



## **Tetyana Sokolska, Gennadii Dzhegur, Svitlana Polishchuk, Svetlana Lobachova**

*Bila Tserkva National Agrarian University (Bila Tserkva, Ukraine)*

### **The Importance of Human Capital in The Formation of Capable United Territorial Communities of Ukraine<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract.** The study examined the modern state of human capital formation, accumulation and use in Ukraine and assessed it to be ambiguous. On the one hand, the improvement of certain qualitative characteristics such as increasing amount of the population with higher education, computer literacy, its ability to work in a market environment and run business are observed. On the other hand, destructive processes are taking place which especially true for the rural population (shortage of highly qualified personnel, depreciation of labor, unemployment, low level of innovations introduction and implementation, increasing poverty, reducing life expectancy, mortality exceeding birth rate, migration, unequal opportunities for education and health services, lack of infrastructure, opportunities for cultural development of cinema, theater, youth recreation areas, etc).

The survey was conducted to find out the degree to which life quality had changed after unification and it reveals that only 10% of respondents in Kyiv oblast wanted their children to live in the community, while in Cherkasy oblast no one wanted to. In addition, 53% of the respondents considered the state of community development unsatisfactory, and only 17% considered it to be good.

The study also reveals the low level of competence of local authorities heads and their executive committees, especially in the use of modern tools of public administration. However, significant reserves for human capital development have been identified, namely, investment in people and development of their professional qualities, which form modern productive abilities and turn them into the main productive knowledge-based force in the conditions of decentralization of power and participation of citizens in local self-government.

The necessary cooperation of newly created communities with higher education institutions and the use of their potential for the formation, development of intellectual capital and further innovative development is proved. The mutually beneficial synergistic effect for their development is substantiated on the example of cooperation of the studied communities with the university.

**Keywords:** *human capital, rural areas, united territorial communities, decentralization, sustainable development.*

## **Тетяна Сокольська, Геннадій Джегур, Світлана Поліщук, Світлана Лобачова**

*Білоцерківський національний аграрний університет (Біла Церква, Україна)*

### **Значення людського капіталу у формуванні спроможних об'єднаних територіальних громад України**

**Авторське резюме.** Досліджено сучасний стан формування, нагромадження та використання людського капіталу України. Встановлено двозначність оцінки людського капіталу в Україні. З одного боку, відбувається поліпшення певних якісних його характеристик: збільшується частка населення з вищою освітою; зростає комп'ютерна грамотність; формується вміння працювати в ринковому середовищі; підвищується підприємницька активність. Водночас відбуваються процеси, які призводять до його руйнації, особливо серед сільського населення (дефіцит висококваліфікованих кадрів, знецінення робочої сили, безробіття, низький рівень впровадження та споживання інновацій, посилення бідності, зменшення тривалості життя, смертність перевищує народжуваність, міграція, нерівні можливості з отримання освітніх та медичних послуг, відсутність інфраструктури, можливостей культурного розвитку кіно, театрів, молодіжних зон відпочинку тощо).

Опитування сільських мешканців щодо змін рівня їх життя після об'єднання територіальних громад виявило, що лише 10% респондентів Київської області хочуть, щоб в цих громадах жили їх діти в той час, як з Черкаської області ніхто не виявив такого бажання. 53 % опитаних респондентів Черкаської області визнали стан розвитку їхніх громад незадовільним і лише 17 % як добрий.

<sup>1</sup> This research was conducted within the project "Interuniversity cooperation as a tool for quality enhancement of selected Ukrainian universities" financed by Development Cooperation of the Czech Republic.



Також виявлено низький компетентнісний рівень голів органів місцевого врядування та їх виконавчих комітетів, особливо в частині використання сучасних механізмів публічного управління. Разом з тим, визначено значні резерви для розвитку людського капіталу, зокрема, в умовах децентралізації влади та участі громадян у місцевому самоврядуванні за умови інвестування в людину та розвиток її професійних якостей, які формують сучасні продуктивні здібності та перетворюють їх на головну продуктивну силу постіндустріальної економіки, заснованої на знаннях.

Доведена необхідна співпраця новостворених громад із закладами вищої освіти та використання їхнього потенціалу для формування і розвитку інтелектуального капіталу, а значить інноваційного розвитку. На прикладі співпраці досліджуваних громад з університетом обґрунтовано взаємовигідний синергійний ефект для їх розвитку.

**Ключові слова:** людський капітал, сільські території, об'єднані територіальні громади, децентралізація, сталий розвиток.

### **Problem formulation.**

The National Security Strategy of Ukraine of September 14, 2020 stipulates that a person, their life and health, honor and dignity, inviolability and security is the highest social value and the implementation of this norm is the main goal of the national security policy [1]. Therefore, the development of the welfare state, the transition to an innovative model of economic development, integration into the European economic space and the formation of a strong civil society require the formation, accumulation and effective use of human capital, with emphasis on investment into its growth and professional qualities development. The development shapes modern productivity abilities and turn them into the main productivity force of a sustainable knowledge-based economy.

### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

According to A. Rachko, countries that have learned to better the use people knowledge, skills, competencies and their ability to further study, i.e. all that covers the category of "human capital", become the world leaders [2].

As for Ukraine, the current state of human capital, especially in rural areas, is rather depressive due to highly qualified personnel, depreciation of the labor force, rising unemployment, low level of innovation etc.

The demographic crisis is deepening every year due to difficult social and economic living conditions and low level of the rural population income - low birth rates and high mortality rates reach a critical level, which poses a threat not only to rural areas but also to the state in general and national security in particular.

However, the analysis of recent publications of leading domestic scientists has shown that Ukraine still has significant

reserves for human capital development. The reform of decentralization of power and citizen participation in local self-government are particularly important factors for the development.

Yet, R. Reich notes that the welfare (wealth) of the area is predetermined by the human capabilities of the inhabitants (fits in the human capabilities of the inhabitants) [3]. The skills of the permanent population are complemented by the richness of the area. In the context of decentralization of power, the growing responsibility for human capital development is carried out by local level resources [4].

American researchers McGranahan and Kassel note a close relation between education and employment in rural areas [5]. According to the scientists, the well- educated workforce contributes to development as well as the industrial park does.

A study by the World Bank confirms the role of national capital and shows that the world has accumulated 65% of human capital, while the accumulated material resources account for only 16% of public wealth. Human capital makes 70-80%, in the national wealth of developed countries while in Ukraine it is 30% of all national wealth

Adam Smith claimed that "Neither gold nor silver, but only labor that was paid for all the accumulated wealth of the world" [6]. According to E. Denison's calculations, the increase in per capita income in the United States during the postwar period was 15-30% due to an increase in the level of education of the labor force.

The role of education in the formation of the nation's wealth were noted by D.V. Ricardo. It is the lack of education in all sections of the population that explains the different levels of the countries development.



Alfred Marshall believed that useful capital is the one invested in human work outputs. T. Schultz justified the need for investment in education and training, which helps to increase the level of productivity of workers and, consequently, increase the society welfare.

The study **aimed** to analyze the current state of human capital in the newly created united territorial communities (UTC) in Ukraine in the context of decentralization of power; to distinguishing trends in the formation of human capital and its role in ensuring sustainable community development; to study the impact of human capital on the development of the powers of united communities. In addition, it aimed to analyze the current state of human capital in the newly created UTCs in Ukraine within the framework of decentralization of power, to identify the trend of human capital formation and its role in ensuring sustainable community development, to study the impact of human capital on the development of the united communities powers.

**Results:** According to the OECD, human capital is referred to as knowledge, skills and other qualities of an individual valuable for economic activity [7]. Moreover, human capital involves not only an awareness of the crucial role of an individual in the economic system of society, but a justified need to invest in a human.

Thus, a person and its development should be in the focus of interest both at the national level of public authority management and economic growth is only a tool for achieving the goal. In addition, the degree of human development is defined not by the amount of the wealth earned, but the degree of their material and spiritual life, as well as improving its quality. These provisions are now the basis of the “new growth theory” and the models by which the magnitude of human capital influences GDP growth.

Considering human capital as a factor of sustainable development, we consider its accumulation as a factor of sustainable development and its accumulation as a prerequisite for the optimal transformation of natural resources into productive capital. It is a condition of technological progress and means of reducing economic damage. Thus, the accumulation and efficient use of human capital acts as a strategic sustainable development of the economy and society as a whole.

The assessment of the state of human capital in Ukraine at the present stage is ambiguous.

On the one hand, the improvement of certain qualitative characteristics such as increasing amount of the population with higher education, computer literacy, its ability to work in a market environment and run business are observed. On the other hand, according to our research on urban and rural communities, destructive processes are taking place there [8]. This is especially true for the rural population. Villages do not have adequate access to high-speed Internet up to now, and thus children living in the rural areas can not learn online in the distance learning. The survey found that they usually receive tasks via Viber. Rural children do not have modern computers and gadgets, which significantly increases the inequality between urban and rural school children. Therefore, the quality of education, including the results of external independent evaluation, certificate grades of rural schools graduates in Ukrainian language and literature, mathematics is almost 2 times lower than those of urban school children. Low number of pupils in rural schools hinders the development of children's communication skills, their ability to work in a team and thus violates the constitutional principle of equal opportunities for citizens. There is no proper transport accessibility in the villages of Cherkasy region and the dwellers have difficulty in reaching the nearest city. Lack of banking institutions, hospitals, supermarkets, opportunities for cultural development through visiting cinema, theaters, youth recreation areas along with unresolved households problems leads to the depopulation of rural areas, which has negative social and environmental consequences. According to the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 473 rural settlements have disappeared from the map at the in 1991- 2021.

The initial stage of the decentralization reform was quite encouraging. It resulted in liquidation of 490 districts and establishing 136 new ones instead [9]; 10,978 local councils were united and made up 1,438 communities with a population of 351,603,375 people in 2020. Capital expenditures of budgets increased by more than 60%. However, the problems of human capital state and weak resource potential remain unsolved. It should be noted that rural population is the main source of human capital formation in rural areas. It amounts to 12.63 million inhabitants living in 28,372 villages (fig. 1.) with 8,3 million working-age population.

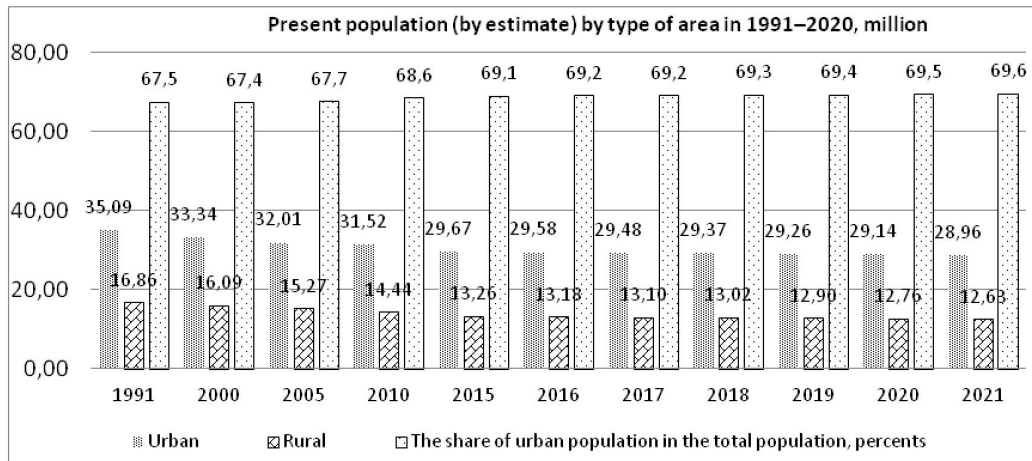


Fig. 1. Present population (by estimate) by type of area in 1991–2020, million

In 2020, the number of deaths exceeded the number of births by 122,829 people, the migration reduction was 11, 423 people (Fig.2). The rural population, including the migrating one, continues to decline including, mainly due to the outflow of young people.

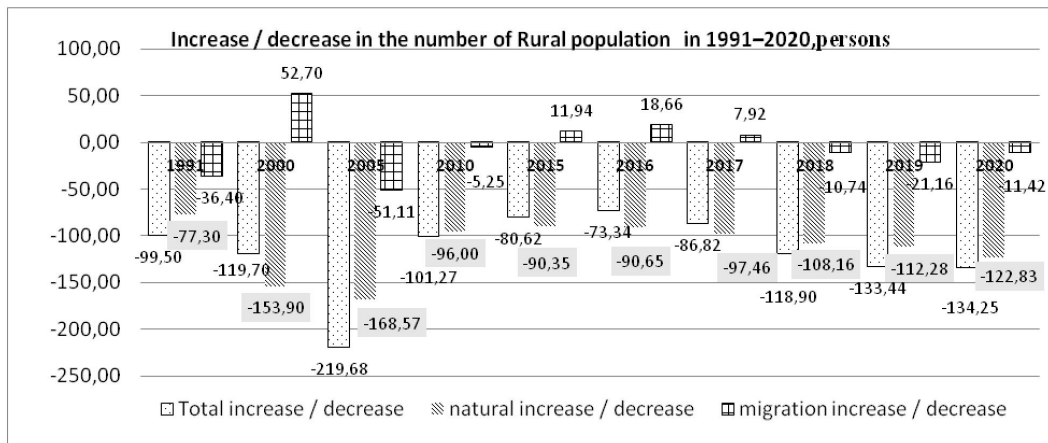


Fig. 2. Increase / decrease in the rural population number in 1991–2020, people

The average life expectancy of peasants remains consistently low: in 2020 it was 65 years for men and 75 years for women (Table 1), while in Sweden women live up to 85 and men - up to 80 [10].



*Table 1*  
**Average life expectancy at birth by sex and type of area in 1991–2020,**  
years

	1991	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total</b>										
Males	64,6 2	62,1	62,2 3	65,2 8	66,3 7	66,7 3	67,0 2	66,6 9	66,9 2	66,3 9
Females	74,2 1	73,5 3	73,9 7	75,5	76,2 5	76,4 6	76,7 8	76,7 2	76,9 8	76,2 2
<b>Rural areas</b>										
Males	63,0 6	61,7 8	61,0 7	63,7 4	64,7 4	65,2 9	65,5	65,3 3	65,5 6	65,3 8
Females	73,8 1	73,5 3	73,5 1	74,7	75,3 8	75,7 2	76	76,0 1	76,2	75,6 4
<b>Urban areas</b>										
Males	67,2 8	66,0 3	62,8 1	62,2 5	65,3 1	67,5 3	67,8 5	67,4 2	67,6 6	66,9 2
Females	76,6 6	75,8 6	74,1 8	73,4 7	74,2 9	76,8	77,1 3	77,0 2	77,3	76,4 4

The demographic crisis had a negative impact on agricultural production, it complicated the situation in rural population employment (Table 2) [11].

*Table 2*  
**Socio-economic conditions of human capital development in agriculture**

	2005	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020
Employment in agriculture, forestry and fishery, thousands persons	4005,5	2870,6	2860,7	2937,6	3010,4	2721,2
Agriculture, forestry and fishery, percentage to total	19.3	17.5	17.7	18.0	18.2	17.1
Number of employees in agriculture, forestry and fishery thousand people	1137	569,4	558,1	545,7	535,0	499,9
Agriculture, forestry and fishery, percentage to total	9.9	9.6	9.5	9.1	8.4	8.0
Average monthly nominal wage in agriculture, forestry and fishing, UAH	437	3309	6057	7557	8856	9757
Percentage to the average monthly nominal wage in agriculture, forestry and fishery	54.2	78.9	85.3	85.2	84.4	84.2
Capital investment in agriculture, forestry and fishery, UAH million	5016	30155	64243	66104	59130	50680
Agriculture, forestry and fishery, percentage to total	4.5	6.1	11.0	14.3	11.4	9.5



In particular, the number of employed population in 2020 decreased from 19.3 to 17.1% as compared to 2005, the number of employees for the same period also decreased to 8%. The level of wages remains low at 84.2% of the average in Ukraine, although capital investment has increased but only 9.5% of total.

In order to determine how much the rural residents living standard has changed after the unification of territorial communities, we conducted a survey among residents of Kyiv and Cherkasy regions. The respondents were asked to assess the standard of living in the community

and to reveal the main resource for their development (Uzyn and Rokytne communities in Kyiv region, Yerkiv, Nabutivska, Stepanetska, Babanska communities in Cherkasy region). The results were quite unexpected.

It should be noted that people aged over 60 answered the questions most willingly - 43% representatives of Kyiv oblast communities and 56% in Cherkasy oblasts. The least active were young people under 20 - 14% and 18% respectively; 21% of the respondents aged 35-59 lived in Kyiv region and 11% - in Cherkasy, Fig.3.

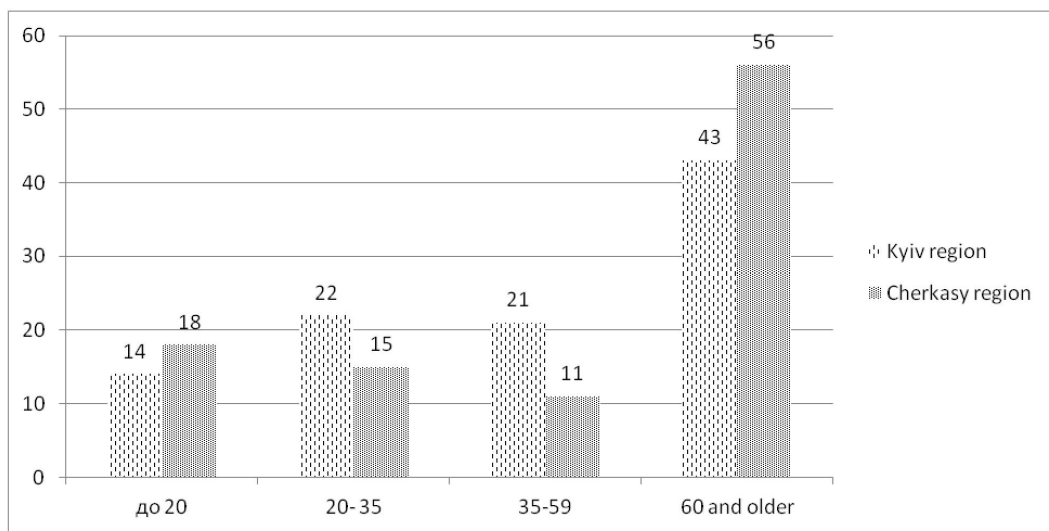


Fig. 3. Respondents age groups

When asked which of the following statements motivates you to reside in the community, most respondents in both oblasts answered that they lived in that community because their parents (ancestors) had lived / lived there or they had inherited the dwelling - 44% in Kyiv oblast and 51% in Cherkasy oblast. 21% of Kyiv oblast respondents and only 3% in Cherkasy oblast noted that their communities

were pleasant to live in. 13% Kyiv region respondents and 15% in Cherkasy had to live in the community due to circumstances. 12% of Kyiv region respondents and 35% of Cherkasy region respondents noted they would leave at the slightest opportunity (98% young people under 35), 10% respondents from Kyiv region and no one in Cherkasy wanted their children to live in these communities, Fig. 4.

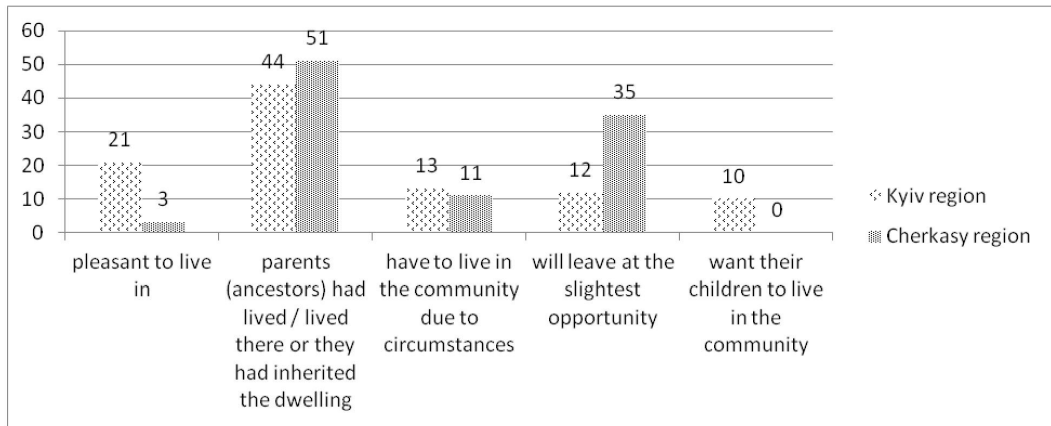


Fig. 4. Characteristics of the communities the respondents reside in

When asked to assess the current state of community development indicators, 10% of respondents in Kyiv oblast assessed it “excellent”, while in Cherkasy oblast no

one appraised it that high though 53% of the respondents considered the state of community development unsatisfactory, and only 17% considered it good. When asked about the

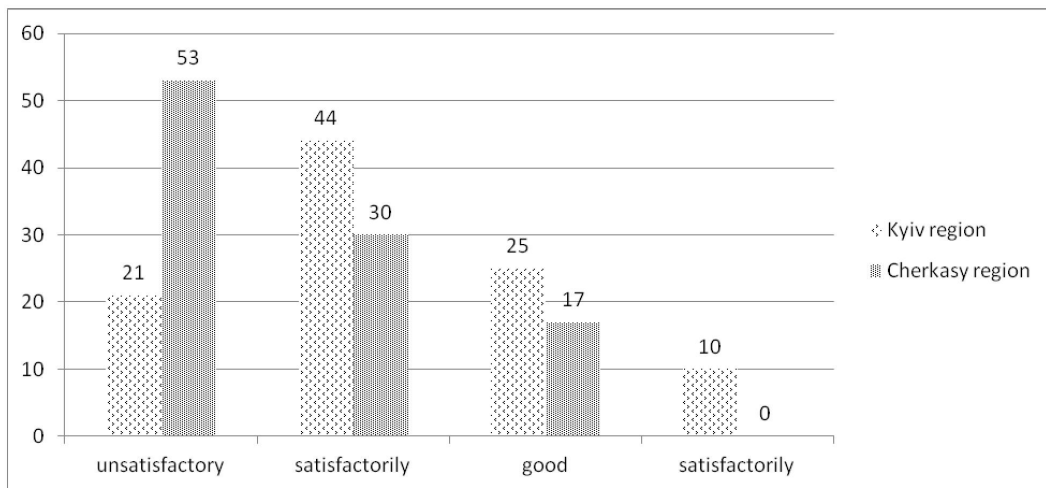


Fig. 5. Assessment of the community state of indicators according to the residents

main resource of the community for further development, over 20% of respondents believed they were effective local government, human

resources and entrepreneurs in both areas. 23% of respondents from Cherkasy oblast communities added land plots to the list (Fig.6).

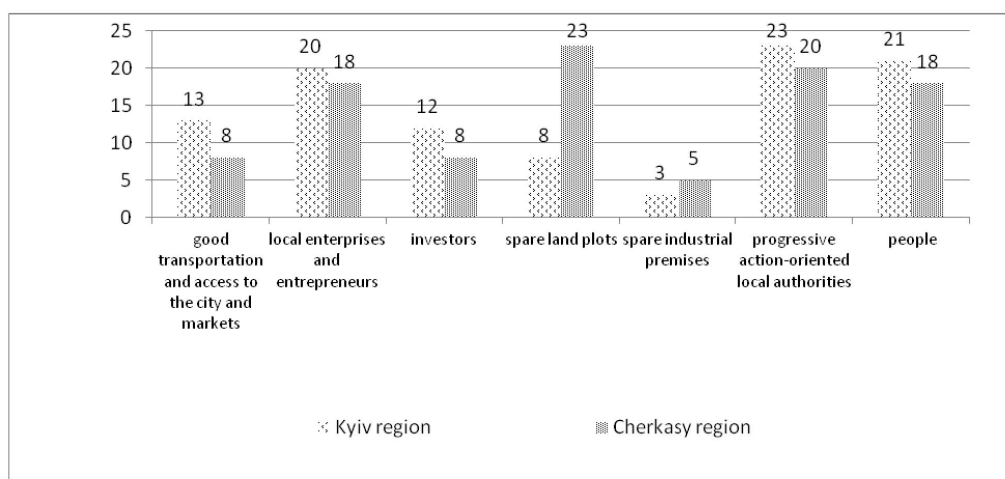


Fig. 6. The main resource of the community according to the residents

In our opinion, the obtained results are predetermined mainly by the lack of a balanced state policy in solving the rural areas problems. The long-awaited lifting of the moratorium on the land market does not give hope for improvement in rural areas. On the contrary, there is a threat that since 2024 the lands of communities will belong to public limited companies, which are actually subsidiaries of agricultural holdings. Thus, the demographic situation will only get worse.

The state's disregard for regulating the most important social and economic tasks in rural areas can be perceived in the fact that in 2019 the Ministry of Agrarian Policy was liquidated.

Apparently, the authorities realize that agriculture is a complex sphere of agricultural production that involve using natural resources, living and employment of people and, therefore, they prompted to restore it. Thus, prevention of excessive concentration of land, increasing employment in rural areas and promoting the development of rural areas are to be the main activities of the authorities. Currently, the Ministry of Regional Development is working out the "New Ukrainian Village" state program for regional development for the next three years. The program will allow to implement projects to ensure sustainable development of rural areas. The first stage of the Program implementation envisages the restoration of the infrastructure for public services provision, in particular, the establishment of agricultural cooperatives and the latest enterprises for processing agricultural products in the villages of 10 oblasts of Ukraine. The state provides a

number of measures:

- provision of rural settlements with water supply and sewerage as well as gas;
- expansion of the network of centres for administrative services NAP (business support centers "Diya. Business");
- stimulating the development of small and medium enterprises in rural areas, especially in remote ones and those with low population density;
- development of various forms of cooperation, farming, ensuring the availability of markets for small and medium-sized agricultural producers;
- development of infrastructure for agricultural products storage;
- promoting the development of tourist infrastructure in rural areas, etc.

Yet, the declaration of intent and the implementation of the program are two distinct things. Not as long ago as in 2012 the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food worked out an algorithm for implementing the Native Village initiative during 2013 that focused on communities initiative. It involved training of heads of village and settlement councils, many cooperatives were established under this initiative, but due to a number of organizational and social factors, the passivity of the public and the lack of intellectual capital, the program remained unrealized.

Today, the reform of decentralization of power provides equal opportunities for communities in implementing the New Ukrainian Village state program of regional development. In particular, united territorial





communities have been created and they have the opportunity to use the resource potential at their own discretion. And the capability of a UTC is largely determined by its resources use effectiveness including financial, territorial and land resources which requires the appropriate competence of local authority officials.

In 2020, real leaders and enthusiasts won the local elections. However, but when working out a strategy and developing local development programs, their low competence becomes evident, especially in the use of modern mechanisms of public administration. In this regard, one of the main factors is education along with the desire to work for the community development.

We believe that in order to develop human capital, newly formed communities desperately need to cooperate with higher education institutions and use their potential for innovative development. Modern universities conduct researches and give new ideas along with offering ways to implement in certain areas. Undergraduate students and young scientists can be involved in the development of community development strategies and in SWOT-analysis to identify the competitive advantages of the community, taking into account internal resources. This is how the role of higher education institutions in the regional development of European countries, including through SMART specialization, is changing.

Universities act as practical tools for the synergy of science, business, government institutions and local government and allow to implement innovations, use modern scientific developments, apply SWOT-analysis of projects, create new competitive activities. EU practice has shown that the main advantage of this approach is promoting inclusive and sustainable development. SMART specialization is a driver of regional economic growth that promotes the efficiency of local communities through highlighting regional competitive advantages. It enhances local opportunities and accelerates innovative transformations by coordinating science, business and society [12].

In order to identify the trend of human capital formation and its role in ensuring sustainable community development, to study the impact of human capital on the development of opportunities of united territorial communities, we studied the state of human capital formation

in Uzyn and Mala Vilshanka communities in Kyiv oblast and Yerkiv TC in Cherkasy oblast. It is worth noting that the heads of the studied communities have a higher education degree. They began their activity in office with the development of social capital in the community through the development of quality education, effective management of primary care and social protection, youth policy, development of the population self-organization in public organizations as well as through establishment of an advisory body - the Entrepreneurs Council. They use modern technologies, in particular, SMART City, in community management,

The studied communities obviously have the economic and social development problems that are typical for the state as a whole. Another typical problem for the communities is the reluctance of young people to work in the countryside due to low wages, insufficient material level of the villagers, lack of infrastructure, lack of career growth and positions that would meet the qualifications of young professionals. However, having faced with these challenges, the leaders of these communities start cooperating closely with the Bila Tserkva National Agrarian University in terms of specialists training and passing all types of internships for higher education. Today, this university is a regional educational center where powerful strong intellectual potential is concentrated. This enables to train and retrain specialists, provide advice on the diversification of agri-food production to teach family farmers the basic tenets of running business. There is a sufficient base for on-the-job training. It is a modern training and production center, which uses the latest technologies in crop production and animal husbandry, and students in all areas of training have the opportunity to see and master all technological processes (for example, in animal husbandry - from birth of an animal to the final stage of its use). Highly professional specialists in law can provide teaching the necessary competencies in regulatory and legal support.

As part of the Ukrainian-Czech project "Interuniversity Cooperation as a Tool for Improving the Quality of Selected Universities in Ukraine", the university is working with these communities to develop a Strategy for Bila Tserkva NAU to ensure balanced development of the Kyiv region. The strategy will reflect a



number of advantages and opportunities that create new directions for the local economy and employment development and for intellectual capital formation. Such cooperation should start at school.

### Conclusions.

Given the ambiguity of the assessment of human capital in Ukraine with some improvement in certain qualitative characteristics on the one hand, and the processes that lead to its destruction, especially among the rural population (shortage of highly qualified personnel, labor depreciation, unemployment and low level of innovations introduction and implementation, increasing poverty, reducing life expectancy, mortality exceeding birth rate, migration, unequal opportunities to receive educational and medical services, lack of infrastructure, lack of opportunities for cultural development of cinema, theaters, youth recreation areas, etc.) on the other hand, we believe that intellectual property, namely human capital with its ability to generate ideas and create opportunities for their implementation, rather than material assets that is a key element in the conditions of decentralization of power, administrative reform and the need for sustainable development of rural areas in the structure of public administration of local self-government.

The analysis of the survey of rural residents of the studied communities on the problems of economic and social development they faced recently and the results of cooperation of these communities with higher education institutions in terms of students training in all kinds of internships showed that education is one of the main factors efficient realization of rural territories potential realisation as it trains professionals capable to create space for the formation of human capital by means of its intellectualization. It is intellectual capital that will provide further opportunities and competitive advantages to rural areas in the implementation of strategic goals of their innovative development. Only experienced professionals are able to develop a strategy, define priorities and set goals, and the community must do that. This involves the development of quality education, effective management of primary care and social protection, youth policy, the development of self-organization of the population in the form of public organizations, support for public initiatives.

Therefore, regional universities should become drivers of successful development of united territorial communities and rural areas. Mutual coordination and coordination of educational institutions in providing intellectual capital for UTC will allow to achieve mutually beneficial synergy effect for their development.

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***Sokolska Tetyana***

D.Sc., Full Prof., <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5420-8569>, [sokolska.tetyana@btsau.edu.ua](mailto:sokolska.tetyana@btsau.edu.ua)

***Dzhegur Gennadii***

Ph.D., Assoc. Prof., <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5955-3687>, [Dzhegur1979@gmail.com](mailto:Dzhegur1979@gmail.com)

***Polishchuk Svitlana***

Ph.D., Assoc. Prof., <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2893-617X>, [kafpublikbnau@ukr.net](mailto:kafpublikbnau@ukr.net)

***Lobachova Svetlana***

Senior Lecturer, <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9876-2422>, [lobachova@gmail.com](mailto:lobachova@gmail.com)

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