

## THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS OF FORCED MIGRANTS

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**Abstract.** *The article deals with educational factors that involve the integration process of forced migrants. Non-formal training of multicultural communication skills is analysed as one of several educational factors of forced migrants' integration. Moreover there is analysed how non-formal training activities influence the emotional state and abilities of forced migrants' minors. These results are relevant for institutions and communities that face with the multicultural communication every day. The theoretical parts of article contain the analysis of the publications made on the integration of forced migrants and multicultural communication in the integration process of the review. The empirical part of the research presents how non-formal training activities influence on minors forced migrants emotional state and their preparation to the integration.*

**Keywords:** *educational factors, non-formal training, multicultural communication skills, integration, forced migrants.*

### Introduction

Global migration trends of our modern society adjust not only the socio-political and economic spheres, but also educational scope. These trends determine the need for a deeper understanding of the role of education in the process of integration of forced migrants. This is the subject of the paper, achieving it we are making an analysis of education during the integration process, revealing the influence of non-formal education of multicultural communication on the emotional intelligence of forced migrants, their multicultural communication skills and integration opportunities. Disclosing educational factors of forced migrants' integration first demands the definition of the target group - forced migrants - migrants who leave their own country and are looking for another because of asylum forced socio-political reasons. Forced migrants are not only refugees, but also granted asylum, additional or temporary protection immigrants. In this article, we are putting attention to the most vulnerable group – minors forced migrants – they, according to the EU directive (2003/3/EB) are declared as the most vulnerable group of migrants. Today, the vast majority of minors forced migrants in Lithuania came from the “hot spots” – areas of military

action. This fact often causes psychosocial, behavioural, educational and communication difficulties of refugee children (Pedersen D., 2002). Once they enter the unfamiliar environment of a foreign country, foreign minors that granted asylum, face the new integration into another society, intercultural communication challenges. Allowing for urgency of problem the objective is to reveal the multicultural communication skills training opportunities for integration of forced migrants and present the results, how the activities of non-formal education affect the minors forced migrants - their emotional well-being and skills of multicultural communication and preparation to integration. The integration process, in the article, is perceived as a complex, dynamic, two-way, multi-dimensional and long-term change process, that enables not only forced migrants to live in harmony with the host country and to become a part of it, but also enables dominant society to accept new members equally. (Bartkevičienė A., 2015; Marks J., 2014; Žydžiūnaitė V., 2012; Steward E., 2009; Ager A. & Strang A., 2008; Bowskill M., Lyons E., & Coyle A., 2007; Martikainen T., 2005; Korac M., 2003; Raicher S. & Hopkins N. 1996). For achieving successful integration of forced migrants, it is important to understand integration process as a difficult two-way process (newcomers and local communities) and to look at this process from educational perspective. In this way, during integration process both - forced migrants and local societies - face new, get atypical experience, endure changes and acquire new knowledge or skills. That's why it's very important to educate both parts of integration process.

### **Education and training during the integration process of forced migrants**

Education and training, in itself, as a phenomenon, is the necessary part of integration process. According to S. Jackson (2015), M. Tatar (2015), He, Y. et al. (2015); A. Bartkevičienė, (2015), H. Moser (2012), V. Žydžiūnaitė (2012), Merrice (2007), E. Štuopytė (2009), C.Salin and G. Muller (1999), R. Hek (2005) and others there is the importance of cooperation between forced migrants and local communities. Moreover, there is the importance of education in the integration process. During the learning process, forced migrants are achieving their educational needs, which are necessary for the integration into a local community and the local community is learning to accept new members. The integration process related to the change, change related to innovations, new experiences, and this, in turn, is an integral part of the education (training /learning).

Forced migrants' training can be analysed by different approaches. Traditional approach analyses forced migrants' possibilities to participate in the host society's educational systems, the availability of formal education and progress in study. In this area, there are a number of research revealing forced

migrants' difficulties integrating into the formal education system: the state language skills, low educational achievement, mobility, racism, lack of educational institutions readiness to accept forced migrants. (Spencer S., 2004; Stubbs S., 2008; Kahan-Strawczynski, Levi, & Konstantinov, 2010; Bereznaja N., 2010; Štuopytė E., Bereznaja-Demidenko V., & Bulotas R., 2014).

Modern approach to forced migrants' education (training or learning) is associated with the concept of lifelong learning. In this case, the integration process can be understood as learning from the new experience process. And in this process it's important to see phenomenological forced migrants' training (learning) point - to study the integration process means just be sustained, survive everything what is new (Hidegger M., 2010; Petrauskienė D., 2016.). Modern approach to forced migrants' integration include non-formal education, informal education and reflective education (learning through experience). According to many experts (S. Nicolai, 2003; Xue, 2007, Stub S., 2008; A. Bonfiglio, 2010; H. Moser, 2012; Jackson S., 2015) non-formal education has the special importance of forced migrants' integration. International Institute's for Educational planning (2015) study shows, that non-formal education is the most suitable and available form of forced migrants' education. According to Jackson, S. (2015) in education process of such target group the most important is non-academic achievement, but self-esteem building, multicultural communication, social skills, learning motivation and successful learning experiences.

### **Education of multicultural communication skills**

In analyzing the role of non-formal education in the integration of forced migrants, it is important to reveal the peculiarities of education of multicultural communication skills. Such skills, together with the linguistic and professional, are considered essential for successful integration. These abilities, according to Bennett (1993); Fantini (2000); Byram (2004); Virgailaite-Meckauskaite (2012) and the other, are not given phenomenon; they can be provided through lifelong learning and continuous development of thought as well as a result of development. The concept of multicultural communication skills is associated with the preparation and adoption of the differences including the social, cultural and educational aspects. At this article, culture is understood as an open, dynamic orientation system, which is changing during the interactions. It is not easy to define multicultural communication skills. First of all because of different understanding of terminology. In French the only possible adjective for this field is "intercultural", whereas in English we have „multicultural", "intercultural" and "cross-cultural" (Fries, 2009). Multicultural communication - is like a cultures salad. It's cultural diversity, acceptance and evaluation of a particular place, in the

level of organization, school, team or other community. Cross-cultural term applied in individual cultures by selected aspects in order to compare cultures. Intercultural communication more associated with the interaction between different cultures. According to Herbrand (2000), while it is not entirely clear what is multicultural communication and what factors help a person adapt to another cultures, it is hard to answer the question of what constitutes an multicultural competence (Pauriene, 2010). However, the multicultural communication should be understood as the ability to understand different cultures – their own and the others, and to adequately treat at a certain culture. Jiaquan (2009) believes that the ability to communicate with people from other cultural backgrounds are caused by three factors: by the formation of cultural awareness, understanding of cultural knowledge, intercultural communication skills and the ability to use them effectively in multicultural situations. Fiantini (2000) analyzed personal multicultural communication possibilities and gave five key dimensions: provision of knowledge, skills, cultural awareness and foreign language skills. Williams (2009) distinguishes three aspects: cognition (knowledge of the cultural norms, values, and behavior), emotional (motivation to act in intercultural situations, emotional stability, openness and flexibility to deal with new situations), behavior (critical thinking, teamwork and other skills and abilities that are necessary for multicultural situations). Norviliene, Zuzevičiute (2011) also talk about the set of skills components that consists of terms and personal qualities, knowledge, skills, and cultural awareness. This, in turn, operates the cognitive, emotional and behavioral processes and allows to operate effectively in multicultural situations.

Multicultural communication skills can and should be taught. The importance of capacity development is excreted not only in the scientific community (Pauriene G., 2010; Reingarde J., Vasiliauskaite N., & Erentaite R., 2010); but it is also regulated by the legal documents of the European Union: Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008) states that multicultural education is one of the five most important areas. Research works (Lopez G., 2004; Delson, 2009; Paurienė G., 2010) showed that there are multicultural skills in a variety of educational programs. Experiential learning is excreted as a well-known method of multicultural skills, when a person is included into the simulation game, designed to artificially multicultural differences, and clashes on situations directly exposed to other cultures. Pauriene (2010) emphasizing the pedagogical strategies that support a culture of peaceful necessity of being together, offers a comprehensive educational strategy: cultural comparison, coexistence of cultures and areas of activities against racism and also defines a hypothetical basis for intercultural learning at the multicultural competence development model. Reingarde, Vasilaiuskaite, Erentaite (2010), speaking about multicultural understanding and multicultural factors, distinguish:

multicultural contact (direct interaction with the representatives of various cultural groups), sources of information (media, peers, family, school), educational environment (well-being during activities, the attitudes about school), content of education (formal and “hidden”). These factors determine the multicultural education, consisting of knowledge of cultural diversity and non-discriminatory terms.

### Methodology of the empirical research

At the empirical part of the article, we are analyzing the short-term program of non-formal education for multicultural communication skills and how the participant in this program involve forced migrants, their integration possibilities. For the methodology we have chosen the non-formal form of education, because such form may take place both within and outside education institutions, and can cater to persons of all ages. It’s important on the country context, cause by Lithuanian low formal education is compulsory for children until 16 years old. So many forced migrant’s minors over 16-teen are dropped out of the formal education system. Non-formal education provide basic education for out of school children, enhance life skills, work skills or improve cultural understanding. The program has structure, that’s why we cant’ call it as informal learning, which is defined as intentional but is less organised and less structured; it might include learning events that occur within the family, at the workplace or in the course of daily life of every person (Moser, 2012). So, the structure of the program that is analyzed is based on:

- multicultural contact (common multicultural group sessions for marginalized minors from Lithuanian problematic families, forced migrants minors from different countries, living in the Rukla Refugee reception center);
- experiential learning (simulation games of multicultural communication, when minors can play different roles, be “natives” and “migrants”, have “high” or “low” social statutes, be “pupil” or “teacher” and so on.)
- multicultural education (theoretical and practical lectures, discussions about different cultures, behavior roles in different societies, multicultural communication, stereotypes, tolerance and so on).

Participants of the empirical research - minors forced migrants - participated in several stages of the study:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| The first stage  | the assessment of emotional state of forced migrants before theirs participating in the program |
| The second stage | participation in the program of non-formal multicultural skills training.                       |
| The third stage  | reassessment of the emotional state of forced migrants after participating in the program       |

## **Research design and methods**

The point of the presented empirical study – to set how education of multicultural communication skills influence the emotional state of forced migrants and their preparation to the integration process.

Characteristics of the participants – minors forced migrants (N=8) that involved in the intercultural skills activities were chosen to this investigation. Age of the participants: early and late adolescence (12-18 years old). The choice of the participants' age is not a coincidence. Adolescence, as a stage of the maturity process, results some psycho-social problems: identity crisis, communication difficulties, peculiarities of puberty, desire for autonomy and the need to belong to compatibility problems, psychotropic substances hazards and so on. The situation is complicated when still mentally immature teenager alone enters the unfamiliar environment. Mental condition of the minor forced migrants is complicated by the “refugee status”, that requires the emotionally confused teen to make independent decisions and take responsibility of them. Because of this minor migrants going through the several levels – emotional, behavioral, mental and psychosomatic – difficulties. They are characterized by the strong trend of insularity (Balazs N., 2006). Minors forced migrants are often become victims of marginalization (social exclusion).

The methods of analysis: a) observation under controlled conditions and in the presence of observation; b) psychodiagnostic technique to estimate the emotional state of a teen (Emotional lability test); projective Lusher color test (Lusher Forwahl Test), for determining the scope of emotional personality characteristics of self-esteem, self-confidence and other characteristics.

The process of analysis: research process was divided into several stages. The first stage was assessed foreigners granted asylum emotional state before the start of the activities. The second stage was for monitoring foreigners granted asylum emotional, behavioral and intercultural communication features during the group sessions. The third stage was to repeat emotional state and multicultural communication skills assessment. Also, this stage is for compare foreigners granted asylum intercultural communication skills, their emotional state (before and after the application of the group methods).

## **Results and discussion**

Let us consider the results of the research how multicultural communication skills influence the emotional state of forced migrants and their preparation to the integration process. First of all we should note, that we have identified different results at different stages, i.e. the results were due to the fact at which stage of the investigation they are identified.

*The first stage* was assessed minor foreigners granted asylum emotional state before the start of the activities. The analysis of the contact options and performance was observed during the test; communication and participation motivation were not enough. Emotional reactions are clear and spontaneous. There are conflict trends. The pace of operating is sufficient but lack motivation. Emotional state's and multicultural communication's characteristics: there is typical contradiction in personality (N=7); age does not meet the emotional maturity (N=5); self-centeredness and recognition depend on the others' opinions (N=8); sensitivity to the environment. It is difficult to endure the restrictions, inherent tendency to avoid responsibility. On ambient pressure usually responds with passive aggressiveness; there is the lack of constructive communication and multicultural communication skills (N=8). At the beginning of activities the emotional stability / lability of the test results - low neuropsychological level of stability (N=4), average neuropsychological level of stability (N=5), lack of emotional strong will, during the research process respondents' openness is 70 percent average.

*The second stage* - monitoring during the group sessions. The observation was highlighted on: foreigners granted asylum contact opportunities, emotional expression, behavior and communication (especially intercultural) features and efficiency working at groups. At the beginning of the study at the group of foreigners granted asylum was observed isolation, limited communication (only with representatives of their people) trend. On ambient pressure usually responds with passive aggressiveness (N=7). Some kind of intercultural conflicts were captured at the beginning of the sessions (N=4). They were used as a motivational training material (analyzed and reproduced in a safe environment, and so on). During the non-formal educational classes, the activity of foreigners granted asylum increased, decreased isolation and limited interaction trend (the beginning of cross-cultural friendship ties), decreased spontaneous emotional expression cases. Emotional cognitive activities were increased participants' self-perception and people around them; constructive emotion management, conflict resolution, multicultural space of communication skills were formed and trained; relaxation techniques help reduce the anxiety level of foreigners granted asylum. To reduce self-centeredness trends of foreigners granted asylum were encouraged tolerance, teamwork, group sharing. Minors tested constructive conflict resolution skills in a safe exercise environment (N=7).

*The third stage* was to repeat emotional state and multicultural communication skills assessment. Also, this stage is for compare foreigners granted asylum multicultural communication skills, their emotional state. After participation in cross-cultural communication skills workshops, and performance contact opportunities contact opportunities become better, less of the language barrier problems, communication and performance motivation higher than at the

beginning of the activities. Promotion of self-reliance program (included in the multicultural communication skills workshops' content) positively influenced teen's confidence. Also, constructive communication, teamwork, intercultural conflict management skills between foreigners granted asylum were developed. Foreigners granted asylum became less dependent on positive feedback, sensitivity to criticism decreased. The majority of examinees' emotional response appropriate to the context (N=8). Operating rate of activity is sufficient. At the end of sessions the emotional stability/lability test results – high neuropsychological level of stability (N=2), average neuropsychological level of stability (N=6), emotional exhaustion is quite enough, high emotional will (N=7), the average degree of openness of the respondents is 82 percent.

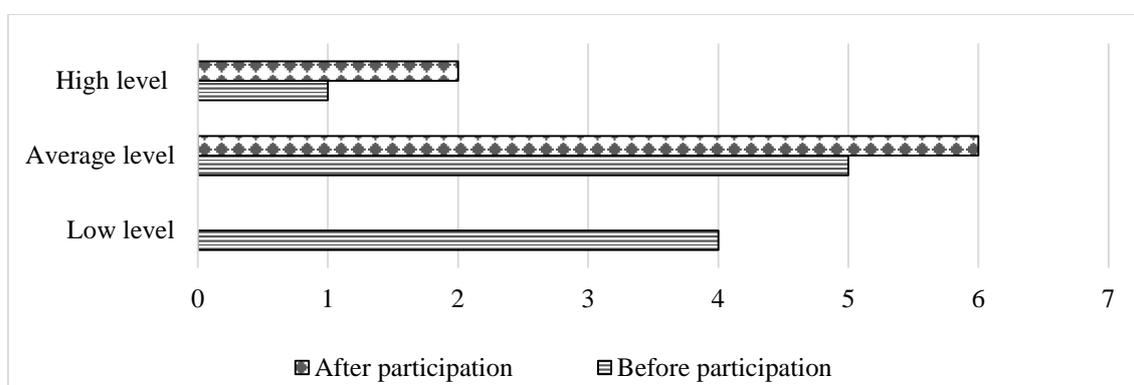


Fig. 1. Emotional state comparison of participates

According to results of the empirical research, non-formal education of multicultural communication skills have a positive impact on emotional state of minors forced migrants (emotional state's comparison before using the methods and after group activities), develops multicultural communication skills and can help them to integrate into a new society.

In discussions about the integration of forced migrants are no longer a question of the role of education in this process. However, in official immigrants' integration programs are often dominated by formal education measures. Indeed, formal education methods should be applied to immigrants' training as an integral part of the education system of the host country (providing equal opportunities for study at schools, universities). However, if we are seeking more effectively integration of forced migrants (not only at the institutional level, but at the personal also), it is necessary to apply non-formal education programs. During non-formal education, the emotional relationship between the new immigrant and the host country, its people, traditions and behavior are formed. Not only formal knowledge, but also multicultural communication, newly established relationships and new skills, which are forming during non-formal education

make it easier for forced migrants to feel better in a new environment and to integrate into a new society.

### Conclusions

Summarizing the presented analysis of scientific publications and the results of the study it is stated, that education of multicultural communication skills is important for forced migrants' integration. Multicultural communication skills can and must be developed as far as incoming migrants and the host local community groups. In addition, it's effective to organize such activities by using non-formal programs. Results of the empirical research stages comparison suggests that non-formal multicultural education have a positive impact on emotional state of teenage that granted asylum, develops multicultural communication skills and can help them to integrate into a new society.

Making the conclusion is important to emphasize the educational effectiveness of the program (non-formal education of multicultural communication skills). Thereby, confirming Lopez (2004) studies that identified in connection with a more favorable assessment of the differences in cultures and multicultural communication skills training activities, regardless of the duration of programs.

In conclusion there are described the integration problems of forced migrants and multicultural communication skills, promoting the integration aspect of the results; it is important to note the further factors contributing to the process of integration, making relevance research of searching multicultural education forms.

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