

DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-CULTURAL SKILLS AS A FORM
OF THE FORCED MIGRANTS' INTEGRATION

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In this article, cross-cultural communication skills are analyzed to promote the form of the forced migrants' integration. Authors have also analyzed how intercultural communication skills and activities influence the emotional state and abilities of the forced migrants' minors. These results are relevant for institutions and communities that face the intercultural communications every day. The first part of the article contains the analysis of the publications made on the integration of forced migrants and intercultural communications in the integration process of the review. The second part is devoted to the presentation of the results of empirical research of cross-cultural communication skills and activities influencing the emotional state of the forced migrants' minors.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication skills, integration, forced migrants' minors (children of refugees and foreigners provided with the shelter), education.

Conference participants,
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Introduction. Migration has become one of the most important twenty-first century problems (WHO, 2006). Global migration trends and the scale adjusts not only the socio-political and economic spheres, but also educational and communication scopes. According to the EU directive (2003/3/EB) minors forced migrants – refugee children and unaccompanied minors, foreigners, asylum seekers are declared as the most vulnerable group of migrants. Today, the vast majority of adopted children in Lithuania came from the “hot spots” – areas of military action. This fact often causes psychosocial, behavioral and communication difficulties of refugee children (Duncan Pedersen, 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 cross-cultural communication skills training opportunities for integration of forced migrants and present the results, how the intercultural communication skills activities affect the minors forced migrants and their emotional well-being of intercultural communication skills.

Research methods: analysis of scientific literature, document analysis, observation, psychological evaluation methods.

I. Forced migrants' intercultural communication education in the integration process.

Modern European societies are faced with the daily intercultural communication challenges. The analysis of these challenges in the context of

Lithuania has historically marked this country as not specific for the arrival of the people from Asia, Africa and the Caucasus. This, in turn, leads to the cultural shock and causes other problems. To solve intercultural communication problems and to make integration of forced migrants successful is necessary to ensure not only newcomers but also public background. According to Raicher, Hopkins (1996); Bowskill (2007); Zydziunaite (2012) – integration is a two-way process. Successful integration process requires: a) the forced migrants' individual potential (motivation to integrate, education, health, family, social status), and b) local community social potential – the ability to enable new members and to take responsibility for contacting the improvement of quality change direction. (see fig. 1)

Scottish scientific studies show the significance of host community preparedness processes for integration. According to the researchers, it is necessary to involve the community in preparation for the arrival of migrants to the ongoing cross-cultural cooperation and to support the integration of forced migrants. Stuopyte (2007, 2008) says that individual's level of integration occurs when the individual retains

his ethnic identity, while the latter has the skills to be able to engage in most of the culture and society. After Hek (2005), Salin and Muller (1999), Merrice (2007), Stuopyte (2009), Zydziunaite (2012) analysis of the work, it is emphasized not only the integration of the two sides – forced migrants and the local community – the importance of interaction, but also the importance of education in the integration process. Newcomers during the learning process meet their educational needs necessary for their integration into the community and the community is getting ready to integration.

It should be noted tough connection between migration, integration and intercultural competence. Cross-cultural communication 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 intercultural communication skills is associated with the preparation and

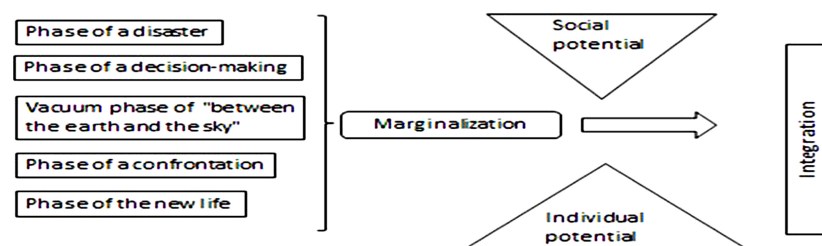


Fig. 1. Factors influencing the integration
(Stuopyte E., Bereznaia-Demidenko V, 2013)

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 intercultural communication skills. According to Herbrand (2000), while it is not entirely clear what factors help a person adapt to another culture, it is hard to answer the question of what constitutes an intercultural competence (Pauriene, 2010). However, the cross-cultural communication should be understood as the ability to understand both cultures – their own and the other, 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 intercultural situations. Fiantini (2000) analyzed personal intercultural 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 intercultural 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 intercultural situations.

Intercultural communication skills can and should be taught. The importance of capacity development is excreted not only in the scientific community (Pauriene 2010; J. Reingarde, N. Vasiliauskaite, R. Erentaite, 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 intercultural education is one of the five most

important areas. Research works (Lopez 2004; Delson, 2009; Paurienė 2010) showed that there are cross-cultural skills in a variety of educational programs. Experiential learning is excreted as a well-known method of cross-cultural skills, when a person is included into the simulation game, designed to artificially cross-cultural 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 intercultural competence development model. Reingarde, Vasiliauskaite, Erentaite (2010), speaking about cross-cultural understanding and multicultural factors, distinguish: intercultural 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 cross-cultural education, consisting of knowledge of cultural diversity and non-discriminatory terms.

Analyzing cross-cultural communication skills, it is important to emphasize that although the impact of these programs depends on many factors – the learning environment, the nature of the program, the characteristics of learners – this is clearly a positive effect on social attitudes and intergroup interactions (Denson 2009). It is important that interfaces with a more favorable interpretation of cultural differences are identified in both the long and the short of intercultural communication skills, tolerance and equal opportunities educational programs (Lopez G.E., 2004). The short-term non-formal education for intercultural communication skills program that is analyzed at the empirical part of the article is based on: intercultural contact (multicultural group sessions), experiential learning (simulation games), intercultural education.

II. Empirical results of the intercultural communication skills activities influence on the forced migrants minors' emotional status

The point of the presented empirical study – to set how cross-cultural communication skills activities influenced the emotional state of forced migrants – teens granted asylum.

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 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 Luscher color test (Luscher 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 intercultural 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).

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 intercultural 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 cross-cultural 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=4), 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 classes, the activity of foreigners granted asylum increased, decreased isolation and limited interaction trend (the beginning of cross-cultural friendships), decreased spontaneous emotional expression cases. Emotional cognitive activities were increased participants' self-perception and people around them; constructive emotion management, conflict resolution, intercultural 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 intercultural communication skills assessment. Also, this stage is for compare foreigners granted asylum intercultural communication skills, their emotional state. After participation in cross-cultural communication skills workshops, and performance 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 cross-cultural communication skills workshops' content) positively influenced teen's confidence. Also, constructive communication, teamwork, intercultural conflict management skills 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.

Conclusions:

This article presents the analysis of scientific publications and the results of the study revealed that cross-cultural communication skills are important for forced migrants' integration. Cross-cultural communication skills can and must be developed as far as incoming migrants and the host local community groups. Results of the empirical research stages comparison suggests that intercultural communication skills have a positive impact on emotional state of teenage that granted asylum (emotional state's comparison before using the methods and after group activities) and also develops intercultural communication skills. Analyzing the results is important to emphasize the educational effectiveness of the programme. Thereby, confirming Lopez (2004) studies that identified in connection with a more favorable assessment of the differences in cultures and intercultural communication skills training activities, regardless of the duration of programmes.

In conclusion there are described the integration problems of forced migrants and intercultural communication skills, promoting the integration aspect of the results; it is important to note the further factors contributing to the process of

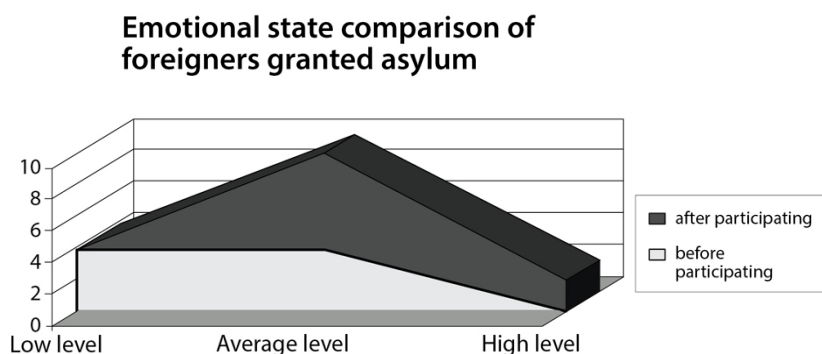


Fig. 2. Emotional state comparison of foreigners granted asylum

integration, making relevance research of searching intercultural communication skills forms.

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