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The Conditions of Adaptation of “Internally Displaced Persons” to University Environment by Means of Students’ Self-Government

Słowa kluczowe: „osoby wewnętrznie przesiedlone”, studenci przesiedleni, adaptacja, organizacyjne i pedagogiczne uwarunkowania adaptacji, środowisko uczelniane, samorząd studencki, organ samorządu studenckiego.

Keywords: “internally displaced people”, IDP students/displaced students, adaptation, organizational and pedagogical conditions of adaptation, HEI/university environment, students’ self-government, students’ self-government body.

Problem analysis and publications. Social and political instability in Ukraine causes the emergence of a significant number of forced migrants – internally displaced persons (IDP), i.e. citizens permanently residing in Ukraine, which were forced to flee their homes but who remains within their country’s borders, because of armed conflicts, territories being temporary occupied by military force, acts of violence, massive human rights violations and emergencies of natural or man-made disasters¹.

Currently about 6 thousand students of higher education institutions (HEIs) from Donetsk and Luhansk regions study in higher education institutions in other regions of Ukraine as temporarily admitted to study (as free listeners). About 500 students enrolled to study for free budgetary places as well as to study for tuition fees paid by both indivi-

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¹ *Law of Ukraine «On ensuring of rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons»*, <http://zakon0.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1706-18> (19.09.2017).

duals and legal entities. As of September 1st, 2015 more than 10 thousand students from Donbas came to study into higher education institutions located on the territories controlled by the Ukrainian authorities, 16 higher education institutions were displaced. The results of monitoring of inquiries submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and to the Parliamentary Committee on Science and Education prove that displaced students are in need of social and psychological adaptation to their new university environment.

Adaptation of an individual for study in a higher education institution is a complex, long-term, and dynamic process, driven by overcoming many and diverse problems of adaptation. Researchers pay much attention to finding ways that ensure the most effective and quick adaptation, in particular, they focus on changes that affect personality while adapting to the university environment, the formation of the self-image of students, their values etc.² Adaptation of internally displaced persons, providing quality education for IDP students were the at the core of a number of foreign studies³, some researchers dealt with adaptation of displaced students to new socio-cultural conditions⁴, but the problem of adaptation of displaced students is not studied enough, taking into account the situation Ukrainian displaced students met and conditions in which they found themselves.

In order to regulate this problem on the legislative level Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine) adopted the following regulations: Law of Ukraine "On the rights and freedoms of citizens and legal regime of the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine", Law of Ukraine "On the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons", Comprehensive national program of integration, social adaptation, protection and reintegration of internally displaced persons for 2015–2016 years, regulations of Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine aimed at ensuring rights to quality education for displaced students. The law provides, inter alia, that the citizens of Ukraine residing in the temporarily occupied territory or moved out of it, have the right to get or continue to

² D.O. Porokh, *To the issue of adaptation of students to study at the HEIs* // Visnyk Luhanskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni Tarasa Shevchenka 10 (197) (2010), p. 78–85.

³ See: T. Ferfolja, *Supporting refugee students through the Refugee Action Support Program*, University of Western Sydney 2010, 45 p; L. Naidoo, *Engaging the refugee community of Greater Western Sydney*, Issues in Educational Research 1 (20) (2010), p. 47–56; *Studentenwerke im Zahlenspiegel 2009/2010*, hrg. Deutsches Studentenwerk, Berlin 2010, p. 54; *Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia: A Gap Analysis*, Tbilisi 2009, p. 60; L. Olliff, *Exploring post-compulsory education and training pathways for young people from refugee backgrounds in NSW*, Refugee Council of Australia 2010, 65 p.

⁴ J.W. Berry, 1997. *Immigration, Acculturation and Adaptation*, Applied Psychology: An International Review 46, p. 5–34.

acquire a certain educational level in other regions of Ukraine by the state budget funds with the provision of places in dormitories for period of study⁵.

At the same time, priorities for adaptation of IDP students are to re-establish the social status of student, to form adaptation intents to new conditions of everyday life, to overcome physiological trauma, stress, social apathy, loss of faith in the future and positive perception of reality, therefore the person's inclusion into the environment of new education institution. One of the complex problems is need to conceptualize the future of Ukrainian "divided" universities⁶.

Nevertheless, currently there is no clear mechanism for the authorities to support displaced students to adapt to the new environment. But the student self-government has significant potential for adaptation of internally displaced persons providing the principles of subsidiarity, social justice, transparency and impartiality, mutual responsibility, mutual respect and understanding.

The researchers analysed the impact of the student self-government on the development of leadership qualities (A. Davlyetova, R. Sopivnyk, V. Kuznetsova, L. Shyhapova), humanistic orientation of students (L. Varlamova), the quality of training of specialists (L. Wozniak, G. Garbuzova, A. Davydov), students' socialization (L. Sheina), creating of foundations for students' managerial culture (I. Anosov, V. Prikhodko, M. Prikhodko). However, while studying the phenomenon of student self-government, researchers paid little attention to its impact on students' adaptation to university life.

At the same time, it was found that the student self-government is an effective instrument for: the creation of educational environment of the university⁷, improvement the quality of education⁸, the formation of social activity of young people⁹; formation of moral and professional qu-

⁵ Law of Ukraine «On ammendments to the Law of Ukraine On the rights and freedoms of citizens and legal regime of the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine» dated August 12, 2014 № 1635-VII, <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1635-18> (19.09.2017).

⁶ D. Svyrydenko, *Divided Universities: The Postcolonial Experience of Contemporary Ukrainian Higher Education*, Future Human Image 7 (2017), p. 128–129.

⁷ See: O. Stupak, A. Kozorog, *The role of the student gorvenment in the management of higher education institution*, Vvyoky pedagogichnoi maisternosti. Seria: Pedagogichni nauky 2014, Vyp.14, p. 267–273, http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/vpm_2014_14_42 (19.09.2017); D. L. Trueblood, *Creative and Functional: Student self-government*, The Personnel and Guidance Journal 32 (1954), p. 404–408.

⁸ D. McFarland, *Inside Student Government: The Variable Quality of High School Student Councils*, Teachers College Record 1 (111) (2009), p. 27–54.

⁹ O. Kulichenko, *The Development of Student Self-Government and its Influence on Personality's Social Activity in Conditions of University*, Intellectual Archive 4 (3) 2015, p. 16–22.

alities, responsibility for the results of their life¹⁰. Therefore, the student self-government as a precondition for the formation of civil society can act as an effective mean of adaptation and reintegration of internally displaced persons to the educational environment of the institution. The philosophy of education has high futurological potential for solving the theoretical problems at this problematic area¹¹.

So, it was discovered that there is the contradiction between the need to adapt internally displaced persons to the university environment and insufficient students' support in higher education institutions. This research is justified by context in which there is a need to reintegrate internally displaced persons and underestimation of the capacity of students' self-government in solving this problem.

The aim of the article is to identify and study the organizational and pedagogical conditions, which are most favourable to adapt internally displaced persons to the university environment by means of the student self-government.

Findings. Lack of proper conditions for adaptation to the university environment university for students from Donetsk and Luhansk who wish to continue their studies at higher education institutions in other regions of Ukraine is a complex problem. The research project conducted at Poltava National Pedagogical University entitled "Adaptation of internally displaced persons in the university environment by means of the students' self-government" is focused on the solution of the above-mentioned problem.

The research is based on the idea that successful adaptation of internally displaced persons to the university environment is possible only if good friendly relations with other students and teachers are established and person-oriented education is provided. The most favourable area for development of constructive relations between displaced students and the academic community of the host university could be created by a system of student self-government.

Authors consider students' self-government an effective mean for adaptation of displaced students, for their inclusion into the structure of interpersonal relations. Under the system of students' self-government we mean an integrated structural mechanism that allows students to participate in the management of the students' community affairs in cooperation with all university authorities, as well as to protect students'

¹⁰ R. Theisen, *Student Government: As Real As It Gets*, Principal Leadership 2 (2012), p. 10–17.

¹¹ S. Terepiszcz, *Przyszłość jako przedmiot badań filozofii społecznej*, Studia Warmińskie 52 (2015), p. 64.

rights and interests, to contribute to the harmonious development of personality of the future professionals fostering leadership and social activity through self-organized activities.

Mutual assistance and mutual support are basis for the deep humanistic idea of our project. Thus, the creation of the most favourable conditions for the adaptation of internally displaced persons to the university environment will be a prerequisite for deeper processes of re-socialization of people from war-affected areas.

The research considers the findings of previous studies of historical, scientific, methodological and organizational aspects of student self-government, justification of conditions for realizing of the educational potential of the system of students' self-government and developed Concept of students' self-government in Ukraine¹².

To identify the range of organizational and pedagogical conditions of adaptation of internally displaced persons to university life an initial research was conducted. 370 internally displaced students from Donetsk (65.31%) and Luhansk regions (34.59%) took part in the research. Among respondents there were 62% students who were transferred from other HEIs, and 38% started to study from the first year, but in a new city.

The following methods of empirical research were applied: questionnaire (Internet questionnaire, individual in-depth interviews with students and teachers), surveys, focus groups, expert interviews with representatives of university administration and the leaders of the students' self-government; analysis of appeals by IDPs concerning improper satisfaction of their needs.

During individual interviews students noted, that there is a need for some advice in organization of learning process and everyday life, psychological support, communication and manifestation of positive attitude to them, of demonstrating of the interest in their needs and problems on behalf of the administration, teachers, groupmates, university students' community; but they still rely primarily on friends and relatives (see. Fig. 1).

¹² H.Yu. Sorokina, M.V. Gryniowa, Yu.P. Krashchenko, *Conditions for realization of educational potential in the system of students' self-government*, Pedagogicheskie zametki 7 (1) (2014), p. 52–57; Yu.P. Krashchenko, *Features of organization of the system of students' self-government*, Vytoky pedagogichnoi majsternosti 6 (2009), p. 255–262; Yu. Krashchenko, A. Ignatovych, *Conceptual bases for development of students' self-government in Ukraine*, Vyscha Shkola 9 (2011), p. 117–125.

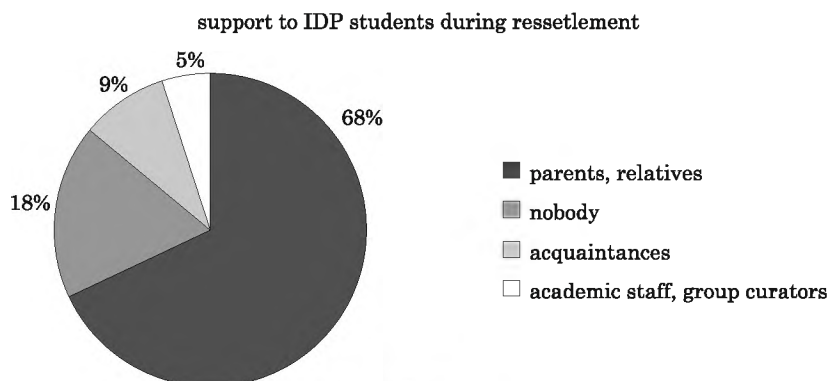


Fig. 1. Sources of support for displaced students during the relocation and in the new HEI

Studies show that psychological problems are connected with the destruction of their accustomed mode of living in the hometown, sudden rupture of social ties with relatives, friends, the uncertainty of their future, worry for their relatives that remain in the occupied regions. Therefore, students from IDP families suffer from psychological problems (23–25% of respondents) as well as from the material ones (accommodation, meals, fees, costs of study, etc.). An intention to visit their parents, who remained in the occupied territories, causes a justified commotion for their safety in IDP students (17%).

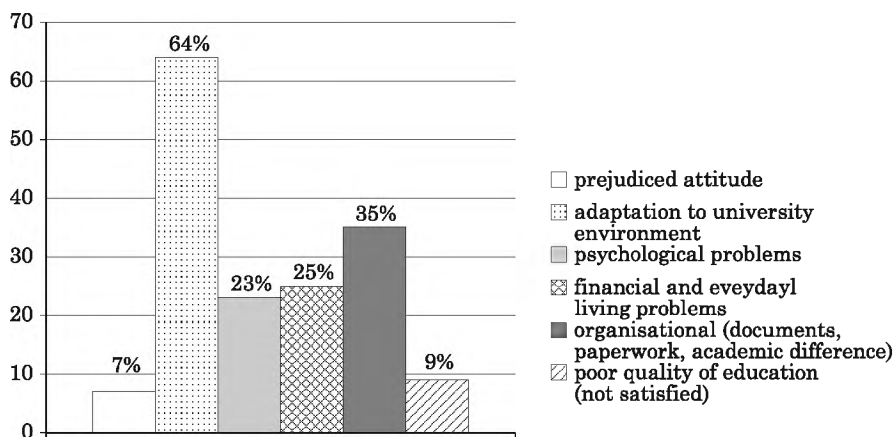


Fig. 2. Difficulties those IDP students meet while moving to new HEI

Approx. 64% of students reported having difficulties in adapting to the new learning environment, 23% of which indicated that they feel uncomfortable in a new group because of some misunderstanding with mates and teachers, their low academic achievements etc. There are other

problems related to lack of knowledge or understanding of educational and organizational requirements, problems of being engaged into environment, as well as problems with communication.

It was found that 35% of respondents have organizational problems: the lack of licensed places to study for state funds (not paying fee and possibility to get stipends), inability to get textbooks for free, bureaucratic contradictions regarding permits for examinations, credits, tests and routine control within passing of the academic difference and reassessment of previously passed subjects, making duplicates of students ID and diplomas, providing places in dormitories etc.

Approx. 19% surveyed students said that students' self-government helped them to adapt to a certain extent through dialogue and engagement into the collective work of the university. But only 9% of students declared their wish to be involved in active cooperation with the students' self-government of their host higher education institution, only 16% would consider such possibility, and 75% of displaced students do not plan to cooperate mainly because of lack of interest, lack of motivation and time (26% of students have to work). Often students say that they are not invited to the students' self-government, that's why they do not see themselves participating in it or they are just contemplating if such cooperation is needed.

A prerequisite for adaptation of IDPs is personally oriented approach and a complex of psychological and educational support that includes:

- diagnostics of preparedness to training and comprehensive activities, of learning motivation, of values, social attitudes, mental health and problems with adaptation;
- support in the development of learning skills and regulation of their creative life maintenance;
- psychological and pedagogical support for displaced students' to overcome difficulties in social and cultural life and to establish an effective relationships with mates and teachers;
- consulting for displaced students, who suffer from the difficulties in adaptation or feel some disappointment in their chosen specialty;
- correction of self-evaluation, of their sense of social vacuum, professional self-identification with the compromise alternatives of displaced students.

Successful IDPs' adaptation is possible only if friendly constructive relations in the higher education institution have been established, which could be ensured the students' self-government in their diverse organizational forms (students' council, students' parliament, scientific communities of students, doctoral candidates and junior researchers,

other students' groups, volunteer centres, etc.) and levels (groups, years, faculty, institute, University, and at the dormitory level).

The scope of activities of the students' self-government includes: protection of students' rights and interests; improvement of the quality of education and promotion of research activity among future professionals; conducting organizational, cultural, recreational, sports and health, charitable and other activities; advocacy for social security of students, their employment and professional development; systematic development of leadership and communication skills of future professionals (e.g. in Poltava within the local youth project "School of local and students' self-government "Leader for the Future") – these activities prove that students' self-government has a strong potential for adaptation of displaced students to the university environment.

The implementation of developed technology of psychological and pedagogical support, which will include trainings of positive interaction for displaced students, teachers, representatives of the students' self-government (to change negative attitudes towards IDPs, to develop self-respect and ability to respect others, learning the ways out of the conflict, the development of social trust, empathy, compassion, etc.) will have social effect which significantly exceeds the cost of its development and will promote the ideals of humanity in line with European aspirations of contemporary Ukrainian society.

Conclusions. To come up with, the following major organizational and pedagogical conditions for adaptation of IDP students to university life could be regarded:

- creating a favourable social and psychological microclimate,
- providing personally-oriented education,
- establishment of friendly and constructive relations with other students and teachers,
- promote development of patriotism among displaced students.

Thus, successful adaptation of internally displaced persons to the university environment will be ensured by providing personally-oriented approach to the students during the whole education process and creating a favourable social and psychological microclimate through the establishment of constructive friendly relationships, as well as promoting patriotic outlook using the potential of the students' self-government.

UWARUNKOWANIA ADAPTACJI STUDENTÓW „WEWNĘTRZNIE PRZESIEDLONYCH” DO ŚRODOWISKA AKADEMICKIEGO Z POMOCĄ SAMORZĄDU STUDENCKIEGO

(STRESZCZENIE)

Artykuł jest poświęcony problematyce adaptacji studentów „wewnętrznie przesiedlonych” (np. uciekinierów z obszarów objętych wojną we wschodniej Ukrainie) do środowiska akademickiego z pomocą samorządu studenckiego. Na podstawie przeprowadzonych badań dowodzi się, że najefektywniejszą platformą do tego, aby studenci „wewnętrzni uchodźcy” zaadaptowali się w nowym dla siebie środowisku akademickim jest system samorządu studenckiego. W artykule zostały również zdefiniowane i objaśnione uwarunkowania organizacyjne oraz pedagogiczne adaptowania się osób „wewnętrznie przesiedlonych” do środowiska nowej uczelni.

THE CONDITIONS OF ADAPTATION OF “INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS” TO UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT BY MEANS OF STUDENTS’ SELF-GOVERNMENT

(SUMMARY)

The article deals with the problem of adaptation of “internally displaced people” (for example, refugees from war zones in eastern Ukraine) to the university environment by means of students’ self-government. According to the survey among IDP students who were transferred from other higher education institutions, it was found that the most favourable field for the development of constructive relations between displaced students and “domestic” students of the academic community of the university could be created by a system of students’ self-government. The organizational and pedagogical conditions of adaptation of IDP students to the university environment were defined. The paper proves that students’ self-government in a variety of forms and organizational levels can ensure successful adaptation of displaced students at a new place of study.