



## **Report of the National President to the Annual General Meeting of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress**

**(November 2019-November 2020)**

### **UCC response to Covid-19**

The covid-19 crisis has impacted our Ukrainian Canadian organizations, the cities, towns and rural communities in which we live, our country and our planet. Faced with the growing challenges of uncertainty, insecurity and risks to public health, the UCC's dedicated volunteers and staff have been working hard to support our community. The UCC's response to the covid-19 pandemic was based on a multi-pronged approach:

#### *Education*

With our National Ukrainian Education Committee, we've organized a series of webinars to help our educators and teachers prepare for distance and online learning. We've developed Ukrainian-language resources for teachers, parents and students to assist them in continuing with our youth's education during this difficult time.

#### *Webinars and workshops for individuals and organizations*

We've worked with our community organizations and professionals to deliver webinars and workshops on issues and challenges facing organizations and individuals – providing presentations on legal information; resources and programs available to newcomers; immigration services; fundraising issues for organizations; issues for businesses.

#### *Supporting our Seniors and vulnerable members of our communities*

The UCC has developed a series of resources for organizations working to support seniors and vulnerable members of our community, including developing an informational package for organizations that are calling seniors to check up on them and assist them with obtaining groceries or medicines. We've supported the Canadian Blood Services through a national blood donation drive in our community.

#### *Staying connected and informed*

We regularly assemble and distribute widely the latest information in an easy-to-read and accessible online Weekly Covid-19 bulletin to ensure that we're all connected and informed. We're working with

our community print, television and online media to identify experts and professionals who provide important information to our community.

#### *Advocating for our community and our organizations*

We are continually working with federal government officials for strong and sustained support of non-profit organizations, charities, arts and cultural groups and programs during this time of decreased revenues and the need to cancel events.

#### *Supporting vulnerable children in Ukraine*

We are working together with Help Us Help, the Canada-Ukraine Foundation, Meest Corporation and the Children's Ombudsman of Ukraine on the COVID-19 Children's Relief Initiative to provide support to children in Ukraine in need of basic supplies during the pandemic. The Initiative provides food packages and hygiene kits for children and families, distributed by social workers as they visit vulnerable families to assess the health and well-being of the children.

#### *Meetings with the Board*

The UCC Board has continued to meet regularly throughout the year, including several meetings devoted to Covid-19 response, feedback and consultation. Vice President Olesia Luciw-Andryjowycz is chairing regular quarterly meetings with the leadership of UCC Provincials, which has also included a focus on covid-19 activities and outreach.

## **Growing Our Community**

### **Engagement with Government and political parties, Members of Parliament**

Ahead of the 2019 federal election the UCC launched 6 key policy priorities in advance of the election. These policy briefs are the result of extensive consultation and research which included community engagement over the past several months. The UCC's key priorities are as follows:

1. Strengthening Canada-Ukraine Defence and Security Relations
2. Supporting Democratic and Economic Reform in Ukraine
3. Fighting Online Hate and Disinformation
4. Welcoming Newcomers to Canada
5. Helping Our Culture Flourish
6. Ensuring Quality, Safe and Affordable Care for Seniors

At the forefront of issues that unite the community, the UCC has developed informed, front-line perspectives on public policy challenges that impact our community and the broader Canadian public. The policy briefs UCC developed on the 6 key themes can be found at [ucc.ca/yourvoice](http://ucc.ca/yourvoice)

During the election campaign the UCC surveyed all the national Canadian political parties and all local candidates from the parties regarding their positions on issues of importance to our community and made the results of the surveys available to our community and the general public.

The results of the surveys of party leaders are available here: <https://ucc.ca/2019/10/09/federal-election-2019-ucc-survey-of-party-leaders/>

The results of the candidates' surveys are available here: <https://ucc.ca/2019/10/15/2019-federal-election-responses-to-ucc-survey-for-candidates-for-mp/>

Following the Federal Election, in early 2020 UCC staff in Ottawa held 19 in-person meetings with Members of Parliament and Senators to brief them on issues important to our community. Due to the pandemic the UCC's advocacy has moved to online meetings.

The UCC also engaged with the Hon. Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, on the Government's Covid-19 response, as well with staff in the offices of the Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage, and Min. Bardish Chagger, Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth on support for not-for-profit arts and cultural groups and non-professional artists. We will continue or advocacy on this issue in the coming year, as one of the priorities of our advocacy efforts.

#### *Advocacy – Fall 2020 Session of Parliament*

When Parliament returned for the Fall session in September, the UCC presented Briefs to Members of Parliament on three priorities for the Fall Session:

1. Covid-19 Response: Better outcomes for seniors' care and support to caregivers
2. Assistance for not-for profit organizations and community educational, cultural and arts programs
3. Support for Ukraine in the face of continuing Russian aggression.

The UCC brief to MPs is available here: <https://www.ucc.ca/2020/09/21/ucc-brief-for-members-of-parliament-fall-2020/>

Following the Throne Speech announcement that the Government will develop national standards for long-term care, the UCC wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau and the Minister LeBlanc urging the Government to engage with experts and practitioners from Ukrainian Canadian long-term care homes. Our community's long-term care homes have seen far better health outcomes for their residents than comparable for-profit institutions. We will be following up with the Government to ensure that our community's expertise is included in these discussions.

#### **UCC Tribute Gala honouring Roman Waschuk and Oksana Smerechuk**

On February 1, 2020, the UCC honoured Roman Waschuk, former Canadian Ambassador to Ukraine and his spouse Oksana Smerechuk for their contributions to public service and Canada-Ukraine relations at a special Tribute Gala in Toronto on February 1.

Due to the generosity of our sponsors and supporters, \$100,000 was raised to support the Roman Waschuk and Oksana Smerechuk Fund, within the UCC Charitable & Educational Trust, which funds the *UCC Parliamentary Internship Program*, as well as the *UCC Community Development Fund*, which supports important community programming initiatives. Roman Waschuk was presented the UCC Taras Shevchenko Medal, for his outstanding contribution to public service. The Shevchenko Medal is the highest form of recognition granted by the UCC.

The Ukrainian Canadian community also paid tribute to Canadian police officers Canadian police officers who have been providing training to Ukraine's police forces as part of Canada's support for security and

democratic development in Ukraine and Canadian Armed Forces personnel on Operation UNIFIER – Canada’s training mission in Ukraine.

### **UCC Parliamentary Internship Program**

The UCC Parliamentary Internship Program is aimed at providing Ukrainian Canadian youth with meaningful political experience. Interns work in Ottawa with Members of Parliament for 10 months on policy research, communications, legislative affairs and constituency work. They learn firsthand about Canada’s Parliament and all aspects of the legislative and governmental process. Upon completion of the internship, UCC works to place the interns in full-time rolls with Members of Parliament, Ministerial Offices, or other public service roles within Government of Canada.

The UCC Parliamentary Internship Program is made possible through the generous support of individual and organizational donors, including the Roman Waschuk & Oksana Smerechuk Fund, Ukrainian Canadian Veterans Fund (through the Shevchenko Foundation, Ukrainian National Federation, and Ukrainian Credit Union Ltd. To see a full list of our donors and learn how you can make a donation to support this program please <https://www.ucc.ca/programs/parliamentary-internship/supporters/>

In 2020, Anna Bodnar worked as a UCC intern in the office of Peter Fonseca (MP, Mississauga East-Cooksville). For the 2020-21 parliamentary year, two interns have been selected – Matthew Selinger and Dr. Alexander Kostenko. Alexander recently began work in the office of Member of Parliament David Sweet (Flamborough-Glanbrook) and Matthew Selinger will begin his placement in early 2021. Both will be working remotely from home until such time as health regulations allow for safe return to work in Ottawa. This proved to be a successful model for Anna Bodnar.

### **XXVI Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians**

The XXVI Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians was held in Ottawa on November 1-3, 2019. Over 250 delegates from across Canada came together to set the priorities and elect the leadership of the UCC.

The theme of the XXVI Congress was *Share Your Vision- Build Our Future!* A series of engaging workshops and discussions were held, and several keynote speakers delivered thought-provoking and interesting addresses. The recipients of the Shevchenko Medal, National Leadership and Youth Leadership Awards were honoured for their outstanding contributions to the Ukrainian Canadian community. The resolutions adopted by the XXVI Congress are available on the UCC website.

### **Outreach work with smaller communities**

UCC is working to reach out to smaller Ukrainian communities across Canada where there are no UCC branches yet to assess their needs and how the UCC can help the community in these towns flourish. We have been in touch with communities and will be working with them in the coming year – particularly in Canada’s North, Maritimes and rural regions across the country.

In October, we held a very successful outreach event with Ukrainian communities in Atlantic Canada; the video of the event is available on our youtube page.

# Advancing our Ukrainian Canadian Identity

## **Holodomor Commemoration and Education**

Every year, the Ukrainian Canadian community commemorates the Holodomor with a series of local commemorative events and activities, along with our branches and member organizations. The UCC Holodomor Awareness Committee is chaired by Irene Mycak and oversees UCC's programming during National Holodomor Awareness Week. Through the UCC Holodomor Education Committee, chaired by Valentina Kuryliw, the UCC participates in organizing regular teachers' and educators' conferences focusing on Holodomor education.

On November 26, 2019, the UCC, together with the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Embassy of Ukraine in Canada, held a solemn Holodomor commemoration event in Canada's Parliament, which was attended by Members of Parliament of all parties.

Holodomor commemoration ceremonies were organized by local communities across Canada during National Holodomor Awareness Week, November 18-24, 2019. More information about the commemorations is available here:

<https://www.ucc.ca/2019/11/18/national-holodomor-awareness-week/>

The UCC is supporting the National Holodomor Awareness Tour's campaign to get the word Holodomor included in all major English-language dictionaries. More information about the campaign is available here: <https://www.ucc.ca/2020/07/21/sign-the-petition-help-us-get-holodomor-included-in-the-dictionary/>

## **Commemoration of the Centenary of the End of Canada's First National Internment Operations**

The UCC National Internment Centenary Committee, chaired by Borys Sydoruk, with the support of the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund, organized a series of online events to build awareness and education about Internment during WWI, culminating in the online commemoration of the centenary of Canada's First National Internment Operations on June 20.

In total, 8,579 men, women and children branded as "enemy aliens" and interned. Among them were Ukrainians, Alevi Kurds, Armenians, Bulgarians, Croatians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Ottoman Turks, Polish, Romanians, Serbians, Slovaks and Slovenes, of which most were Ukrainians and most were civilians.

## **Vyshyvanka Day 2020**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 Vyshyvanka Day celebration was organized online – the Vyshyvanka Day All-Canadian Flash Mob, which took place on May 21, 2020, which included the participation of many Canadian Members of Parliament and political leaders.

For the video from Vyshyvanka Day, please click here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3\\_XwGQdmMc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3_XwGQdmMc)

## **Genocide Remembrance Month**

In recognition of Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation, and Prevention Month, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress was once again part of a coalition of civil society organizations – including

organizations representing the Armenian, Jewish, Roma, Rwandan, Ukrainian and Yazidi citizens of Canada - joined together to solemnly commemorate and condemn acts of genocide and recommit to working together to prevent genocide. The statement issued by the coalition partners in April 2020 is available here: <https://www.ucc.ca/2020/04/14/april-is-genocide-remembrance-condemnation-prevention-month/>

### **Black Ribbon Day – August 23**

Due to the pandemic, the commemorations for Black Ribbon Day – the National Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Communism and Nazism in Europe, were held online. The UCC and the Central and Eastern European Council in Canada jointly held an online commemoration, with Belarusian activist and politician Andrei Sannikov and Russian human rights and democracy activist Vladimir Kara-Murza, moderated by CEEC President Marcus Kolga, which can be viewed here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnEIWLrsHbA&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnEIWLrsHbA&feature=emb_title)

### **UCC 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

2021 marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress – which unites Ukrainian organizations from coast to coast to coast of our great country. Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, supporters and generosity of our donors, the Ukrainian Canadian community today – more than 1.3 million of us – is stronger than ever and ready to lead us into a brighter future.

For the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary we will be developing a series of videos – one for each decade – that focus on the work of our community and the UCC. Each decade will be dedicated to a specific theme:

*1940s – The War Effort and Refugees*

*1950s – Human rights/dissidents/democracy*

*1960s – Multiculturalism, arts and culture, founding of Shevchenko Foundation*

*1970s – Community development and education*

*1980s – Holodomor Education, Awareness, Recognition*

*1990s – Independence of Ukraine*

*2000s – Internment and redress*

*2010s – Making a Difference – Moving to the Future*

The videos will be unveiled throughout the coming year.

## **Supporting Ukraine**

### **Canada Ukraine relations**

As Ukraine endures the seventh year of Russian invasion and occupation of Crimea and Russia's war against Ukraine in Donetsk and Luhansk oblast, the priority of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress since 2014 has been to focus efforts on assisting Ukraine. We are working intensely to:

- Coordinate community reaction and response;
- Coordinate community efforts to provide aid and assistance to Ukraine;
- Keep the Government of Canada and Canadian politicians properly informed about events in Ukraine;
- Advise the Government of Canada on providing concrete and tangible responses to the crisis;

- Advise and advocate to the Government of Canada on increased assistance to Ukraine;
- Provide accurate and thoughtful commentary to Canadian media on these events;
- Provide daily and weekly briefings on developments in Ukraine to politicians, the press and the community.

UCC has and continues to work with all political parties as well as provincial and municipal governments to maximize support for the people of Ukraine. We regularly meet and brief with high-ranking officials of the federal government. The UCC also testifies before Committees of Canada's Parliament, including the Foreign Affairs Committee, Defence Committee, and Subcommittee on International human rights.

The UCC is a co-chair of the Canada-Ukraine Stakeholder Advisory Council (CUSAC), which brings together representatives of our community and high-ranking officials of several departments of Canada's federal government.

In March 2020, UCC CEO Ihor Michalchyshyn accompanied Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. François-Philippe Champagne on his visit to Ukraine.

In March 2020 the UCC participated in the Public Consultations launched by Global Affairs Canada on the Possible Modernization of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. The UCC's submission is available here:

<https://www.ucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/March.16.2020.UCC-Submission-CUFTA-Public-Consultation.pdf>

In June 2020, the UCC held an online conference, *Ukraine Reforms One Year After the Toronto Conference: Progress, Pitfalls and Canada's Role*, in partnership with the Canadian International Council. The event was moderated by former Ambassador Roman Waschuk and hosted experts including Jill Sinclair, Canadian representative to the Ukrainian Defence Reform Advisory Board (DRAB), Senior Government of Canada Official, Ukraine Reform Conference 2019; Oksana Markarova, former Minister of Finance of Ukraine, 2018-20; Taras Shevchenko, Director Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law, member of the Board Reanimation Package of Reforms and Matt Simpson, Chief Executive Officer, Black Iron, Inc, who discussed the successes and pitfalls of reforms in Ukraine in the past year and the future trajectory of reforms in Ukraine.

In October 2020, the UCC hosted Minister Champagne for a community meeting on Canada's support for Ukraine. The brief that was presented to Minister Champagne is available here

<https://www.ucc.ca/2020/10/22/ucc-briefing-note-for-the-honourable-francois-philippe-champagne-minister-of-foreign-affairs/>

The substantial regression in Ukraine's reform trajectory in recent months is cause for increasing concern for the UCC:

- The authorities' attempts to undermine the independence of the National Bank and other institutions;
- The targeting of President Zelenskyy's political opponents with legal persecution;
- The appointment to senior positions of former Yanukovich-era officials;

- The decision by the Constitutional Court that in effect destroyed some of the most important pillars of anti-corruption policy

are all disquieting manifestations of the increasing influence of oligarchs and vested interests in the Zelenskyy administration and the Parliament, and are an attempt to reverse the reforms undertaken since the Revolution of Dignity in 2014.

UCC will continue to stress to the Canadian government that Ukraine's partners need to speak publicly and forcefully on these issues, and stress to Ukraine's government that continued international support is contingent on the Ukrainian government's ability and willingness to implementing reforms to which Ukraine has committed.

### **Support for democracy in Belarus**

Together with partners at the Belarusian Canadian Alliance and the Central and Eastern European Council of Canada, the UCC wrote to Minister Champagne in the first days of the crisis urging a strong response from Canada to the falsification of election results in Belarus, and subsequent state-led violence against demonstrators. The UCC National Office continues to engage with and assist the Belarusian Canadian community in their advocacy efforts. In September 2020, Canada and the UK led the way in announcing sanctions against self-proclaimed president Lukashenka and his regime.

In an effort to keep our community and the Canadian public informed and engaged on the movement for democracy in Belarus, the UCC hosted a webinar with Belarusian Canadian Alliance Chair Alena Liavonchanka; former Ambassador Roman Waschuk and scholars Dr. Olga Onuch and Dr. Alexander Lanoszka.

## **Future Initiatives**

### *Community Education Leadership Program*

We are in the planning stages of two new projects – the UCC Community Education Leadership Program, which will be a series of seminars we will offer to member organizations and the wider public. We are currently envisioning the program as four levels of seminars and will be engaging experts and practitioners in our community. With Anna Bodnar, our 2020 parliamentary intern, we organized a pilot seminar – *Politics 101* – about how Canada's political and legislative systems work.

### *Ukraine "Birthright" Program*

UCC National Office is in the beginning stages of research into the feasibility of establishing a "birthright" program, which, following the end of the covid-19 pandemic, will provide Ukrainian Canadian youth with the opportunity to visit Ukraine, learn about Ukrainian heritage and become more involved in developing people-to-people ties between Canada and Ukraine.

# Thank you to our Volunteers and Supporters from Coast to Coast to Coast!

## Committees of the UCC

The activities of the UCC are largely run through a variety of committees and task forces. These include:

- Advisory Council (James Temerty)
- Awards & Recognitions (vacant)
- Canada Ukraine Stakeholder Advisory Council (Paul Migus)
- National Ukrainian Education Committee (Tetiana Sunak)
- Education Advocacy (Orest Sklierenko)
- Holodomor Awareness (Irka Mycak)
- Holodomor Education (Valentina Kuryliw)
- Seniors Network (Jaroslaw Grod)
- Museums, Archives and Research Institutions (Maryna Chernyavska and Andriy Savchuk)
- Ukraine Advisory Council (Bohdan Kupych)
- Ukrainian Festivals Network (Olya Grod)
- XXVI Triennial Congress Organizing Committee (until November, 2019) (Ann Szyptur)
- Newcomers Committee (vacant)
- Internment Centenary Commemoration (Borys Sydoruk)
- Parliamentary Internship Program (Alex Ilchenko)
- Vyshyvanka Day (Volodymyr Palagniuk)
- Youth Interorganizational (Liza Zienchuk)
- Youth Volunteerism Recognition (Oksana Horich-Pastushok)

## Provincial Councils and Local Branches

UCC works very actively across Canada through 6 dynamic provincial councils, which are comprised of community representatives from their respective province as well as numerous local organizations. Our provincial councils organize cultural events, offer services for new immigrants from Ukraine, and work closely with their provincial governments on areas such as education.

- Alberta Provincial Council: Orysia Boychuk, President
- British Columbia Provincial Council: Natalia Jatskevych, President
- Manitoba Provincial Council: Ivanka (Joan) Lewandowsky, President
- Ontario Provincial Council: Bohdan Wynnyckyj, President
- Quebec Provincial Council: Mykhailo Shwec, President
- Saskatchewan Provincial Council: Ivan (John) Denysek, President

UCC is very fortunate to have 16 active local branches, which work to bring together community organizations, coordinate and organize community events.

We also actively engage with Ukrainian communities where formal UCC branches have not yet been established including Kelowna, Moncton, Brandon, Yellowknife, Quebec City and Kingston.

## UCC branches and Presidents

- Calgary, Alberta: Inna Platonova
- Canora, Saskatchewan: Dorothy Korol
- Edmonton, Alberta: Anastasiya Khoma
- Hamilton, Ontario: Antonina Kumka
- Halifax-Dartmouth, Nova-Scotia: Ihor Yushchenko
- London, Ontario: Daria Hryckiw
- Montreal, Quebec: Mykhailo Shwec
- Niagara Region, Ontario: Irena Newton
- Ottawa, Ontario: Borys Gengalo
- Regina, Saskatchewan: Terry Zwarych
- Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Kevin Kardynal
- Toronto, Ontario: Taras Bahriy (to Oct. 2020) Petro Shturyn (since Oct. 2020)
- Vancouver, British Columbia: Iryna Shyroka
- Victoria, British Columbia: Devon Sereda Goldie
- Windsor, Ontario: Lesia Nazarewich
- Yorkton, Saskatchewan: Larissa Van Caeseel

**Thank you to our generous donors!**

### **Members of**

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The President's Circle

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**And all Donors for their support and contributions to keeping our community strong and united!**

**Thank you to all supporters of the Waschuk-Smerechuk Tribute Gala!**

Lead Sponsor



The Temerty Family would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Ambassador Roman Waschuk and Oksana Smerechuk.

Diamond Sponsors



We are delighted to support the UCC Parliamentary Internship Program and the UCC Community Development Fund, through the Roman Waschuk & Oksana Smerechuk Fund.

Silver Sponsors



Ukrainian Credit Union Limited gratefully acknowledges former Ambassador to Ukraine Roman Waschuk and his wife Oksana Smerechuk for their loyal and dedicated life-long service to Canada in the diplomatic corps, and outstanding contribution to their ancestral homeland Ukraine. Щастя Вам Боже на Многії та Благії Літа!

Thank you

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The Ukrainian National Federation (Toronto Branch)  
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Thank you to all the supporters of the XXVI Triennial Congress!



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Respectfully submitted,  
Alexandra Chyczij, UCC National President  
November 7, 2020