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May 13, 2023

Global Scholar Capstone

My Ukrainian Experience

The noise of sirens sounds around the city; Ukrainians go into bunkers, but it's all the same. When is the war going to end? Nine years ago, Crimea was invaded by Russia and annexed. Since that time, Ukraine and Russia have been at war. Even though much of Ukraine hasn't been under direct attack, their lives have changed forever. Yet there is always hope for the Ukrainians; they know that they have support around the world. Through Global Minnesota and the Protez Foundation, I have learned 10 times more about Ukraine, their history, culture, and the difficult situation there. As a global scholar, I have to explain how I have enriched myself. So I'm going to explain my Ukrainian experience, how I will benefit from it, and how I will inspire change in the world. And that's how I came up with this question that I will have to answer. In the midst of a war, what are the struggles that communities have in Ukraine? How are their daily lives affected? How are lives around the world also affected? And what needs to be done to help them?

Before doing this project, I knew so little about Ukraine except through history class and from TV. But Global Minnesota has given me a great opportunity to learn more about their history and culture. I got to talk to young Ukrainians about their lives. Through them and the opportunity I got at Global Scholars, I was able to experience an exciting and interesting unique

perspective that I would not have gotten the chance to experience as my perspective was narrow. I learned from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who spoke about the danger of one-sided stories in her Ted Talk. This opportunity was all virtual, and I learned a lot through Zoom meetings and flip grids. Flip Grid is an app where students can share short videos about certain subjects. Through Zoom, I had the chance to talk about their lives and their culture. I learned that Ukraine was formed as a state in 1991, but it still has a long and rich history. They speak their own language, and they are very different from Russia. They were the creators of Grammarly, Reface, and DepositPhotos. I also learned some new words, including Slava Ukraini, which means "glory to Ukraine". I had many things in common with the young students that I talked to. Many Ukrainians do similar things to what I do. Many people love watching movies and reading books, which I really enjoyed. Others enjoy writing and sometimes want to become journalists. Students also like doing photography. I thought it was cool how we had so much in common with people around the world. Learning more about their history and their culture, I was able to take more away from the experience and better understand how strong their country is.

The war has changed many young Ukrainians. They want to help out because they believe in their soldiers. They try to make change in their country by volunteering and doing other things to help with the war. Many Ukrainians try to spread awareness about the war by going on social media; they do podcasts, post on Instagram, and use Twitter. In Kyiv, Ukrainians are used to hearing the sounds of bombs. Through the Zoom meeting, I learned that many people and their friends have to relocate because it isn't safe to live where they live, or else their houses will have to be occupied. Many had to sleep in bomb shelters, while in stores there would be no food at all. I have learned from many students that they never believed that it would have happened and that everybody had to adapt to the situation at hand, like knowing how to use a gas

stove. With many families on the front lines, being positive helps unite everyone. Their national identity has become stronger because they are proud that their nation is standing up. Talking to the student, I experienced that they have hope and that they believe that they will pull through. One of the major effects for them was the mental side. Many feel depressed because they are separated from their families and have to think constantly about the war. The daily lives of the students in Ukraine have drastically changed because of the war. My perception of the way I see my life has changed a lot because I'm more thankful for the things that I have.

People around the world want to help them out with the ongoing war. In my community, there are many different groups trying to help Ukrainians. For example, the Ukrainian Community Center is a place where Ukrainians can gather. While other groups directly help those who have been a part of the war. The Protez Foundation was created by Yury Aroshidz, who was working on a project to give free prosthetics to people who were in the war in Ukraine and to other civilians who lost limbs during the war. They also help with the psychological side by helping people recover from their traumas. Along with that, they want to unite people to help with the war. I was granted permission to help participate in an event where 11 soldiers came to Minnesota by plane, and I went to the airport to greet them. It was a really cool experience because everybody that showed up was excited, and many Ukrainians came to show their support by bringing a huge flag, wearing shirts of the flag's colors, and wearing traditional clothing. They brought their families. One Ukrainian even started to play the accordion, and many others started to dance and sing along with it. It was a really cool experience to see them come together to celebrate real heroes. It is really cool to see everybody come together to meet soldiers, which is really inspiring. This shows the importance of supporting people because it helps bring people together and makes them happy. This has really inspired me to try to make

change in the world, especially in Ukraine. From this, I will spread awareness to my friends and family, who don't really know as much as I once did, so they will understand the difficult situation that Ukrainians are in.

Their lives have been affected in many different ways by the invasion. First and foremost, they have changed mentally, and they also had to adapt to help protect their country. This led to many young Ukrainians fighting for their country, which has a strong sense of culture, by volunteering and spreading awareness. All around the world, people are helping Ukrainians by comforting them, sending supplies, and helping with other stuff. There is still a lot to be done, and with the foundation of what has already been started, we must, as a community, talk more about what is happening because the media is sometimes false. Through my findings and my experience, I have changed a lot because I have been able to see the truth about what is happening during the war, and with that, I hope to share my experience with other people to help them understand the problems in Ukraine, and I also hope to apply what I learn from this experience to other world problems.

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