INTERPLAN

APA
American Planning Association
International Division
Creating Great Communities for All

2022 Ukraine Special Issue -Volume I

A Publication of the International Division of the American Planning Association

INTERPLAN

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DIVISION
OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

Executive Committee

Chair **Michael Kolber, AICP**

Immediate Past Chair **Timothy Van Epp, FAICP, IAIA**

Vice Chair of Financial Management **Joanne Manson, AICP**

Vice Chair at Large **Lyndsey Deaton, PhD, RA, AICP, RMP, LEED GA**

Vice Chair of Special Projects **Kate Holmquist, AICP, RLA, LEED AP ND, LEED AP BD + C**

Vice Chair of Communications **Jing Zhang, AICP**

Interplan Team

Managing Editor **Jing Zhang, AICP**

Assistant Editor **Lynn Abdouni, PhD**

Assistant Editor **Andy Cross, AICP**

Assistant Editor **Antonella Salmeron**

Assistant Editor **Jay Skardis, AICP**

Assistant Editor **Michelle Tullo, AICP**

Graphic Design **Jing Zhang, AICP**

American Planning Association
International Division
Creating Great Communities for All

American Planning Association International Division
1030 15th St NW
Suite 750 West
Washington, DC 20005

Cover Photo: YUSUKE KOIKE from Pixabay

Table of Content Photo: andriish22 from Pixabay

INTERPLAN

Ukraine Special Issue

Volume 1 | August, 2022

4
Chair's Column
Michael Kolber

9
My experiences in Ukraine and Eastern Europe
Tim Van Epp

13
Learn Ukrainian on Duolingo
Jing Zhang

18
Just Walking the Streets of Your City
Gitta Pap

24
Article Review
Jing Zhang

Just Walking the Streets of Your City

- Post War Reconstruction of Ukraine

By Gitta Pap, Ph.D

Landing in Budapest

I landed in Budapest on May 16th where I found no obvious sign of the Ukrainian-Russian war. I was not sure what to expect, and I was prepared for a hectic scene from a neighboring country to Ukraine. I was able to lodge as usual and get from the airport to the hotel without any delay, or stress. Restaurants, shops, and streets were displaying the usual, relatively "calm and normal" scene that have greeted me in the past two decades. Given the short time I had available before my next flight to Romania I walked the streets, and I was vigilant for signs of the war. My footpath from the fully restored Budapest State Opera House to the Western Railway Metro Station did not have any signs of refugee crisis, nor did I see people being abandoned as refugees.

As I was walking, I recalled Hungarian newsbites about citizen involvement at metro stations and railway stations. Many refugees were arriving to the Western Railway and Metro Station where citizens and authorities were receiving and helping them. In the metro station I started seeing the first informational signs for Ukrainian refugees through smart signage which were directing arriving refugees to a nearby yellow informational tent. The yellow refugee helping tent had a sign in Hungarian "We cannot accept more clothing donations."

I continued my walk around the Western Railway Station, and explored recent additions to the area. While I was sitting at a nearby coffee shop, I saw some visitors who seemed to be Ukrainian refugees asking for help from the people in the yellow tent. A family of four, that seemed to be a mother with two children, and a man, were talking to the individuals (likely volunteers) and were able to get what seemed to be board games, and toys for the children.

The scene was calm and there were no signs of chaos or disorientation, not in the subway or on the surface.

Figure 1 Transportation hub and the yellow informational tents for Ukrainian refugees in front of the Nyugati Pályaudvar (Western Railway Station), Budapest, 2022. Photo by Gitta Pap.

There are several charities, and citizen led initiations who have been providing help along the border, and in the capital. One of them, a Facebook group called "Segítségnyújtás (Ukrajna,Kárpátalja) Допомога українцям" has been providing help including food, shelter, work, and information. Due to limitations to time, I could not see the Eastern Metro and Railway Station (Keleti Pályaudvar). However, there seemed to be help and information available for those who seek it.

The Next Day

The next day, I continued my journey to Romania by air. Here, for the second time, everything was peaceful and "the usual everyday scenery" awaited me. There was no sign of the Ukrainian war in terms of chaos, or disorganization. I have landed in Marosvásárhely (Romanian: Tîrgu-Mureș). The region is quite off of the main routes of international attention of visitors, thus refugees. I did not spend time in the city, but I continued my journey to a more remote region of Transylvania (Romania). In general, I have not seen smart signages for refugees, or tents in the region. Likely, there is no need for them due to its remoteness. Information for refugees is shared through social media. Local governments, citizens and charity organizations have been reported to be helping out with donations, food, and shelter; e.g., like the city of Tîrgu-Mureș has been relying on state-provided funds and citizens to help refugees with lodging and food. According to Antal (2022) the state provided fund is enough for lunch, and for lodging, while breakfast, and dinner are provided through citizen donations.

People's Concern

Cities are calm and still. However, this calmness is deceptive. After spending nearly two weeks with the local community, it became evident that there is a general concern as prices have escalated.

One walking in the city, and engaging with local residents, will be reminded of the disappointment, concerns, and diverse points of views of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine.

While people are concerned, they are also busy living their own life which is quite hard here, with low minimum wage of about $ 580/month (about $ 7000/year). To place it into perspective, Romania, and Hungary, based on their minimum wage, are Group 3 countries in the European Union. Group 3 countries have a minimum vague between $ 350-850/month. In contrast, Group 1 countries like Ireland, Germany and France range from $1700-1875/month. Group 2 countries include Spain and Slovenia with about $1180-1230. Luxembourg is a Group 1 country with an outlying $ 2570/month. Some countries have no national minimum wage (Eurostat 2022, values are rounded, and converted to dollar value from euro). In general, people are getting ready for inflated prices, but the war still seems remote for many.

Some Reflections

What I noticed during my short stay in both countries is that certain media and political commentaries, figures, etc. seem to be consciously dividing people in both countries. However, at the end of the day, both countries are helping, along with citizens and organizations. I am not seeking to judge, or evaluate their work. I always find that the least help is tremendous for the one who needs it, and criticizing does not help anyone, those who are helping, or the ones being helped (owing to ethnic, racial, and historic divides of the larger Easter-European and Western European region).

Outsiders are relying on political figures, media, and social media to stay informed. Verbal, written and imagery reports keep us informed. These report seek ways to connect us to what is it like in war-thorn Ukraine. The short answer is that most of

Figure 2 Yellow informational tents for Ukrainian refugees in front of the Nyugati Pályaudvar (Western Railway Station), Budapest, 2022. Photo by GP.

us cannot even imagine this reality. However, we may find alternative "connecters" through urban landscapes that allow us to connect more deeply to those who struggle. Urban landscapes were the most efficient connecters for me. Socialist urban landscapes have many similarities across diverse cultures and countries. Anyone who has grown up in such an environment (like me) is likely unable not think,"Oh My God! This could be us!" It took no effort for me. Walking on the streets of Romanian socialist and post-socialist urban landscapes, one can easily envision the ruins, and the immense losses of Ukrainian cities like Mariupol. I believe, the next step for many planners would be "How can we help now, and how can cities rebuild themselves?" The answer is not easy, and I am not planning to give an answer, rather provide some insights without the aim of being comprehensive.

Reconstruction and Planning

President Zelensky in his May 29th speech addressed Ukrainians. Some highlights of his speech from the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine's official website:

"The post-war reconstruction of Kharkiv and the Kharkiv region was discussed very objectively with the local authorities. We must use only advanced ideas, only modern technologies in reconstruction. In particular, security technologies. And the best offers from our partners. Kharkiv and all other cities and communities in our country affected by the war must be reconstructed to have the most modern look in Europe…
As a result of the Russian strikes at Severodonetsk, the entire critical infrastructure of the city has already been destroyed. 90% of houses are damaged. More than two-thirds of the city's housing stock has been completely destroyed. There is no mobile connection. Constant shelling."
(Ministry of Defense of Ukraine 2022, 8th and 16th paragraph)

According to President Zelensky, Ukrainian cities and communities need to be reconstructed after the war resulting in modern looking cities, and the use of the most advanced ideas. Obviously, international planners may become partners and provide recommendations. I was asking myself: What can the international community of planners do to aid with such an objective? How can planners help with linking knowledge to action in the public domain (Friedmann 1987)? Personally, I find inspiration from Libby Porter (2010). Porter in her book "Unlearning the Colonial Cultures of Planning" (2010) pressed that planning is a "cultural artifact" of colonialism and it needs to be historicized. She further asks the

Historically, Ukraine and its neighboring countries, can be "grouped" at least two ways:

A complex and tumultuous regional history that translates into regional level heterogeneity

Socialism, the breaking from socialism, democratization, and struggles to build a democratic society.

question "If planning is a producer of place, what does it claim is worth producing and how is this particular view of the world continually mediated and reconstituted?" (p.16). While Porter asked the question for a different planning context (Australian planning system, and planning with Indigenous communities) her question remains relevant for post-war Ukraine.

Planning is not a universal profession (Porter 2010); however, it is a universal human act. Planning involves decision-making that is also a universal human behavior. Planning and decision-making processes, as components of professional practice, need to be historicized, and understood in their own historical context. What was planning like in Ukraine? What should be avoided and made better? Planning history is a relevant and needed tool that international planners can use to help Ukraine to avoid well documented and known pitfalls through rebuilding efforts. Planners need to ask, "how space was produced throughout the history and at what cost," to avoid repeated failures and injustice to groups of people (i.e., socialist housing estates, eradication of village communities, assimilation efforts if any, and socialist planned ethnic homogenization efforts).

International planners need to provide the most advanced ideas, but not just in terms of technology and security, but in terms of environmental and social sciences. Advanced ideas need to reflect acceptance of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the larger Eastern-European region, the cultural heritage of the many groups who are defining Ukraine. Why? Because Ukraine is a democratic country. Planning, in the public domain should be rooted in democratic processes where planners plan for communities, and not for individuals, or for exclusive groups. This would mean that national identities would need to embrace the regional heterogeneity of the many ethnic groups. Ethnic groups need to embrace the reality of the Ukrainian majority. In this rather ideal setting, both groups would become equal stakeholders. However, this is a universal challenge around the world (e.g., Hungary and Romania) and not exclusive to Ukraine. It is a very hard task for planners. Innes and Booher (2018) gave me inspiration. To plan with complexity, Innes and Booher argued for achieving a "collaborative rationality." This can be achieved through authentic dialogues and recognizing that stakeholders have (1) diversity of interests, but also, they do share common interest, that they called (2) interdependency of interests. To achieve a "collaborative" rationality over individual, or group's rationality, equal representation of interests and inclusion of all stakeholders is needed. Through a structured process, where the planners are a key facilitator, a resolution, or "community vision" can be achieved (i.e., Who is my city in post war Ukraine, and what is it like?). The task is challenging, and can be easily flawed. Still, it provides a way for creating modern cities, and for applying the most advanced [planning theory] ideas.

Finally, when we converse about the post-war rebuilding of Ukraine, we need to see that "rebuilding" is maybe an inadequate term. One needs to ask, "where is the region coming from and where is it headed?" The physical built infrastructure bear signs of the socialist era like real estate housing projects, with iconic transformed urban landscapes. These urban landscapes have signs of historic injustice and the cruelty of the socialist era. Rapid, and cookie-cutter rebuilding should be avoided. Planning and building of new Ukrainian urban landscapes should be done with care, sensitivity and understanding of local culture, heritage in a way that respects the wish of the entire community. Local

The post-war Ukraine will never be Western Europe, nor remain to be what we may perceive as "post-socialist Eastern European."

Kolozsvár (Hungarian) Cluj Napoca (Romanian) a multiethnic city transformed during the regime of Ceaușescu Communist Dictator. We see socialist estate housing projects in the back and recent (post socialist) growth in the front. Image: Ghiță Bizău from Pixabay.

Ukraine is a modern state with a professional and intellectual legacy that equals the rest of the developed world. Thus, the need is through cautious application of "knowledge."

and regional ecological processes should guide development over profitability of investment.

In conclusion: the international community will provide perspectives and knowledge in forms of most advanced ideas, but the task of rebuilding, need to be made by Ukrainians. We should not be mistaken through seeing the "familiarity of landscapes" (i.e., post socialist), or values (European, Judeo-Christian Western heritage) and think we are on a "home-base," because post-war Ukraine will never be Western Europe, nor remain to be what we may perceive as "post-socialist Eastern European." Each has its own planning scholarship, planning theory, planning history, and methodological approach to planning. Most planners should be prepared to be on an entire new media. There are a few reasons for this.

1. First, people are still more likely to define their national and ethnic identity through historic land attachment, the bloodshed of their ancestors, their rich cultural heritage that is millennia old, than through more globalized ideas (i.e., a global urban community, a city like New York). In addition to this point, while many urban Ukrainian cities are diverse, they are still less heterogeneous in contrast to the US cities, or Western European cities (think of the flux of immigrants and their respective heritage).
2. Second, people in Ukraine are still more connected to their faith and religion than in many Western European countries [US is quite religious]. In Ukraine, non-secular planning and decision-making processes may intertwine with the secular ones that are not common or are constitutional in the U.S.
3. Third, there has been no precedent in the 21st century to what is happening now in Ukraine; and post-war Ukraine will likely become its own "realm." In this "realm," Ukraine must lead a regional development that has broken free from "socialist" and "post-socialist" tags of the West; and at the same time be able to occupy a leading role in future democratic conversations.
4. Fourth, the will of the people in Ukraine is likely to be the strongest and most unified in Europe. Ukrainian national identity is tremendously tested, and the war may lead to new forms of shared identity. Overall, the war strengthened Ukrainians and their identity, meanwhile in many European countries there is an "identity crisis."

It is my view that Ukraine is a modern state with a professional and intellectual legacy that equals the rest of the developed world. Thus, the need is through cautious application of "knowledge." Discussions need to be facilitated with authorities, developers, stakeholders, and local planners to

Rapid, and cookie-cutter rebuilding should be avoided. Planning and building of new Ukrainian urban landscapes should be done with care, sensitivity and understanding of local culture, heritage in a way that respects the wish of the entire community.

recognize and avoid "old planning mistakes." Failed planning examples of the West [and East] should be avoided because they will likely happen again. Old mistakes are always reapplied through rapid rebuilding efforts in parts of the "less developed world." Essential ecological, environmental, and social dimensions of proposed projects need to be considered next to economic return, profitmaking, technology, and security. ■ *Edited by Tim Van Epp*

References

Antal, Erika and Székelyhon.ro. May17th, 2022. "Összefogás a menekülőkért: ebéd az államtól, reggeli és vacsora a civilektől" Accessed June 6th. https://szekelyhon.ro/aktualis/osszefogas-a-menekulokert-ebed-az-allamtol-reggeli-es-vacsora-a-civilektol.

Eurostat. January 2022. "Minimum wage statistics." Accessed June 6th, 2022. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Minimum_wage_statistics.

Friedmann, John. 1987. Planning in the public domain : from knowledge to action. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Innes, Judith Eleanor, and David E. Booher. 2018. Planning with complexity : an introduction to collaborative rationality for public policy. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. May 29th, 2022. "This war is going on now for the happiness of living your normal life and just walking the streets of your city, that's what we are fighting for in it – address by the President of Ukraine" Accessed June 1st, 2022. https://www.mil.gov.ua/en/news/2022/05/29/this-war-is-going-on-now-for-the-happiness-of-living-your-normal-life-and-just-walking-the-streets-of-your-city-thats-what-we-are-fighting-for-in-it-%E2%80%93-address-by-the-president-of-ukraine/ .

Porter, Libby. 2010. Unlearning the Colonial Cultures of Planning. e-book. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

We Are the World
We Are the Children

Join us at

international.planning.org

apa.international.division@gmail.com

American Planning Association

International Division

Creating Great Communities for All