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Ukrainian Values in a Global World

Українські цінності у глобальному світі

Conference Story

Історія конференції

Third International Conference · November 20, 2026

Hosted by Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, Canada, and online

Written by Oleksandr Kondrashov, Chair, on behalf of the Organizing Committee

DROKACADEMY · Kamloops, British Columbia · 2026

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We Continue, Together: Reflections on Ukrainian Values in a Global World

Third International Conference, Educating for Tomorrow series · Friday, November 20, 2026· online, hosted by Thompson Rivers University

Introduction: We Continued, Together

The night before our conference, Russia attacked Ukraine again. In Kyiv, people were killed, among them water workers who keep the city alive. In my hometown of Lviv, people were killed and injured at a railway station while they waited for their morning train. So we began the way we had to begin: with a minute of silence for everyone killed that day and throughout this war, for the injured and their families, and for Ukraine's defenders, rescuers, doctors and workers. Вічна пам’ять (Vichna pamiat, eternal memory).

Then we did what Ukrainians have taught the world to do. We continued, together.

Opening Ceremony: A Day Across Horizon Lines

President Airini welcomed us from Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc territory and showed us the morning horizon over Kamloops. She reminded us that wherever we are, we are joined by horizon lines, and that open, free and accessible education is a value Thompson Rivers University lives. She named what makes this gathering different: it reaches across war and peace zones, it moves between English and Ukrainian, and it makes room for people presenting between power outages. Her words set the tone for the whole day: we are greater together.

And the horizons were many. Greetings came in the chat from North-East Scotland, New York, Florence, Croatia, Morocco and Mexico, from Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Lviv Polytechnic, Cherkasy State Technological

University and the Institute of Pedagogy. Nina Brazhko, our former Mitacs Globalink researcher at TRU, joined from Dnipro after five days without electricity and called the conference the best thing that could happen that day. Maryna Fihel joined from Lviv with no power until evening, and found a place to recharge her laptop so she could still present. Timothy Chen presented from Hong Kong at four in the morning, and then went back to bed before another seminar.

Greetings in Ukrainian carried the same spirit. Natalia Vnukova of Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics called the conference series a successful startup in its own field, and told us about her university's project on the continuity of generations, marking a century since Simon Kuznets, who left Kharkiv in 1922, defended his doctorate at Columbia University in 1926. Iryna Mitnovych greeted us as an independent researcher in her first year of research. Tetiana Podkupko came with her students and told us that the day before, Odesa had mourned four people killed when the city centre was shelled.

Nothing unites Ukrainians, she said, like an outside threat, and when the world grows tired of Ukraine's war, gatherings like ours do not let it forget.

Keynote and Featured Presentations: Belonging, Memory and the Map

Our keynote speaker, Olha Buchel of the New England Complex Systems Institute, showed how library shelves can either hide or reveal a people. Working from library catalogue records, historical maps and the biographies of people who shaped Ukraine, she is building a living grid map of Ukrainian history, one where a reader can click on a place and travel through centuries. Her argument stayed with me: in the age of AI, a people needs its own carefully built record, so that no one can claim that Ukraine never existed.

Nataliya Chorna, registered clinical counsellor and President of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Vancouver Branch, spoke about belonging as something different from attachment. Attachment asks who we can turn to when life feels uncertain. Belonging asks where we matter and where we have a place. She described host families opening their homes, newcomers sharing a first Canadian Thanksgiving, three generations writing the national dictation together, and young Ukrainian cadets standing beside Canadian peers on Remembrance Day. Her advice to newcomers was simple and active: do not wait to be invited.

Kateryna Ihnatenko, who taught at Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University for more than twenty years and now works at a relocated university, presented a photovoice study with Ukrainian refugee women and Georgian internally displaced women. A street in a settlement and a sea in Georgia looked like ordinary photographs until the women told their stories. Her question for social workers was the one I keep asking my students: what do we learn about a person that we could never know from their displacement status alone?

Session 1, in English: What People Keep

The English session moved quickly across borders. Maryna Fihel spoke about translating a novel for teenagers into Ukrainian and bringing its values of friendship, kindness and asking permission into her classroom. Olena Heichenko, coordinator of the War Up Close virtual reality and arts exhibition in Canada, and Gregory Crew, North America exhibits coordinator of the Sunflower Dreams Project, shared two ways of carrying the war's reality to people far from it: an immersive exhibition of the VR Museum of War in Ukraine, and the art of Ukrainian children from an art therapy program in Lviv, shown in galleries and libraries across Europe and North America. Bohdan Chekerenda told how a 150-kilometre solo bicycle ride around Okanagan Lake grew, year by year, into a

community ride with Okanagan for Ukraine in support of Peremoha bakery (Перемога, victory) in Kyiv, which bakes free bread around the clock for anyone in need. His lesson was the simplest of the day: ask what you can do with what you have, where you are, and then start.

Oleksandra Goretska, a first-year medical student in Odesa and a former member of Ukraine's national artistic swimming team, described studying anatomy through air raid alerts and power cuts, and how the discipline of sport now carries her through medical school. Nina Brazhko argued that a state is first of all its people, and that human development is the foundation of Ukraine's recovery, not its by-product. Ouafaa Rogouti from Morocco presented a model linking generative AI in teacher training to pedagogical agency and educational resilience. Carlos Alberto Ochoa Ortíz from Juárez showed how his engineering students built dioramas, learned Cyrillic and studied Ukraine as a lesson in solidarity. Jelena Ivelić Telišman from Croatia spoke about meeting each person where they are, with dignity, choice and contact. Timothy Chen re-examined self-determination with social work students in Hong Kong and invited Ukrainian and Hong Kong young people into one shared conversation about futures they did not choose.

Session 2, in Ukrainian, and the Zoom Toloka

In the Ukrainian part of the day, Tetiana Podkupko of Odesa National Medical University described how her university keeps teaching future doctors. There are not enough shelters for every class at once, so every lecture, practical and question set is posted online and shared in student groups, ready to read on a phone in a shelter. Last week one class lasted six minutes before the next alert. She now builds her Kahoot quizzes with ten or twelve quick questions instead of twenty-five, so every student gets a mark before the sirens. Her medical students

also volunteer with an organization for children with disabilities. When the power is out for days, people charge phones and batteries at пункти незламності (punkty nezlamnosti, “points of invincibility”, heated help points with power), and students bring laptops and thermoses to university rooms on the same power line as intensive care. Her students, she said, no longer remember another way to learn. Tetiana Lisovyn answered with words many of us felt: teaching like this is a feat of educators.

Oleksandr Pyvovarov of Kharkiv National Medical University presented a survey of young people in his city on digital tools for nutrition and health. Most use smartwatches, many use calorie apps, and the biggest barriers to digital nutrition care are low digital literacy and the caution of older patients. It was his second time with us: last year, he said, he presented with electricity, and this year without.

Iryna Mitnovych, co-founder and President of the Ukrainian Cultural Society in British Columbia, shared part of her research on recipes that preserved identity, which she hopes to publish as a book. Cheddar perogies can be a culinary novelty to someone who grew up in Ukraine, and the most familiar taste of childhood to someone who made varenyky (вареники, filled dumplings) with baba in a church hall in Canada. Both recognize something Ukrainian; each draws on a different life. Her three theses traced how settlers carried seeds, grain and skills to keep the old world alive in new conditions; how recipes adapted to Canadian ingredients and neighbours, including the Saskatoon berry that Indigenous neighbours taught settlers to recognize, with her question of whether we keep the memory of the peoples who shared this knowledge; and how women's shared cooking in parish halls became a practice of belonging, volunteering and responsibility. Ukrainian cuisine in Canada, she concluded, is not a simplified version of Ukraine's, but the record of its own history. A participant from the

Netherlands answered with the rye sourdough bread of his childhood, which took him years to recreate, and Tetiana Lisovyn added that, as she told it, Ukrainian wheat reached Canada before Ukrainian settlers did.

We ended with Diaspora.FM. Dmytro Bratchenko, co-founder and producer of Voice of Ukraine, and Tetiana Lisovyn shared the story of a volunteer team from British Columbia that has been on the air every week for more than two years, on Fairchild Radio 96.1 FM in Vancouver and on YouTube, holding what they call the information front. Their short film reminded us that every war is fought on many fronts, and that telling the truth is one of them.

And then, unplanned, the chat began to talk about bread. Olena wrote that she started baking bread after February 24, 2022 in Kyiv, and still bakes it in Canada. Timothy remembered his mother's bakery and what bread taught him about persistence and love.

Bohdan shared the link to Peremoha. Without anyone planning it, bread became the symbol of the day.

Closing: What I Take With Me

In my opening I asked what it means to keep Ukrainian values alive in a global world. The day answered better than I could. It means гідність (hidnist, dignity), when a student presents her research between air raid alerts. It means воля (volia, freedom and the will to choose), when a counsellor tells newcomers not to wait to be invited. And it means толока (toloka, neighbours working side by side), when a radio volunteer, a cyclist, a librarian of maps, a translator and a medical student each bring a little, and together build something none of us could build alone.

Technology failed us more than once. Slides did not advance, sound did not play, connections dropped. Some colleagues could not join at all because of strikes in Italy, and power cuts and red alerts in Ukraine. We did not finish everything we planned. A colleague from the Netherlands will share his work on Ukrainian iconography next time, and my own presentation on F.I.L.T.E.R.+ will move to our next Ukrainian Values conference. That is also part of the story. Every presentation that happened, happened because someone chose to come anyway.

Thank you to every presenter, to President Airini and Thompson Rivers University, to Diaspora.FM, to Okanagan for Ukraine, and to our Organizing Committee: Svitlana Arkhypova, Vira Baryshnikova, Inna Belova, Nina Brazhko, Natalia Bykovets, Yuliia Clark, Zoryana Galadzhun, Oleksandr Ievlev, Olha Kibik, Larysa Nozdrina, Tetiana Symonenko, Pavlo Teslenko, Juliana West and Liudmyla Yuldasheva.

Conference Summary from the Chair

Dear friends and colleagues,

Our Third International Conference, Ukrainian Values in a Global World, lasted five busy hours. Behind those five hours were hundreds of hours of preparation, and behind those hours were people. I want to thank every one of them.

The day in numbers: 55 abstracts in the proceedings, in English and in Ukrainian. 77 people registered, from at least 15 countries. 46 of us met in the Zoom room, from more than ten countries, and 32 stayed for an hour or more. Together we shared about 125 hours of listening. We heard 16 presentations from 18 presenters, a keynote, and greetings in two languages, in one room, with no parallel sessions.

Thank you to everyone who submitted an abstract. Your 55 abstracts, in English and in Ukrainian, are the heart of our proceedings. Thank you to Vira and Natalia, who reviewed every abstract with me with such care, and to Svitlana Arkhypova for her organizational support, her encouragement, and a second opinion whenever we needed one. Thank you to our whole Organizing Committee.

Thank you to everyone who spoke, registered, came and supported us. Thank you to our keynote speaker, Olha Buchel, to our featured presenters, and to every presenter who prepared slides, recorded videos and shared their stories. And thank you to the tools that quietly carried the work: Zoom, Gmail, Google Drive, Google Forms, and Claude, which helped me prepare.

A special thank you to President Airini. Her support for this conference series, and for my work at Thompson Rivers University, has been steady and essential, and her presence at the start of our day meant a great deal to me and to everyone joining from Ukraine. She welcomed us from Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc territory with an image of the dawn over Kamloops, and reminded us that wherever we are, we are joined by horizon lines. She spoke of TRU standing with the students, scholars and families affected by war, including presenters who joined us between power outages, and of open, accessible education as a value TRU lives. She called this a conference that is redefining what it means to be a conference: open to all, reaching across zones of war and peace, and holding sessions in English and in Ukrainian side by side. She encouraged us to keep sharing the work through the proceedings and the Educating for Tomorrow journal, and spoke of a day when TRU will welcome friends from Ukraine to our campus. Her closing words stay with me: we are greater together. Thank you, President Airini, for your leadership and your care.

Thank you to those who joined between air raid alerts and red warnings, who came and went and came back again. Thank you to those who could not come but still sent videos, and to those who wanted to share but could not this time. Thank you to a colleague who joined us from the Netherlands and kindly gave his time so that others could speak, moving his presentation on Ukrainian iconography to our next conference. I did the same with my own presentation on F.I.L.T.E.R.+, and I look forward to sharing both with you next time. Thank you for every email, every question and every clarification. That is the reality of what makes a conference a success: not one person, but many people each doing what they can.

These were five hours I will never forget. They were emotional. Tetiana Podkupko described a class in Odesa that lasted only six minutes before her students had to move again from the classroom to укриття (ukryttia, a shelter), and every lecture now waits online so students can read it on their phones while they shelter. Teachers search for a safe space to teach, and students for a safe space to learn. I cannot imagine it, and yet they do it every day. Listening to each story of resilience, you understand how much every single one matters.

When Timothy Chen joined from Hong Kong before dawn, wearing a T-shirt in support of his Ukrainian friends, we felt it. When Carlos Alberto Ochoa Ortíz told us that his students in Mexico learned the names of Ukraine's Junior Eurovision singers, and what solidarity means, we felt it too. The keynote, the featured presentations from around the world, and the English and Ukrainian sessions were a joy to listen to, and hard at the same time.

Each presentation was a masterpiece of kindness, care and support. Thank you to:

- Olha Buchel, for our keynote: a living map of Ukraine's history built from library collections, so that no one can say Ukraine never existed.
- Nataliya Chorna, for showing how belonging is built for newcomers, from the airport to the community hall.
- Kateryna Ihnatenko, for photovoice with Ukrainian and Georgian displaced women, and for listening to the person behind the photograph.
- Maryna Fihel, for bringing the values of a translated novel into her classroom in Lviv.
- Oleksandr Pyvovarov, for his research on how young people use digital tools for nutrition and health, presented without electricity.
- Olena Heichenko and Gregory Crew, for War Up Close and the Sunflower Dreams Project, carrying the war's reality and children's art to people far away.
- Bohdan Chekerenda, for turning a bicycle ride into bread for people in need through Peremoha bakery.
- Tetiana Podkupko, for showing how students and teachers in Ukraine keep learning without light, water or heat.
- Oleksandra Goretska, for her courage as a medical student in wartime.
- Nina Brazhko, for reminding us that people are the foundation of Ukraine's recovery.
- Ouafaa Rogouti, for her model of AI in teacher training and educational resilience.
- Carlos Alberto Ochoa Ortíz, for teaching solidarity to his students in Mexico.
- Jelena Ivelić Telišman, for meeting each person where they are, with dignity.
- Iryna Mitnovych, for showing how food carries Ukrainian identity across oceans.
- Timothy Chen, for his study of self-determination among young people, and for joining us at four in the morning.
- Tetiana Lisovyn and Dmytro Bratchenko of Diaspora.FM, for holding the information front every week.
- Everyone who brought greetings, by voice and in the chat, from Ukraine, Canada and around the world.

Thank you also to everyone whose work and presence carried the day in other ways. To the co-authors behind our presentations, including Shorena Sadzaglishvili and Rusudan Asatiani, and to every author whose abstract is in the proceedings. To those who sent recordings and slides: Nataliia Dobroier and Yaryna Kaplunenko, whose work we will share at our next Ukrainian Values conference, and Bohdan Kravchenko, Denys Seliukov and Tetiana Podkupko, who also stayed with us through the day. To those who brought greetings by voice: Nina Brazhko, Maryna Fihel, Natalia Vnukova, Iryna Mitnovych, and Tetiana Podkupko with her students. To everyone who joined us, greeted us and asked questions, including Svitlana Arkhypova, Larysa Nozdrina, Liudmyla Yuldasheva, Liudmyla Ternova, Larysa Kalchenko, Tamara Gavrylyuk, Christina Pikhmanets, Olena Havrylyuk, Nadiya Semegen, Alla Zhukova, Larysa Bohatyrova, Halyna Patryliak, Anna Oliynyk, Vitalina Novoselova, Denys Kovalenko, Yuliia Fedoryshyna, Olha Dushchenko, Ihor Bubnov, Janet Skuce, Najma Issak, Amaal Ahmed, Liubov Yurchenko, who joined us between alerts, Kate Woodman of Okanagan for Ukraine, and my TRU colleague Kathie McKinnon. And to those who wanted to be with us but could not: colleagues in Italy held back by the national strike, colleagues who were teaching, and every colleague in Ukraine kept away by air raid alerts, power cuts and lost connections. You were with us too.

I will write a fuller conference story about every presentation. I do not keep video recordings, but I have the audio, and I am grateful to Diaspora.FM for their coverage. With the audio recordings, the conference proceedings and the conference story, we will remember this day, and keep sharing and learning from it.

Conferences are always a place of learning. The Ukrainian Values conference is also a place of healing, of strength and of support. Hosting it is a privilege. No

matter how many hours it takes, it is worth every second: to be there, to listen, to hear, to witness, and to stand in solidarity with a world that stands with Ukraine.

Everyone named here gave permission when registering. If you would like your name changed or removed, please write to me, and I will do it with care.

Our next conference, Social Work and Social Development Values in a Global World, meets online on Friday, December 18, 2026, with abstracts due Friday, December 4. The fourth Ukrainian Values in a Global World conference follows on Friday, February 19, 2027, with abstracts due Friday, February 5. The final program and proceedings, this story and every call are at drokacademy.ca/conferences.

With gratitude, Sasha, Dr. Oleksandr Kondrashov, Chair of the Organizing Committee

Love. Care. Share.

Ukrainian Values in a Global World

The story of the conference, told by the people who were in the room: what was shared, what moved us, and what we carry forward together. Free and open to all.

Inside this story

- A message of thanks from the chair
- A day across horizon lines: belonging, memory and the map
- What people keep, and what we take with us

Read the full proceedings

The program and every abstract from this conference are in the third conference's Final Program and Proceedings, free to read at https://doi.org/10.66989/eft.uv3.2026.

Read it your way

Large clear type, bookmarks and headings that screen readers can follow. For large print, plain text or another format, write to educatingfortomorrowconference@gmail.com.

About the Author



Dr. Oleksandr Kondrashov is Associate Professor of Social Work (tenured) at Thompson Rivers University and founder of DROKACADEMY, a healing and writing space. Born in Lviv, Ukraine, he has taught over 7,000 students across five Canadian universities. Accessibility is the through-line of his scholarship.

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Every program, proceedings and conference story in the Educating for Tomorrow series is free to read at krasun.ca/conferences. Everyone is welcome to present, listen and share.

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