recommended for publishing 29/11/2024.*