UDC 373.3/.5.091.212.5-054.73(437.66=161.2)-044.247:004

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INTEGRATION OF UKRAINIAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH USING DIGITAL TOOLS IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF SLOVAKIA

Abstract. The article examines the issue of integration of Ukrainian children and youth into the educational environment of Slovakia. The purpose of the article is to highlight the results of the national assessment of the process of integration of Ukrainian school-age children using digital tools into the social and educational environment of Slovakia, identify problems and needs of subjects of the educational process, and provide relevant recommendations. General scientific and special research methods were used. We summarized the results of the general report of the study "Support for emigrants from Ukraine in education", which was conducted in Slovakia during 2022–2023 by the National Institute of Education and Youth in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic and in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund as well as the report "Distance education of students during the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of teacher training". It has been established that the integration of Ukrainian school-aged children into the educational environment of Slovakia also requires significant linguistic, educational and socio-psychological support from teachers and pedagogical workers. It was found that a wide range of digital tools and resources are used to organize the process of integration of Ukrainian children and students in Slovakia. It has been established that Slovak teachers use such digital tools as Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex Meetings, Google Classroom, Zoom to integrate Ukrainian students into the educational environment. It has been proven that Slovakian society faces the problem of accelerating the integration of Ukrainian children, pupils and students by means of digital tools. The generalization of the results made it possible to draw up recommendations on the integration of Ukrainian school-age students by means of digital tools at the state, regional and educational institution levels that are recommended to be used in developing state policies and strategies in the field of teacher training both in Slovakia and in Ukraine. The article was funded by Next Generation EU through the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Slovakia under the project No. 09I03-03-V01-00058.

Keywords: integration; educational institutions; electronic educational resource; digital tools; digital literacy; digital educational environment; teacher training.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem statement. To support refugees and migrants European Commission adopted Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 back in 2020. It promotes inclusion through an integrated approach involving migrants and local communities, employers, civil society as well as all levels of state authorities. The Action Plan emphasizes providing targeted support at all stages of integration.

The European Commission offers targeted expert advice through peer counselling to support policy reforms in EU Member States, for example, on the integration of newly arrived children and migrant students in education. The Commission co-finances the SIRIUS Network on Migrant Education. The network supports educating children and youth with a migrant background through strategic activities at the national and international levels, and brings together researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field of migrant education.

The education system of any country has a socio-political, cultural and economic impact on society. The unexpected interruption of the educational process due to unfavourable conditions caused by the aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine has extremely negative consequences for personal and social development of Ukrainian children and youth. One of the main actions in the crisis situation that has arisen is inclusive education and training starting from early childhood and ending with higher education with the support of EU funds.

Since the beginning of 2020, European Union countries have started the implementation of the digital competence formation system of citizens, known as DigComp. It is a tool for increasing the level of competence of EU residents in the field of digital literacy.

In 2022, the European Commission commissioned a study aimed at identifying the effectiveness of assessing the adequacy of mass open online courses and free digital learning (FDL) for Ukrainian children who, together with their mothers, received asylum in European countries. A catalogue of these initiatives, classified by type and purpose, is available at MOOCs4inclusion. The priority is the integration of Ukrainian children and youth into the education systems of the EU countries, as well as the training of teachers – both local and those who are fleeing the war [1].

The arrival of children from Ukraine represents a new test for schools in Slovakia after the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Pupils who came to the country with their parents needed to be provided with affordable and high-quality education, taking into account their specific needs. Schools need systemic support from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Slovak Republic regarding the integration of children from Ukraine into their social and educational environment.

A fairly wide range of digital tools and resources are used to organize the integration of Ukrainian schoolchildren in Slovakia. Their choice depends on many factors, particularly, on the level of formation of digital competence among the subjects of the educational process, the functionality of the gadgets they have, access to high-speed Internet, etc.

The Erasmus+ funded School Education Gateway digital tool enables teaching practitioners to exchange information, share materials (e.g. articles, notes and lesson plans) and access services such as online courses on inclusion, cultural diversity and integration of new coming pupils and students with the status of forced migrants or refugees to educational institutions. The eTwinning platform unites schools across Europe with the help of ICT tools and offers school leaders and staff the opportunity to share their experiences and offer mutual assistance [2].

In this regard, in the fall of 2023 in Slovakia, all Ukrainian pupils and students of higher education under the age of 18 were provided with free laptops. Using multimedia electronic educational resources and digital tools, teachers in this country enrich classes with interesting and non-standard forms and methods of students' work.

At the same time, the integration of Ukrainian children and youth into the educational environment of Slovakia still requires considerable psychological support from pedagogical workers. There is also the problem of how to integrate Ukrainian pupils and students into the educational process of Slovak educational institutions using digital tools.

Therefore, the interest of researchers in the topic of integrating children and youth in crisis situations of new social and educational environment, as well as creating and providing new digital technologies for integration activities, is obvious. At the same time, practical experience of school education system in the conditions of social upheavals and the integration possibilities of society is insufficiently studied. The research and its conclusions on the example of Slovakia can give a further impetus to deepening our knowledge about EU state policies experience on the integrating and including forcibly displaced children into the social and educational environment of the receiving countries by means of digital tools.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issue of integration of migrant children and youth has been studied in various countries of the world. The problem of organizing education and integration process for Ukrainian pupils and students in the countries where their families received asylum is analyzed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the context of the consequences of a large number of refugees for national education systems, policies for integrating Ukrainian youth in education systems, with support and involvement of Ukrainian educators and scientists [3].

The integration of migrant children into new socio-cultural educational environment requires innovative approaches to understanding the changes in the lives of these children. Numerous foreign studies of this issue have proven that migrant children in a new country begin to struggle with negative stereotypes from teachers. Their families were not familiar with the school system in the country causing a lack of support for a child. Ultimately, this had a negative impact on the mental health and school performance of migrant children.

Strategic orientations and successful practices of integrating Ukrainian children and youth into education systems of EU member states were analyzed in the article by O. Lokshyna, A. Dzhurylo, O. Maksymenko and O. Shparyk [4]. The researchers substantiated the model of integrating Ukrainian refugee children into educational process of EU member states and found out that it is aimed at addressing their social, educational and emotional needs.

In the article by a team of scientists led by V. Bykov "The current state of the use of digital tools for organization of distance learning in general secondary education institutions: 2022 results" [5] based on the results of an online survey of teaching staff, the state of the use of digital tools for organization distance learning of students in general secondary educational institutions of Ukraine is highlighted. The researchers highlighted general approaches to the modern stage of informatization in the country, drew attention to the important role of teachers in building digital environment and proved the need for teachers to master digital technologies for the implementation of distance learning in educational institutions.

O. Spirin et al. paid attention to the description of open electronic research and educational systems, its use in the professional activity of research and training staff. The authors developed the concept of open electronic educational systems designed for effective organization and support of scientific research in the field of education, pedagogy, social and behavioral sciences [6].

Modern digital tools for educational process were summarized by N. Myslitska, V. Zabolotnyi, I. Slobodianiuk [7]. These include: Web 2.0 LearningApps, StudyStack, EDpuzzle, Kahoot, Quizizz, services for creating a "word cloud", "memory cards" (resources that integrate the game into the didactic process); Mentimeter digital educational resource (a service with extensive educational opportunities for creating presentations with real-time feedback); Flipgrid (a video communication tool for participants in the didactic process) for video communication that allows students and teachers to record educational video

presentations. With these tools, students and teachers can create videos on their computers or mobile devices, share their thoughts, acquire social interaction skills and express their mental or emotional state.

The effectiveness of using "virtual class" model in classes with students is indicated in a research article by a research team [8], as it allows students to interact with the teacher and classmates in real time. Such interaction affects the integration of students.

O. Ovcharuk studied the problem of digitalization of educational environment of general secondary educational institutions in Ukraine. The monitoring assessment of the readiness of teachers to use digital tools as well as means and ways of using them for organizing distance learning of students [9] is of particular interest to our research.

The researcher emphasizes that the monitoring of teachers' readiness to use ICT in distance learning, carried out for the fourth year in a row in the country, made it possible to identify: 1) the most popular digital tools, tools and resources (My Class; Padlet; Kahoot; Skype; Microsoft Teams; Whats App; Viber; Zoom; Google Apps for Education; Electronic diary; Learningapps.org; Telegram; Na Urok; Vseovsita; educational resources on You Tube; All-Ukrainian school online; EdEra; Facebook and Prometheus); 2) problems and needs of teachers (improvement of methods and forms of conducting lessons online; recording of educational videos, recording and editing of video lessons; availability of new online tools and services for the development of student creativity; consulting and practical assistance to teachers in mastering new digital tools and tools); 3) the level of digital competence of teachers through self-assessment; 4) find out the peculiarities of the organization of the educational process during the war in Ukraine [9, p. 58-60].

Summarizing our own experience in organizing the education of Ukrainian students in schools and students in Slovak universities, we note that the most used digital tools in the country are Mentimeter, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Kahoot, Microsoft Teams, TED-Ed, Zoom, ThingLink. For example, TED-Ed is suitable for creating educational videos. Thanks to ThingLink, it is possible to create interactive images that are worth using when studying new scientific phenomena, processes and relationships. Twiddla is an online whiteboard. Using Kahoot, the teacher can offer questionnaires, create discussions and game situations for pupils and students to fill out. Class Dojo is an application for quick feedback, school teachers use it for the purpose of awarding and honoring students, for example with plus or minus signs (resembles "visual feedback" in digital format).

P. Gavora, A. Wiegerová emphasized that an important phenomenon in the activity of a teacher is a concept that demonstrates the possibilities of cooperation between pedagogy and psychology. Researchers emphasize that the use of psychological knowledge in the work of a teachers with children determines such a factor as "professional cooperation". This factor also "presupposes the cooperation of teachers with other specialists, such as psychologists, speech therapists and pediatricians in addressing psychological, social and medical problems of children" [10, p. 132]. The interaction between psychology and pedagogy is currently being strengthened by new challenges associated with the organization of the integration of Ukrainian students into the education system of Slovakia.

The importance of taking students' mental health into account when organizing integration influences was also pointed out by representatives of Slovak research agenda in the article "Health literacy as a determinant of students' professional self-realization: experience of the Slovak Republic" [11]. Researchers believe that the level of medical literacy of student youth affects the state of health and, accordingly, the quality of life.

V. Hladush et al. in "Using a didactic tool with it-support for teaching geography in a special school in Slovakia" [12] pointed out that school support teams (the presence of school defectologists, school psychologists) operating in schools in Slovakia do not automatically mean a solution to all problems of education at the modern stage. The authors offer essential

recommendations for upgrading the training of teachers in the context of the implementation of didactic manuals with IT support.

Despite a significant number of papers on various approaches to organizing the integration of children and youth with the status of migrants, refugees or forcibly displaced persons by means of digital technologies, there are no monitoring studies of the effectiveness of the practice of using digital tools for the integration of Ukrainian children and youth into the educational environment of European countries. Therefore, empirical and monitoring research on peculiarities of organizing integration of Ukrainian pupils and students in institutions of general secondary and higher education in Slovakia, the spectrum of digital tools for its implementation and their impact on the quality of education and integration of children and youth are relevant.

The research goal. The purpose of the article is to highlight the results of the assessment at the national level of the effectiveness of integrating Ukrainian school-aged children using digital tools into the social and educational environment of Slovakia, as well as to identify the problems and needs of the subjects of educational process, and to provide relevant recommendations.

2. THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS

The basis for achieving the main goals of integration of migrant students from Ukraine was the implementation of Slovakia's educational policy at various levels of school education. These are decision-making processes regarding educational issues and priorities that relate to issues of management, funding, curriculum updates or changes, and assessment of student achievement. On one hand, the state plays an important role, but on the other hand, such international organizations as UNESCO, OECD and the World Bank participate in the formation of the country's educational policy. The state educational policy takes into account the interests of many players, including representatives of the country's government and local communities, school inspectors, and heads of educational institutions.

Highlighting the research on practical experience of the process of integration of Ukrainian children and youth using digital tools, the authors assumed that integration in local schools of the Slovak Republic is carried out using two dominant approaches, but they can overlap or alternate depending on the material, financial or personnel conditions of each educational institution. The first approach characterizes activities for the integration of students within a separate class. Although students with different abilities and differences will be in the same institution, they will not engage together in an interaction that would help them understand the essence of inclusive education based on the principle of solidarity. The second approach involves direct integration without creating separate classes, although its effectiveness depends on powerful measures of social and psychological support. These support measures include mainly intensive Slovak language learning (practiced in small groups during the school day, but after-school time is not an exception), as well as help with preparation for classes and homework, speech therapy and psychosocial support, often provided by non-teachers (psychologists, teacher assistants, interpreters, tutors and mentors). At the same time, it should not be forgotten that the education of refugees can also be carried out as training in camps, in introductory classes. The main focus is on the education of refugee pupils and students in Slovakia "with an emphasis on the integration in initial education (for the integration of youth and adults around the recognition of qualifications) ..." [13, p. 8].

An important factor affecting the integration of Ukrainian children and youth is the professional development of Slovak teachers, their acquisition of skills in working with Internet search systems, their formation of digital literacy and the ability to manage their own time, to be aware of the need to evaluate not only the results of integration, but also the process of

students achieving.

Taking this research into account, attention was focused on: identifying the peculiarities of integrating of Ukrainian children and students into the educational system of Slovakia; clarifying the interests of Slovak teachers regarding digital tools for the organization and integration of Ukrainian students; identifying the main barriers that prevent the effective integration of Ukrainian children and students from the point of view of all participants (students, parents, regional coordinators, representatives of the public) of the integration process and providing recommendations.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The basis of this research is the analysis of the general report of the results of the experiment "Integration of Ukrainian pupils into education" that was conducted in Slovakia during 2022–2023. National Institute of Education and Youth (NIEaY) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of Slovak Republic and in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) within the framework of the project "Support for emigrants from Ukraine in education" regarding the integration of Ukrainian children and students into the Slovak education system [14]. The authors also used the materials of the general report "Distance education of students during the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of teacher training" [15], conducted in 2021 by the research group of the Methodological and Pedagogical Center of the National Institute of Education and Youth of Slovak Republic.

The problem of integrating Ukrainian children and students into the educational environment in Slovakia by means of digital tools was not relevant for this country before and has not been studied by scientists. In the country's education system, starting from the spring of 2022, dynamic changes occurred due to the arrival of a significant number of Ukrainian families with children.

The main goal of the research was an interdisciplinary analysis of the process of integration of Ukrainian children and students into the Slovak education system. Research objectives: 1) characterize the system of measures aimed at the integration of Ukrainian children into the Slovak educational system; 2) analyze the specifics of the integration of Ukrainian children and students into the Slovak educational system with the main emphasis on the needs of all participants (students, parents, regional coordinators, representatives of the public) of the integration process; 3) identify the effectiveness of linguistic, educational and social-psychological support measures that were provided to all participants of the integration process by means of digital tools.

Achieving the expected objectives of the study will allow for an in-depth understanding of the views of all integration participants on the current situation, the support measures they receive, their effectiveness, challenges in the field of support measures and examples of successful practices, and to offer recommendations based on empirical evidence to improve support for teachers and schools, who teach Ukrainian children and students.

Within the framework of the conducted research, we used the results of empirical research conducted by NIEaY representatives on the problems of integration of children and students from Ukraine since the beginning of the military conflict: a questionnaire survey on the process of integration of children and students from Ukraine in Slovak schools with the main focus on the use of digital tools, and in-depth research conducted with the help of focus groups (or in-depth interviews).

Considerable attention was paid to the description of the experimental stage of the research implemented by means of an online survey of integration subjects. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms technology. The survey was anonymous and involved random

sampling.

Information about the use of digital tools to provide linguistic, educational, and socio-psychological support as components of the integration of Ukrainian children and students was obtained in the course of working with teaching staff, parents of students, and students as interview respondents.

Generalization of the results of the online survey was carried out using general scientific (analysis, generalization and systematization) and quantitative and qualitative (descriptive and mathematical statistics, interviews, focus group, documentation analysis) research methods. For statistical data analysis, MS Excel processor was used as a powerful tool designed to process, analyze and display the received data in digital spreadsheets. We described the statistical indicators expressing the quantitative relationships between the study subjects and research phenomena (in %). To interpret and visualize the obtained data, tables and diagrams arranged according to the relevant thematic blocks were used.

4. THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Slovakia, various integration measures for Ukrainian children, students and youth have been organized, taking into account the specifics of the Slovak educational system. The integration of Ukrainian schoolchildren using digital tools into the educational environment of Slovakia entails the needs, barriers and support measures that affect all participants of the integration (Ukrainian children and students, their parents, managers and teaching staff of educational institutions).

We characterize the generalized results of the "Integration of Ukrainian pupils into education" experiment conducted by NIEaY representatives in Slovakia at the end of 2023. The total sample initially consisted of 1710 respondents. From the original dataset that contained 2274 respondents' answers, the experts removed 564 answers that were random (for example, teachers answered as respondents, but they had no experience of teaching Ukrainian schoolchildren). The final sample consisted of 1352 teaching staff, 292 Ukrainian parents and 66 students.

The targeted group of teaching staff consisted of up to 59% of primary school teaching staff, of which 19% worked in the primary level of primary school; 40% worked at the second level of primary school. Secondary school teachers (14.8%) and kindergarten teachers (12.4%) also had a relatively high representation. Also, during the online survey, the number of teaching staff by regions (krajes) of Slovakia, the number of teaching staff by school types was obtained based on the questions of the questionnaire. In general, the representation of respondents was even.

During the survey, respondents were asked to answer the following groups of questions: 1) the need for school attendance by Ukrainian children from the point of view of the teaching staff, the need for school attendance from the point of view of parents, the need for school attendance from the point of view of Ukrainian children; 2) whether it is necessary to organize the activities of preparatory classes (groups) for Ukrainian schoolchildren from the point of view of the teaching staff, parents and children themselves; 3) whether language support (organizing and conducting language courses on the basics of using the Slovak language) is

needed for Ukrainian children/students from the point of view of the teaching staff, parents and the children themselves.

The results of the questionnaire conducted and processed by NIEaY representatives showed that 94% of teaching staff fully agree that attending school is an important element of the integration of Ukrainian students; three quarters (76%) of the surveyed pedagogical workers perceive the creation of a preparatory group/preparatory class before the integration process as a necessary condition for the further successful integration of Ukrainian students. On the contrary, up to 85% of Ukrainian parents and 84% of Ukrainian students do not consider it appropriate to attend preparatory groups or classes for successful integration.

To a group of questions regarding the need for language support for Ukrainian children/students from the point of view of the teaching staff, parents, and the children themselves, the following answers were received: on average, 87% of teaching staff believe that such support is necessary, 85% of students' parents also agree with the need for language support, however, only 70% of children consider such support necessary if it is organized as an extracurricular activity.

Characteristics of the research sample of focus groups and interviews. NIEaY's in-depth interviews with a diverse group of 66 parents and legal guardians of their children provided valuable insights into their families' educational environment. In total, these families have 83 (100%) children of school age. In particular, 8 (9.64%) of these children study through online platforms in schools in Ukraine that reflects their more specific educational needs and higher level of academic expectations. All 8 of these students are 16 years or older that indicates a predominance among high school students, who, on one hand, faced greater problems during integration into the Slovak school system, and on the other hand, accepted the flexibility and accessibility of Ukrainian online education.

The study of demographic indicators of children attending school in Slovakia revealed an interesting age distribution. Thus, out of 75 (90.36%) children studying in Slovak schools, 41 (49.39%) belong to the age group from 6 to 10 years old, 30 (36.15%) children from 11 to 15 years old, and 4 (4.82%) are 16 years or older. This division sheds light on the different educational needs and experiences of children at different stages of development, emphasizing the importance of individual approaches to the integration process.

The geographic representation of interviewed parents and legal guardians provides a complete picture of the regional context. A total of 66 participants were distributed across all 8 regions of Slovakia. The capital city of Bratislava had the highest representation with 26 (40%) respondents, followed by Koshytskyi (19% of respondents), Pryashivskyi (17% of respondents) and other regions. Such a regional distribution not only enriches our understanding of the dynamics of education for Ukrainian families seeking refuge from the war in Ukraine in different regions of Slovakia, but also allows us to look at the local challenges and opportunities Ukrainian families face across the country in a different way.

Of significant scientific and practical interest are the results of summarizing the answers of parents of students regarding their children's attendance at Slovak schools. A large number of parents (35%) believed that the relocation would be temporary, they expected to return home soon, and therefore did not consider it necessary to immediately apply for enrollment in Slovak schools. In addition, 45% expressed concern for their children's emotional well-being, saying that the stress and trauma of moving made starting a new school an unwanted extra stress. Finally, 20% of the students' parents were unsure about their future in Slovakia, as they were considering further migration to another country for asylum that affected their decisions regarding their child's school enrollment.

As part of our study, we present the perception of integration into the educational environment of Slovakia from the point of view of the teaching staff, Ukrainian parents and students (table 1).

Table 1

**Perception of integration from the point of view of the teaching staff,
Ukrainian parents and students (n=1710)**

Spheres of integration	Absolutely disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Completely agree (%)
Community development	3	13	42	42
Setting inclusive values	1	3	34	62
Training organization	2	22	51	25
Promoting diversity	21	27	34	18
Developing School for all	3	12	45	41

From the results presented in Table 1, it becomes clear that the teaching staff, Ukrainian parents as well as Ukrainian students positively evaluate certain areas. As respondents, they gave high percentage points to such areas of integration as community development, setting inclusive values and developing School for all.

During a specific interaction with teachers, they were asked how they organize remote linguistic, socio-psychological or educational support, which online resources they use in preparation for communicating with parents and working with Ukrainian children and students. It was found that Slovak teachers use such digital tools as: Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex Meetings, Google Classroom, and Zoom the most. It was on these digital tools that they focused their professional activities.

According to the general report "Distance learning of students during the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of teacher professional development" survey of teachers in June 2021 in the form of 8 focus groups. A total of 35 respondents participated, of which 29 were women (n=29) and only 6 (n=6) were men from various municipalities and cities in Slovakia. It was found that almost 12% of teachers had a problem with the availability of technology in the implementation of distance learning, while teachers also faced related problems with insufficiently fast Internet (nearly 26% of respondents noted it), high level of data consumption (23%), but also with insufficient the level of own digital skills (39%) [15, p.7-32]

It was important to find out which sources teachers learn about news on using new digital tools and technologies in their professional activities, which online forms of professional development they consider to be the most effective; which institutions in Slovakia offer to improve the qualifications of teachers in using digital tools and what exactly are the needs of teachers in terms of improving their digital literacy when interacting with Ukrainian children and students today.

The need for additional training in the use of digital tools has not diminished among Slovak teachers even today. The survey showed that almost 48.6% of teachers have attended a webinar or training on the forms, methods and means of distance learning. Half (51.4%) of the teachers did not undergo such additional training at all. The most frequent reason for this situation was the conviction of these teachers that they do not need such training (almost 43%). Other reasons given by teachers: teachers did not find training suitable for their educational needs (29%), or were not satisfied with online training (15%). It was found that the Slovak teachers follow the news about the distance courses using digital tools the most through the following information channels: learning through the website/portal Učíme na daľel (almost 55% of all respondents); through e-mail distribution to educational institutions from the Methodological and Pedagogical Center NIEaY (31%); thanks to the websites of non-governmental organizations, private companies (14%). An important role was played by official institutions designed to support the training and professional development of teachers [15].

Summarizing the answers of pedagogical workers regarding the main needs for professional development, it was found that the most important thing for teachers in

implementing integration activities with Ukrainian students is to improve the methodology of conducting online lessons (rank 1); practical help in mastering new digital tools (rank 2); recording and editing of a video lesson (rank 3); rapid online consultations on the use of ICT (rank 4); creating and maintaining own blog (rank 5).

Slovak pedagogues believe that digitalization of education is not only about the technical equipment of schools, but also a general change in the thinking of pedagogical workers. A professional conference "Digital education and preparation for practice as the basis of a quality school" was held on the basis of the Office of Prešov Autonomous Region. It was organized by the World Bank in cooperation with the partners of the Catching-Up Regions Initiative (CuRI). The experts present agreed that the digitization of education is not only an update of the equipment of educational institutions, but also a general change in the thinking of the agents of the educational process.

It is important to emphasize that the Slovak government has also organized additional events to accelerate the integration of Ukrainian teachers and preschool staff: language courses in online format for teaching staff at Comenius University in Bratislava; accelerated procedures for the entry of recently refugee teachers into the education system, relying on their knowledge and experience for the purposes of training programs (by removing administrative barriers and recognizing prior qualifications through alternative pathways to the teaching profession); support from the school community, network and professional communities (eTwinning and School Educational Portal, pedagogical materials on the Internet) in Ukrainian.

Of particular reserch interest is the identification of barriers that disrupt the integration of Ukrainian children and students into the educational environment of Slovakia.These barriers can be perceived very differently by the subjects of integration. At the time of introducing integrative actions, it was established that teachers do not know all the solutions for accelerating the integration of Ukrainian children and students.

On the basis of the general analysis, it can be stated that the integration of Ukrainian school-age students and young people by means of digital tools into the educational environment of Slovakia is carried out in the directions of linguistic (conducting online language courses, using videos on learning the Slovak language in Tik-Tok), educational (additional classes on the educational platform Kahoot, use of the Mentimeter service) and psychological support (informal communication in social networks, on WhatsApp or Viber chats; posts and messages in Telegram; individual consultations of psychologists, teaching assistants and tutors in Zoom). Observing the dynamics of integration allows us to conclude that in almost 2 years, the educational community of Slovakia has done a lot, but it is still inappropriate to call the integration of Ukrainian children and youth using digital tools effective, because there are barriers to the integration. In order for the integration of Ukrainian children and students into the education system of Slovakia to be as effective as possible, it is necessary to first identify barriers to integration for all subjects of the integration process. Only on the basis of the definition and perception of barriers by all participants of the integration process will it be possible to offer a specific form of integration measures by means of digital tools.

Recommendations regarding changes in educational institutions for the integration of Ukrainian children and youth using digital tools into the educational environment of Slovakia.

Taking into account the general European structure of digital competence of educators (DigCompEdu) that directs the introduction of educational digital tools and resources into educational practice, we recommend at the state level to include a mandatory component of digital literacy in the content of professional development courses for teachers and pedagogical workers in order to use digital technologies to strengthen inclusion and personalization. State support for professional growth and training of qualified teachers is no less important, as educational institutions are constantly faced with a lack of motivated teachers with a high level of digital literacy.

It is recommended to conduct national research on the effectiveness of educational services for the integration of Ukrainian students and youth using digital tools in connection with dynamic changes in the country's education system caused by military aggression and the presence of a large number of forced migrants from Ukraine.

At the regional level, it is worth creating a so-called regional hub (single point of contact) that would become an agent of cooperation and digital changes for all educational institutions in the region and community. Currently, schools are too small to lead the digital transformation of the region on their own, but they are ready to get involved. Creating such hubs will be an important contribution to the coordination of the priorities of self-governing regions, on one hand, and the priorities and needs of the community and schools, on the other.

Among the main recommendations at the level of educational institutions, the introduction of the so-called digital coordinator position in schools and more effective cooperation of educational institutions in the field of digitalization deserve attention. In the regions, educators should be more closely connected with their colleagues from other schools and especially with representatives of the public, so that the process of integration of Ukrainian children and youth is accelerated.

Another recommendation, which takes into account the presence of educational losses in connection with the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, is the need to change the definition of class as a community of students who will become more flexible and will be able to support hybrid forms of education.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In Slovakia, the First Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for an Inclusive Approach in Education and Training for 2022–2024 has been developed. It covers such key areas as support measures, the career guidance system in education, desegregation in education and training, debarring school environment, training pedagogical and professional personnel and destigmatization. Therefore, Slovakia, with the support of the EU member states, implements targeted and comprehensive activities for the integration of Ukrainian children and youth into the education of their national community.

After the start of full-scale Russian aggression in Ukraine, almost half of Ukrainian children and refugee school-aged students took advantage of the opportunity to gain access to education in Slovak schools. In the course of an experimental study, it was proved that the integration of Ukrainian children into Slovak schools varies not only depending on the region, but also on the type of school, the process of including Ukrainian children in education was implemented in most of the surveyed schools in accordance with the state educational policy of the Slovak Republic, the educational process for students in most schools included auxiliary measures aimed at overcoming the language barrier and integrating them into the educational environment, almost three quarters of primary and secondary Slovak schools (73%) introduced language courses for Ukrainian students to overcome the language barrier.

The main purpose of using digital tools in the integration of Ukrainian children and students is to make it of higher quality and more effective.

Educators currently play a key role in the process of integrating Ukrainian children and youth who, together with their parents, received asylum in European countries, into the social and educational environment of the new country. The professional competence of teachers in the use of digital means is vital under the current conditions of martial law, when Ukrainian schools and institutions of higher education have switched to a blended learning format. It is especially important to constantly update the range of digital resources for teachers, improve their skills in using digital learning tools. Researching the opinion of teachers, determining the level of their digital competence and digital readiness should become a strategic task of the new

educational policy in Ukraine as well. Therefore, the constant introduction of innovations that contribute to the effective organization of the educational process should be carried out consistently and become part of the monitoring of the quality of Ukrainian education as a whole.

Recommendations have been developed at the state, regional and educational institution levels. The proposed recommendations should be used in the preparation of state policies and strategies in the field of professional development of teachers and lifelong education both in Slovakia and in Ukraine.

It is important that the results of the proposed research be used by education management bodies and institutions of post-graduate pedagogical education for the purpose of improving the qualifications of teachers, by scientific institutions – in their organizing the events contributing to the successful use of digital means and resources for the education of Ukrainian children and youth who have received temporary asylum in European countries.

In the future, it is recommended to research on the readiness of teachers and scientific and pedagogical workers to use digital tools for the organization of a blended format of training for pupils and student youth. Trends of professional development of teachers in the field of using digital technologies also need to be highlighted and substantiated in detail.

GRATITUDE

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ІНТЕГРАЦІЯ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ДІТЕЙ ТА МОЛОДІ ЗА ДОПОМОГОЮ ЦИФРОВИХ ІНСТРУМЕНТІВ В ОСВІТНЄ СЕРЕДОВИЩЕ СЛОВАЧЧИНИ

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Анотація. У статті досліджується питання інтеграції українських дітей і молоді в освітнє середовище Словаччини. Мета статті полягає у висвітленні результатів національного оцінювання процесу інтеграції українських дітей шкільного віку засобами цифрових

інструментів в соціально-освітнє середовище Словаччини, виявленні проблем та потреб суб'єктів освітнього процесу, наданні відповідних рекомендацій. Використано загальнонаукові та спеціальні методи дослідження. Узагальнено результати загального звіту дослідження "Підтримка емігрантів з України в навчанні", яке було проведено в Словаччині впродовж 2022–2023 років Національним інститутом освіти і молоді при співпраці з Міністерством освіти, науки, досліджень та спорту Словацької Республіки і Дитячим фондом ООН та звіту "Дистанційне навчання учнів під час пандемії COVID-19 у контексті підвищення кваліфікації вчителів". Встановлено, що інтеграція українських дітей шкільного віку до освітніх закладів Словаччини також потребує значної мовної, освітньої і соціально-психологічної підтримки з боку вчителів і педагогічних працівників. З'ясовано, що для організації інтеграції українських учнів у Словаччині використовується досить широке коло цифрових інструментів та ресурсів. Встановлено, що словацькі вчителі для здійснення інтеграції українських учнів в освітнє середовище використовують такі цифрові інструменти, як Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex Meetings, Google Classroom, Zoom. Доведено, що перед словацьким соціумом постає проблема пришвидшення інтеграції українських дітей, учнів і студентів засобами цифрових інструментів. Узагальнення результатів дозволило скласти рекомендації з інтеграції українських дітей шкільного віку засобами цифрових інструментів на державному, регіональному рівнях і рівні закладів освіти, які рекомендовано використати при підготовці державної політики та стратегій у сфері підвищення кваліфікації вчителів як у Словаччині, так і в Україні. Підготовка і фінансування статті зумовлені Планом відновлення та стійкості Словацької Республіки в рамках проєкту № 09I03-03-V01-00058.

Ключові слова: інтеграція; заклади освіти; електронний освітній ресурс; цифрові інструменти; цифрова грамотність; цифрове освітнє середовище; підвищення кваліфікації вчителів.