

# ФІЛОСОФІЯ І ПСИХОЛОГІЯ ПЕДАГОГІЧНОЇ ДІЇ

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## SOCIO-PEDAGOGICAL ADAPTATION OF UKRAINIAN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TO THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF POLAND UNDER CONDITIONS OF FORCED MIGRATION

*The article presents the results of a study on the socio-pedagogical adaptation of Ukrainian teachers in Poland under conditions of forced migration, considered in the context of intersystem educational integration of students. The relevance of the study is determined by transformations in the educational space caused by the war, as well as by the increasing number of Ukrainian students in European countries. The empirical basis consists of data from a survey and focus group interviews reflecting the experience of Ukrainian teachers' professional functioning within the host country's education system.*

*The obtained results make it possible to reconstruct the features of teachers' inclusion in a new educational environment, where different educational practices, norms, and communication models coexist. The professional activity of teachers acquires a complex character, combining educational, mediating, and supportive functions. In this dimension, the teacher acts as a link between the Ukrainian and Polish educational systems, ensuring the coherence of the learning process and supporting students. This role requires a flexible combination of professional experience with new educational requirements and interaction norms.*

*The adaptation of Ukrainian teachers and students is represented as a multidimensional process that integrates professional, social, and psychological aspects. Particular importance is attached to preserving students' educational and cultural identity alongside their inclusion in a new educational environment. The study identifies factors that complicate these processes, including language barriers, institutional differences, features of educational organization, and conditions of teachers' professional realization, and highlights the importance of a supportive educational environment that contributes to the stability of professional activity and effective interaction with students.*

*The importance of systemic support for Ukrainian teachers is emphasized as a key resource for ensuring the stability and quality of the educational process in conditions of prolonged migration, as well as a factor in coordinating interaction between educational systems.*

**Keywords:** *Ukrainian teachers, forced migration, educational integration, refugee students, Polish education system.*

**Problem statement.** The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on February 24, 2022, triggered a large-scale wave of forced migration affecting virtually all socio-professional groups of the population. Military aggression caused a deep crisis in Ukraine's education system, as a result of which a significant number of pupils, students, and educational staff were forced to leave the country in search of temporary protection (UNHCR, 2024; OECD, 2023). These migration processes have had a substantial impact on the educational systems of European countries, particularly the Republic of Poland, which has become one of the main host countries for Ukrainian citizens. In the field of education, this has led to the need to integrate a large number of students and involve Ukrainian teachers in the educational process (Eurydice, 2023).

The dynamics of the number of Ukrainian teachers in Poland during 2022 – 2025 indicate a gradual decrease to 5,410 individuals as of early 2025. This trend may reflect both processes of partial integration and changes in professional activity, as well as the return of some teachers to Ukraine (Polish Ministry of Education and Science, 2024).

At the same time, there has been a rapid increase in the number of Ukrainian students in Poland. According to analytical reports, approximately 200,000 Ukrainian children were enrolled in the Polish education system in 2024 (Świdrowska & Stano, 2024; Tędziągolska, Walczak, & Wielecki, 2024), which has led to increased demand for teaching staff capable of supporting their adaptation and education.

In this context, the professional activity of teachers under conditions of forced migration can be considered as an interdependent system in which teachers and students function as interconnected elements of the educational process.

**Literature review.** In contemporary academic discourse, the issue of educational integration of Ukrainian refugee children and the functioning of education systems under crisis conditions is widely represented. International reports emphasize that such integration is a key factor in their socialization and largely depends on the availability of qualified teachers capable of working in intercultural environments. A substantial body of analytical materials has been produced by international organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as UNICEF and OECD. These publications address the scale of migration,

socio-demographic characteristics of refugees, access to education, and the specifics of their integration in host countries. Particular attention is paid to systemic challenges faced by European education systems due to the rapid increase in the number of refugee students and the need to adapt curricula and pedagogical approaches.

Significant empirical data on the educational trajectories of Ukrainian children, their learning conditions, and adaptation challenges are presented in reports by UNESCO (2023) and UNICEF (2024). These publications describe educational responses, particularly in Poland, aimed at integrating Ukrainian students through their inclusion in general education schools, the establishment of preparatory classes, and the provision of language support. They also highlight the role of teachers and the challenges associated with increased pressure on education systems and the need for additional resources.

An important contribution is made by studies conducted by Polish researchers, which explore the functioning of school education in conditions of cultural diversity. For example, the report by Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej (2024) outlines the challenges of integrating Ukrainian students, their educational needs, and the role of schools in creating inclusive environments. Publications such as “Szkoła z Klasą” (2023), Świdrowska and Stano (2024), and Tędziągolska, Walczak, and Wielecki (2024) present the experience of integrating Ukrainian students into the Polish education system, identify challenges of multicultural interaction, and describe the organization of the educational process. Additional aspects of integration are reflected in materials from local authorities, particularly reports by the Warsaw Education Office (Gembik, 2024), which present monitoring data on the situation in educational institutions.

A specific contribution to the study of this issue is provided by analytical works of Ukrainian scholars (Lukianova & Ovcharuk, 2023), which focus on the problems and needs of Ukrainian teachers in Poland, as well as the specifics of their professional adaptation and educational activity abroad.

At the same time, the issue of professional adaptation of Ukrainian teachers abroad remains less systematically addressed compared to the education of refugee children, and existing studies only partially reflect their experience, indicating the need for further research.

**The aim of the article** is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the adaptation processes of Ukrainian teachers in Poland under conditions of forced migration, to identify the key challenges and determinants of this process, and to determine their role in the integration of Ukrainian students into the Polish education system within the framework of intersystem educational interaction.

**Research Methodology.** The empirical basis of the study consists of the results of a survey of Ukrainian teachers who were abroad, particularly in the Republic of Poland, during 2022–2024, supplemented by focus group discussions conducted in 2025, which made it possible to clarify the interpretation of the identified problems and needs.

**Sample.** The study involved Ukrainian educational professionals who left Ukraine after February 24, 2022, have pedagogical education and experience in the field of education, and are currently residing in the Republic of Poland. The sample is purposive. The analysis considered the following characteristics of respondents: age, gender, teaching experience, specialization, and duration of stay abroad.

**Research instruments.** Data were collected using a structured questionnaire covering socio-demographic characteristics, migration experience, features of professional activity, adaptation challenges, professional needs, and motivational orientations of respondents.

The survey was conducted online using digital platforms, ensuring accessibility for respondents in different regions of Poland, as well as anonymity and voluntary participation. The questionnaire was distributed through professional communities, educational networks, and civil society organizations working with Ukrainian teachers abroad.

**Data analysis methods.** Descriptive statistics, comparative analysis, and qualitative analysis of responses were applied to process the data.

**Limitations.** The main limitations of the study include the non-representative nature of the sample and the potential subjectivity of participants' self-assessments.

**Main Body of the Study.** The issue of forced migration of Ukrainians following the outbreak of the full-scale war has gained significant scholarly attention and has become the subject of interdisciplinary research covering sociology, pedagogy, and economics. One of the important aspects of this issue is the experience of Ukrainian teachers who have found themselves in a new educational environment abroad.

*Social Profile of Ukrainian Teachers in the Republic of Poland.*

The analysis of the collected data makes it possible to identify the structural characteristics of this group and the specifics of their professional realization in a new educational environment. The vast majority of respondents were women, which corresponds to the general gender structure of the teaching profession. The largest age group consisted of individuals aged 30–50, indicating that an active and professionally mobile segment of the teaching workforce has moved abroad.

Some teachers were able to find employment in their field, particularly in educational institutions in Poland, where their work is related to supporting Ukrainian students in the process of integration and cooperating with local teachers. At the same time, a significant proportion of respondents reported a transformation of their professional activities: some work in education only partially, while others are forced to temporarily switch to employment in other sectors (Fig. 1).

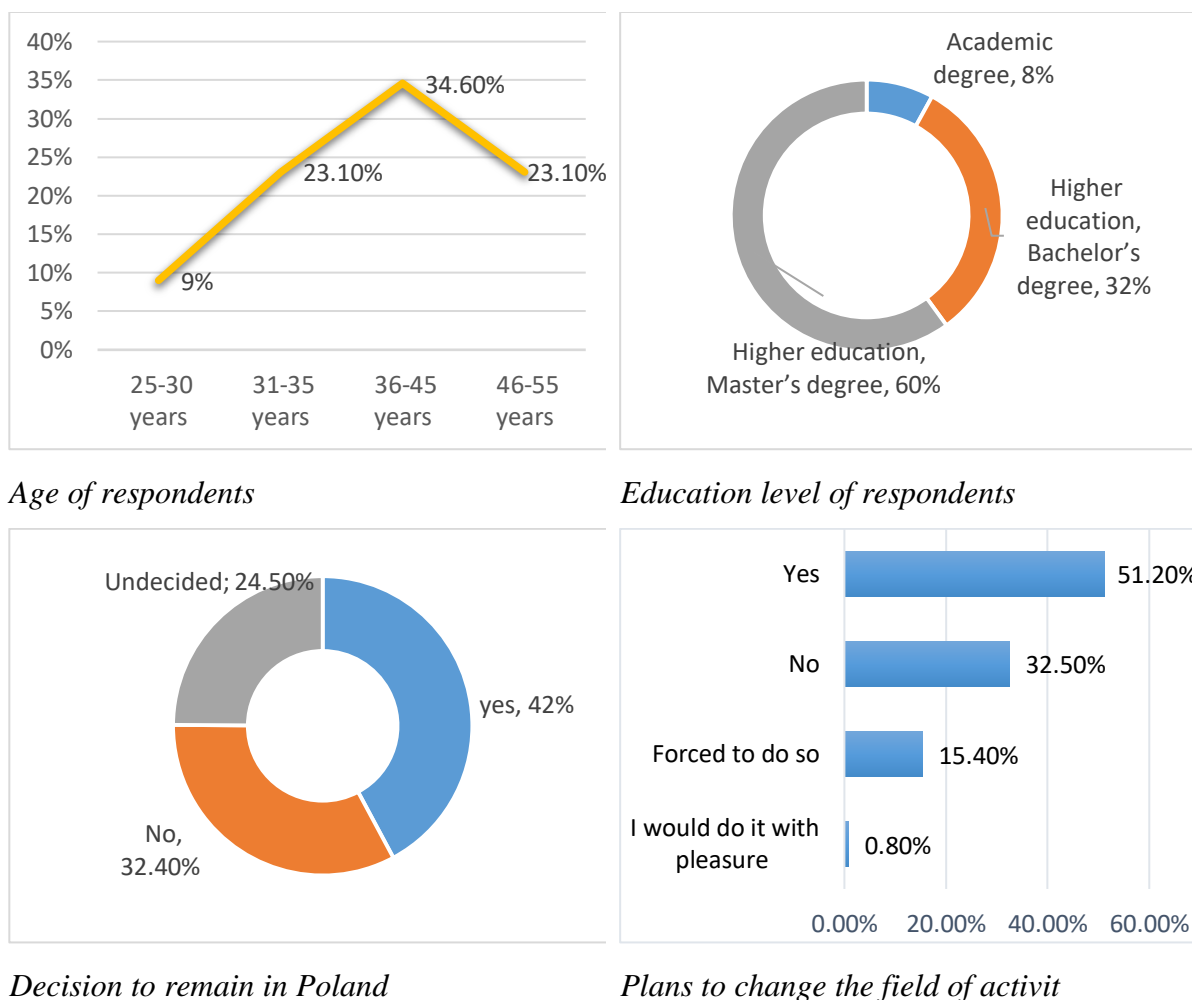
The main factors complicating employment in the field include the language barrier, difficulties with diploma recognition, differences between educational systems, limited awareness of employment opportunities, and high requirements for adaptation to new professional standards.

This situation reflects processes of forced professional mobility and partial deskilling. Overall, the findings indicate the complex nature of Ukrainian teachers' integration into the labor market of the host country.

It is also important to note the motivational dimension of professional activity. Even under challenging adaptation conditions, Ukrainian teachers strive to remain in the profession. Their work is often driven not only by economic factors, but also by the desire to support Ukrainian children abroad, maintain their professional identity, and fulfill a sense of social mission in the context of war.

In general, a contradictory situation can be observed: Ukrainian teachers possess high professional potential and motivation to remain in the profession, yet face systemic barriers that limit their full integration into the education system of the host country.

A separate issue concerns adaptation and its role under crisis conditions. In this regard, the adaptation of Ukrainian teachers abroad becomes a key factor that, under conditions of forced migration, acquires not only social and professional but also existential significance, as it is linked to overcoming the consequences of traumatic wartime experiences.



**Fig. 1. Social profile of Ukrainian teachers in the Republic of Poland during the period of the full-scale war**

Thus, in addition to the language barrier and significant differences between the educational systems of Ukraine and the host country, one of the most common challenges identified by respondents is adaptation under conditions of post-traumatic stress associated with war, forced displacement, and the disruption of social ties. Respondents emphasized emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and difficulties in adapting to a new environment.

An equally important aspect is sociocultural adaptation. Ukrainian teachers are required to adjust to new norms of professional behavior, establish interaction within a different cultural community, and build new social connections. At the same time, this process is complicated by differences in educational traditions and communication styles, which necessitates the development of intercultural competence.

### *Analysis of Focus Group Results*

The results of the focus group discussion complement the survey data and enable a deeper interpretation of the identified problems and needs of Ukrainian teachers abroad. The focus group highlighted subjective experiences, emotional responses, and less visible aspects of adaptation (Tabl. 1).

Table 1.

**Structure of Problems and Needs of Ukrainian Teachers Abroad  
 (based on focus group data)**

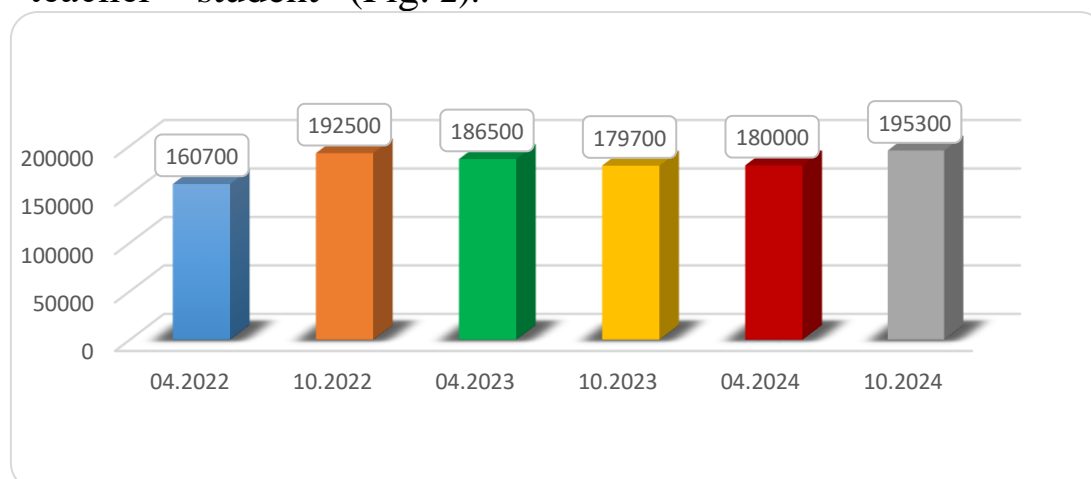
<b>Category</b>	<b>Problem Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Mismatch with qualification requirements	Complexity of diploma recognition; need for additional education; limited employment opportunities	Gap between teachers' qualifications and the requirements of the host country's education system
Recognition of professional experience	Limited career development opportunities; decline in professional status	Partial devaluation of professional experience and decrease in social status
Psychological condition	Psychological stress; emotional exhaustion; loss of professional identity; traumatic war experience	High psycho-emotional burden affecting professional activity
Adaptation to online learning	Insufficient technical skills; limited access to platforms and programs	Need for digital adaptation to new learning formats
Cultural differences and language barrier	Different pedagogical approaches; differences in terminology; different assessment systems	Complications in professional communication and integration into the educational environment
Integration into the local environment	Entry into a new professional community; challenges of socialization; integration while maintaining identity	Dual adaptation process: integration into a new environment while preserving identity

Participants of the focus group emphasized a sense of professional uncertainty accompanying their stay abroad, along with emotional tension and internal conflict, often associated with feelings of instability and uncertainty about the future. On the one hand, they strive to adapt and realize themselves in a new environment; on the other, they maintain a strong connection to Ukraine and to a professional identity shaped within the national education system.

The discussion clearly highlighted that psychological exhaustion, anxiety, and emotional instability directly affect professional performance and the capacity for adaptation. Thus, the results of the focus group discussion made it possible to deepen the understanding of the adaptation processes of Ukrainian teachers abroad. They demonstrate that behind statistical indicators lies a complex personal experience which, together with motivational factors, plays a decisive role in teachers' willingness to support students.

### **The context of the interrelation between the key actors “teacher – student”**

The logic of the study requires considering the problem not in isolation, but in the context of the interrelation between its key actors, “teacher – student” (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2. Dynamics of the number of children and youth enrolled in schools and kindergartens**

Source: author's own elaboration based on *Uczniowie z Ukrainy z doświadczeniem uchodźstwa w polskich szkołach. Raport z analizy danych*. 10.2024 [https://ceo.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Raport-z-danych-SIO-UKR\\_CEO\\_UNICEF\\_10.2024\\_PL-1.pdf](https://ceo.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Raport-z-danych-SIO-UKR_CEO_UNICEF_10.2024_PL-1.pdf)

According to international organizations and national statistics, in 2022 Poland received the largest number of Ukrainian school-aged children among European Union countries (UNESCO, 2023). Since September 2024, following the introduction of compulsory schooling for all children and youth from Ukraine, a new group of students has entered Polish schools, those who had previously remained outside the Polish school system (Tędziągolska, Walczak, & Wielecki, 2024).

In October 2024, 195.3 thousand refugees from Ukraine attending various types of schools and preschool institutions were registered in

the Education Information System (SIO) (Świdrowska & Stano, 2024). To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the scale and dynamics of this phenomenon, it is important to examine specific quantitative indicators reflecting changes in the number of Ukrainian students in the Polish education system over recent years (Tabl. 2).

Table 2.

**Dynamics of the Number of Ukrainian Students in Poland  
(2022–2024)**

Year	Estimated Number of Ukrainian Students in Poland	Dynamics Characteristics
2022	500,000–700,000 (total number of children), including over 180,000 in Polish schools	Sharp increase due to the outbreak of the full-scale war
2023	180,000–200,000 in the Polish education system	Stabilization and partial integration
2024	200,000+ (according to SIO data)	Sustained high presence and long-term integration

*Note.* Data are aggregated based on analytical reports 2024; Chrostowska, 2023; Świdrowska & Stano, 2024; Tędziągolska, Walczak, & Wielecki, 2024; OECD, 2023

The data presented in the table demonstrate a transition from a phase of crisis response to a stage of long-term integration, which, in turn, highlights the importance of the role of Ukrainian teachers in ensuring the educational process.

It should be noted that, in the context of a significant increase in the number of Ukrainian children in the Polish education system after 2022, Ukrainian teachers perform the function of educational mediators, facilitating the connection between the two educational systems. They support students in understanding the requirements of the Polish school system, help overcome language barriers, and assist in adapting to new learning conditions. In this context, their role becomes particularly significant given the critical shortage of teaching staff in Poland: as of 2025, more than 20,000 teaching positions remain unfilled in schools. Under such conditions, Ukrainian teachers, with their relevant experience and high motivation, become a highly demanded resource for the education system (Balyńska, 2025).

The obtained generalizations make it possible to consider the situation of adaptation of Ukrainian teachers and the integration of Ukrainian students into the Polish education system as a complex,

multi-level system of interaction between two educational spaces, within which a specific distribution of responsibilities between countries is formed.

The analysis shows that Poland experiences primarily an institutional burden associated with integrating a large number of students into its education system, while Ukraine continues to perform the function of ensuring educational continuity through distance learning. The current situation creates a significant burden on both the Polish and Ukrainian education systems. At the same time, the nature of this burden differs, which directly affects the role and significance of Ukrainian teachers in Poland.

Thus, a situation of dual educational load emerges, in which both systems are simultaneously involved in educating the same students. In this context, the question of which country – Poland or Ukraine experiences a greater burden cannot be answered unequivocally.

First, on the one hand, the Polish education system has faced a substantial burden due to the sharp increase in the number of Ukrainian students after 2022. The integration of hundreds of thousands of children into the school system required a rapid expansion of resources, adaptation of curricula, the establishment of preparatory classes, and the involvement of additional teaching staff (Ruszkowska, Nazaruk, Budnyk, 2025). On the other hand, the Ukrainian education system continues to bear a significant functional burden, as a large proportion of students remain engaged in distance learning in Ukraine, ensuring educational continuity for children physically residing abroad.

Second, Poland faces a quantitative and institutional burden related to integrating a large number of students into its education system. In contrast, Ukraine bears a systemic and functional burden by ensuring the continuity of education under conditions of war and forced migration. Ukrainian teachers effectively perform a compensatory function, reducing the imbalance between students' educational needs and the capacities of both systems by bridging these two educational dimensions.

Further analysis allows for an expanded interpretation of their role, viewing their activities not merely as auxiliary or compensatory, but as system-forming in ensuring educational stability under crisis conditions. In this context, the work of Ukrainian teachers in Poland

acquires particular significance. They act as a key link that reduces the burden on the Polish education system by supporting students' adaptation while simultaneously maintaining connections with the Ukrainian education system, thereby ensuring functional coherence between the two systems and reducing the risks of fragmentation of the educational process. In addition, they facilitate students' adaptation within Polish schools and help integrate elements of the Ukrainian curriculum into their learning experience. This helps prevent disruptions in learning continuity and minimizes educational losses that could arise due to differences between the systems.

From a discussion perspective, it is also important to note that Ukrainian teachers act as agents of social stabilization, providing not only instruction but also psychological support to students, fostering their integration while preserving their cultural identity. This multidimensional role further enhances their significance in conditions of prolonged migration.

In this context, the question of which country Poland or Ukraine bears a greater burden shifts from a quantitative to a qualitative dimension. Poland ensures the institutional integration of students, while Ukraine maintains the functional continuity of education. Ukrainian teachers serve as a key element that connects these two processes and ensures their coherence.

At the same time, the insufficient level of integration of Ukrainian teachers into the Polish education system, difficulties in employment and recognition of qualifications, as well as limited access to resources, reduce the effectiveness of utilizing their professional potential. This group of educators possesses unique competencies that cannot be fully replaced by other resources. Therefore, the findings confirm that supporting Ukrainian teachers in Poland should be considered not only as a social or humanitarian measure, but also as a strategic instrument for managing educational processes in times of crisis. Investment in their integration, professional development, and involvement in the educational process can reduce the burden on both education systems and enhance the effectiveness of educational support for Ukrainian students.

**Conclusions.** Ukrainian teachers, under conditions of forced migration, perform a multifunctional role that includes educational, adaptive, sociocultural, and psychological dimensions.

They support the educational process, facilitate the integration of Ukrainian students into the Polish educational environment, while maintaining their connection to Ukrainian educational and cultural traditions. Their activities have a compensatory character and are aimed at reducing the imbalance between students' educational needs and the resources of education systems.

The results of the study reveal the presence of systemic barriers that limit the effective realization of Ukrainian teachers' professional potential. These include difficulties in employment within their field, language barriers, challenges related to the recognition of qualifications, as well as insufficient informational and institutional support.

Currently, the Polish education system is experiencing a significant institutional burden associated with the integration of a large number of Ukrainian students, while the Ukrainian system continues to ensure the continuity of education through distance learning. In this context, Ukrainian teachers in Poland acquire a key role as a connecting element between these two educational dimensions.

Thus, Ukrainian teachers in Poland perform a system-forming function in ensuring educational stability under crisis conditions. Their work contributes not only to improving the quality of education for Ukrainian students, but also to optimizing the distribution of the burden between the education systems of Ukraine and Poland.

**Directions for Further Research.** In this regard, particular importance is attached to the development of a comprehensive policy for supporting Ukrainian teachers abroad. Such support should include simplifying procedures for the recognition of qualifications, expanding employment opportunities, enhancing language training, as well as ensuring psychological and professional adaptation.

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Лариса Лук'янова

## СОЦІАЛЬНО-ПЕДАГОГІЧНА АДАПТАЦІЯ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ УЧИТЕЛІВ І УЧНІВ ДО ОСВІТНЬОГО СЕРЕДОВИЩА ПОЛЬЩІ В УМОВАХ ВИМУШЕНОЇ МІГРАЦІЇ

У статті представлено результати дослідження соціально-педагогічної адаптації українських учителів у Польщі в умовах вимушеної міграції, розглянутої в контексті міжсистемної освітньої інтеграції учнів. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена трансформаціями освітнього простору, спричиненими війною, а також зростанням кількості українських учнів у європейських країнах. Емпіричну основу становлять дані анкетування та фокус-групових інтерв'ю, що відображають досвід професійного функціонування українських учителів у системі освіти країни перебування.

Отримані результати дають змогу реконструювати особливості включення педагогів у нове освітнє середовище, у якому співіснують різні освітні практики, норми та моделі комунікації. Професійна діяльність учителів набуває комплексного характеру, поєднуючи освітню, посередницьку та підтримувальну функції. У цьому вимірі вчитель виступає ланкою між українською та польською освітніми системами, забезпечуючи узгодженість освітнього процесу та підтримку учнів.

Адаптацію українських учителів та учнів представлено як багатовимірний процес, що інтегрує професійні, соціальні та психологічні аспекти. Особливого значення надано збереженню освітньої та культурної ідентичності учнів поряд із їх включенням у нове освітнє середовище. У дослідженні визначено чинники, що ускладнюють ці процеси, зокрема мовні бар'єри, інституційні відмінності, особливості організації навчання та умов професійної реалізації педагогів, а також акцентовано важливість підтримувального освітнього середовища, яке сприяє стабільності професійної діяльності та ефективній взаємодії з учнями.

Наголошено на важливості системної підтримки українських учителів як ключового ресурсу забезпечення стабільності та якості освітнього процесу в умовах тривалої міграції, а також чинника координації взаємодії між освітніми системами.

**Ключові слова:** українські вчителі; вимушена міграція; освітня інтеграція; учні-біженці; система освіти Польщі.

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