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INCLUSION IN UKRAINE: MODERN CHALLENGES

ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to a theoretical and practical analysis of the problem of inclusion: formation and development, features of educational inclusion, and mechanisms of implementation of inclusive higher education. Based on the analysis of regulatory documents and scientific research, the authors determine the most significant stages of the formation and development of inclusion in Ukraine. The requirements for specialists needed by the modern domestic education system have been analyzed. The article emphasizes the trends in the process of invalidation of the population of Ukraine. The authors determine the expediency and necessity of wide implementation of educational inclusion in the system of higher education, in particular: ensuring free access of all higher education applicants to educational and methodical materials and creating the necessary special units. On the basis of the analysis of the results of the conducted survey, the possible ways of solving the current problems of educational inclusion in the higher education system are substantiated and characterized: support of the teaching staff in the organization of an inclusive educational environment in the institution of higher education; support for education seekers who belong to the category of persons with special needs; financing and implementation of regulated and guaranteed mechanisms for financial support of higher education institutions; technical and methodological support of the educational process. Also, emphasis is placed on electronic inclusion, which is interpreted as a social movement aimed at overcoming the digital divide among different categories of the population. It was found that the appropriate level of organization of an inclusive educational environment is observed in institutions of general secondary education. Instead, HEIs need more active involvement of specialists, technical equipment and financial support for effective educational inclusion. An important factor is the availability of computer equipment: ensuring access to free or low-cost computers, in particular through the implementation of special target programs, charity projects, etc. It is also relevant to search and exchange data to diversify the ways of obtaining education for persons with special educational paths, to ensure effective interpersonal communication despite temporal and spatial boundaries.

Keywords: inclusion, educational inclusion, e-inclusion, higher education, inclusive educational environment, students with special educational needs

JEL Classification: D83, H83, I23

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion, as a necessary and important characteristic of our society, has already become an invariable component of many phenomena and processes, an indicator of the quality of involvement of different categories of the population in joint social activities. Translated from English, this term (from English "inclusion") means the involvement of all citizens in various spheres of society, without any differences or restrictions. Also, the concept of "educational inclusion" is widely used, which involves the creation of a safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective educational environment for all. UNESCO interprets educational inclusion as a dynamic process, which consists of a positive attitude towards the diversity of students in the educational environment, perceiving the individual characteristics of children's development not as problems, but as opportunities for their development.

The relevance of the studied issues should include the trends in the process of disability of the country's population, which are largely related to the events taking place in Ukraine in connection with Russia's military aggression. This caused an aggravation of the situation with ensuring the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities to education, some of whom became forced migrants, and others were disabled as a result of military operations. The modern war period, and later the post-war period, will become important factors in the emergence of new challenges for the state regarding the provision of psychological and pedagogical assistance and support, ensuring equal rights and opportunities for different categories of people (children and youth with special educational needs, persons who experienced traumatic events), creating optimal conditions for the successful integration of everyone into society.

In order to implement the principles of inclusiveness and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, on December 13, 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was signed and ratified by almost all countries of the world, including Ukraine. The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (Inclusive Policy) ensures the coordination of activities carried out by the entire system of bodies of executive power, local self-government, institutions, enterprises and other institutions regarding the implementation and realization of this Convention.

It is worth emphasizing that inclusion is an integrated process for all citizens in the development of social relations, including persons with disabilities, etc. (elderly people, pregnant women, forcibly displaced persons (IDPs), etc.). The relevance of the researched issues is determined by the difficult conditions in which Ukraine is located due to the full-scale invasion of Russia and the resolution of military actions by the aggressor state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational inclusion is a global trend. In this context, M. Poroshenko notes that such a statement was repeatedly confirmed at international conferences and forums, and was also reflected in international legislative acts. International organizations such as the United Nations (UN) UNESCO, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) take care of issues of educational inclusion and policy formation in the field of inclusive education [12, p. 27–32]. For example, O. Krasota claims that the main challenge on the path to the introduction of educational inclusion into the higher education system is the education of a tolerant attitude of all citizens to the inequality and specificity of others, the creation of such conditions under which the norm is to treat everyone with respect for their dignity, regardless of whether the person has special educational needs or not. Another significant challenge, in our opinion, is the implementation of educational inclusion in higher education. It is about the fact that educational inclusion should not be limited only to the creation of conditions for the education of children in a regular educational institution (secondary education institution) and not only children with special educational but also social needs. The author claims that it is appropriate to consider educational inclusion in a broader sense, in particular: in a broad sense, educational inclusion involves the formation of equal access to education for all citizens, regardless of any discriminatory features; implementation of inclusive education at all levels, from primary general to full higher education; transformation of all educational institutions into such inclusive educational spaces that support all participants in the educational process. That is, under educational inclusion, the researcher understands involvement, and inclusion in the educational process of all its participants at all its levels [7]. In the same direction, other Ukrainian researchers of inclusive education are developing their thoughts, let's single out some of them: H. Bilavych, I. Didukh et al. analyze the problems of inclusive education in Ukraine in the context of global trends. In their opinion, every school should be inclusive in its philosophy, which implies the readiness of the school to accept every child with special needs at any time, and the desire to create the most favourable educational environment that will serve the development of its potential [1, pp. 891–899; 16]; H. Davydenko analyzes state policy and offers methodological recommendations for the availability of information presented in electronic and digital form for the most sensitive social groups [4, p. 17–25]; In his article, M.F. Melnik considers current approaches to the emergence of the theory of inclusive development, which are related to the problems of uneven growth, the accumulation of a sufficient level of tangible and intangible assets, and the fair distribution of resources [10, pp. 44–49], etc. For example, international colleagues in this context also provide interesting opinions: Madhumala Kumari notes that the key principle of the inclusive process in general is that practically all participants in the educational process learn together constantly and independently of any internal or external factors [8, p. 36–39]; Meda Lawrence, Efthymiou Efthymia et al. researching the problem area, the authors, on the one hand, claim that the participants of the educational process generally positively perceived inclusive education, students unanimously perceived inclusion, and on the other hand, the authors predicted an increase in the level of differentiated education in the future, etc. [9; 13, p. 225–243]; some of the researchers, in particular, C. Charalampous and M. Fadilah, P. Utari, M. Wijaya, assure that it is advisable to identify: "(1) communication strategies used for inclusive education policy in different regions of the world; (2) conditions of inclusive education in different regions of the world; and (3) the challenges of inclusive education faced by people with disabilities" [3, p. 157–165; 14, p. 757–775].

At the same time, despite the presence of research, the theoretical and practical analysis of the problem of inclusion remains neglected: formation and development, features of educational inclusion, mechanisms of implementation of inclusive higher education, etc.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the article is to highlight the actual aspects of inclusion in the higher education system based on the theoretical analysis and the conducted survey and to substantiate the ways of implementation in the conditions of the higher education institution. For this, it is necessary to solve a number of tasks, including the following: based on the research of domestic researchers, to propose a chronology of the formation and development of inclusion in Ukraine; find out the prerequisites for the formation of an inclusive educational environment for all interested parties in the shortest possible time; substantiate proposals for the implementation of educational inclusion in the system of higher education in Ukraine and others.

METHODS

During the preparation of the manuscript of the article, both general scientific and special research methods were used, which include: based on the purpose of the article and the tasks for its solution, the problematic boundaries of the topic of scientific intelligence were analyzed and established. In this context, in particular, it was found that informational and educational work will have a positive result only when the principles of educational inclusion become the norm of life in our society, and the formation of an inclusive educational environment for all involves equal access to all students of higher education to the necessary educational materials, creation of special units – resource centres, educational and rehabilitation units or groups of psychological and pedagogical support, etc. To do this, we conducted a survey among students of the first (bachelor's) level of higher education in the following specialties: "Preschool Education", "Primary Education" (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv); "Psychology" (Lviv State University of Internal Affairs). Scientific and pedagogical workers and students of higher education of 2-4 courses of full-time education took part in the survey.

RESULTS AND CONCEPT

The formation of an inclusive environment in the educational sphere and the normalization of this process in the domestic education system is still in its infancy. In the domestic national economy, educational inclusion is mostly formed at the level of secondary general education, which is reflected in its simplified understanding as one that involves the acquisition of the necessary education by children with special needs in an educational institution adapted for such needs.

Based on the analysis of legal acts and determining the ways of their implementation in the educational system of Ukraine, using the work of domestic researchers, we offer a chronology of the formation and development of inclusion in Ukraine (Table 1). It is worth noting that the defining date of the introduction of inclusion in domestic educational institutions was 1991 – the date of Ukraine's declaration of independence.

In Ukraine, several reform processes are taking place at the same time - decentralization, deinstitutionalization, education reform, health care reform, etc. That is why there is a demand for professional training of those specialists who are able to:

- join the process of transformation of the network of special educational institutions;
- create services and develop a network of educational institutions, as well as provide social services in conditions of decentralization;
- establish interaction between all interested parties;
- organize the provision of social support services during inclusive education for children;
- carry out an assessment of the architectural accessibility of an educational institution, service institution, etc.;
- provide training / advanced raising the level of qualifications of specialists to provide them with an educational process for persons (both children and adults) with special needs;
- carry out educational activities with parents on the formation of tolerance, changing attitudes towards alternative opportunities for their children to receive education and involving relevant specialists in this;

- carry out information activities on changing society's attitude to approaches in assessing children's capabilities, their characteristics and their own potential.

Table 1. Stages of establishing inclusion in Ukraine.

Age period	Characteristics of the event / regulatory document
2001	the beginning of the experiment "Social adaptation and integration into society of children with special psychophysical development by organizing their education in general educational institutions" (Ministry of Education of Ukraine, Institute of Special Pedagogy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, VF "Step by Step"). URL: http://ussf.kiev.ua/projects/naukovo-pedahohichniy-eksperyment-sotsialna-adaptatsiia-ta-intehratsiia-v-suspilstvo-ditei-z-osoblyvostiamy-psykhofizychnoho-rozvytku-shliakhom-organizatsiikh-navchannia-u-zahalnoosvitnikh-zakladakh.html
2008	implementation of the project "Inclusive education for children with special needs in Ukraine" (Ministry of Education of Ukraine, Institute of Special Pedagogy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine with the support of the Canadian Agency for International Development, the Canadian Center for the Study of Disabilities of Grant McEwen University and with the participation of the VF "Step by Step"). URL: http://ussf.kiev.ua/projects/inkluzivna-osvita-dlia-ditei-z-osoblyvymy-potrebamy-v-ukraini.html
2010	making changes to the educational legislation of Ukraine, which provides for the creation of inclusive classes for the education of children with special needs in the SEN of Ukraine, as a result - the approval of the Concept of the Development of Inclusive Education (Order of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ukraine dated 01.10.2010 No. 912). URL: https://osvita.ua/legislacion/Ser_osv/3189/#google_vignette
2011	approval of the Procedure for the Organization of Inclusive Education in General Educational Institutions (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine at the request of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ukraine), and later - Approval of the Procedure for the Organization of Inclusive Education in General Secondary Education Institutions (as of September 15, 2021, No. 957, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine). URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/957-2021-%D0%BF#n8
2013	approval of the new State standard of primary education for children with special educational needs (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine at the request of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ukraine, dated August 21, 2013, No. 607). URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/607-2013-%D0%BF#Text
2020	Decree of the President of Ukraine "On ensuring the creation of a barrier-free space in Ukraine", December 3, 2020. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/533/2020#Text
2021	approval of the National Strategy for the creation of a barrier-free space by 2030 (April 14, 2021 No. 366). URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/366-2021-%D1%80#Text

The higher school is faced with a task: to create an inclusive educational environment for all those who wish to do so in the shortest possible time. The prerequisites for this are the following measures:

- educational affirmation of worldview concepts in a tolerant perception higher education applicant from the OOP;
- creation of a so-called barrier-free environment, which involves the installation of special equipment to help students with special needs get to the necessary premises during the educational process (ramps, special elevators, sanitary room equipment, marking of premises, etc.).

At the same time, it should be noted that informational and educational work will have a positive result when the principles of educational inclusion become the norm of life in our society, and the formation of an inclusive educational environment for all will involve equal access to all students of higher education to the necessary educational materials, the creation of special units – resource centres, educational and rehabilitation units or groups of psychological and pedagogical support, etc. In this context, we note that an example of the creation of such a resource centre is the resource centre for inclusive education, which operates at the Ivan Franko Lviv National University (<http://centres.lnu.edu.ua/inclusive-education/>). It is possible to competently respond to all the challenges of educational inclusion facing the higher education institution based on a synergistic approach of three complementary levels - student groups, the administration of higher education institutions and the state.

Spontaneous integration, education of children with special educational needs in the conditions of a general secondary education institution began in the late 1990s, when special education institutions began to undergo changes due to demographic decline, and insufficient funding, as a result - some of them were liquidated or repurposed. The signing (2008) and ratification (2009) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a key moment in the formation of the state policy of Ukraine in the field of education of children with special needs, according to the researchers. According to the authors, the transition from a "medical" model to a "social" one in the treatment of people with special needs shifts the emphasis from shortcomings, violations, deviations from the norm to the needs of special conditions and means of education, and increases the responsibility of society [2, p. 1–10].

Among the modern problems of the implementation of the inclusive process in the Ukrainian educational environment, R. Fedko emphasizes that it is worth starting with small steps, namely: providing the opportunity for people with special

needs to move normally in all types of transport, get to public buildings without problems, move through the streets, get a job, satisfy their cultural needs. In this case, as the author notes, it is possible to bring not only such persons but also themselves closer to the modern European level of civilization [15].

In the context of researching our problem, we conducted a survey among bachelor's degree holders of higher education within such educational specialties: "Preschool Education", "Primary Education" (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv); "Psychology" (Lviv State University of Internal Affairs). Scientific and pedagogical workers and students of higher education of 2-4 courses of full-time education took part in the survey. You used the results of the survey in our further justifications of the proposals regarding the implementation of educational inclusion in the system of higher education in Ukraine.

The questionnaire contained both open and closed questions, which made it possible to determine the real knowledge of the respondents regarding the content, main principles and features of inclusion (inclusive educational environment), as well as to determine the actual problems of educational inclusion in higher education and possible ways to solve them from the point of view of all participants of the educational process. In general, 650 students and 135 scientific and pedagogical workers of the previously mentioned higher education institutions took part in the survey. Regarding the general understanding of the content of inclusion, inclusive educational environment, and barrier-free communication, we obtained the results, which we systematized in Table 2.

Table 2. General indicators of understanding the content of inclusion.

Number of respondents, %	General understanding of inclusion	The most characteristic features of an inclusive environment	Arrangement of an inclusive environment	Did you study at school with children with OOP	Have you met teachers who have clearly expressed OPP	Did you work/study with students from OPP
Education seekers (650)	100%	75%		90%	25%	35%
Teachers (135)	100%	85%		45%	65%	45%

It is worth noting that the respondents noted that there were significantly more students with SEN in the school (such answers prevailed among those who obtained higher education), there were almost none (such answers were found among teachers, which is due to a significant age gap, the period of study at the school of many teachers was not yet indicated by inclusion in general). The following comments were also found among the respondents' answers:

- students of higher education from OPP study according to an individual curriculum, so their presence in the classrooms is optional;
- applicants of higher education from OPP cannot study in the chosen speciality, taking into account their specifics;
- institutions of higher education do not provide assistants (assistants, tutors) for students with special needs, very often this function is performed by parents and students, sometimes it is taken over by teachers or employees of the dean's office or department.

The analysis of respondents' answers makes it possible to single out some ways of solving the current problems of educational inclusion in the higher education system. Let's reveal their content.

1. *Support of scientific and pedagogical worker's introduction of inclusive education in a higher education institution.* This direction was singled out as the leading one by both students and teachers of HEI. We believe that the formation of motivational readiness of teachers for the organization of educational inclusion in the higher education system will be effective if the following factors are taken into account:

- introduction of a bonus system and additional financing of scientific and pedagogical workers who develop and work according to individual educational and professional programs for the professional training of future specialists (or, possibly, the creation of individual OPPs taking into account the specifics of a specific education seeker);
- introduction of a system of short-term and long-term academic leaves for conducting scientific research and internships in recognized foreign educational institutions on the issue of organizing support for OPP in the higher education system;
- creation of specialized grants for teaching staff, which contribute to the professional development of persons with disabilities and their involvement in new initiatives, participation in international conferences, symposiums, etc.

2. *Support for education seekers who belong to the category of persons with special needs.* This direction won the second place in a number of suggestions and recommendations of the respondents. Implementation of this direction involves:

- clear definition and categorization of persons from vulnerable groups of the population (persons from OPP; persons from the category of forcibly displaced persons; persons who returned from the war and adapted to peaceful living conditions; persons who were forced to emigrate abroad, but returned to continue their education and professional activity, etc.);
- development of specialized educational and professional programs and training courses, as well as individual plans for completing the educational process that meets the needs of these groups;
- provision of additional resources for training, such as sign language interpreters, special equipment, opportunities for individual use of computer support, etc.;
- provision of consulting services for adaptation, socialization and training of various categories of persons on a regular basis;
- introduction of additional subsidies or other incentives for educational institutions that actively develop and implement educational inclusion in the training of students in higher education;
- development and implementation of specialized scholarship programs for students who belong to the category of persons with special needs in order to stimulate admission to study in institutions of higher education, etc.

3. *Funding and implementation of regulated and guaranteed financial support mechanisms for higher education institutions.* The issue of funding higher education in general, as well as individual OPP programs, which provide for taking into account the individual characteristics of education seekers, relate to the following aspects of educational inclusion:

- introduction of inclusive education for applicants of the OPP;
- searching for and participating in the development of grants for the implementation of inclusive education initiatives and programs;
- providing funding for the creation and support of inclusive resource centres and specialized units in higher education institutions;
- allocation of funds for the modernization and adaptation of the infrastructure (physical and digital) of higher education institutions in order to ensure the availability of education in various formats.

4. *Technical and methodical support of the educational process.* This direction implementation of developments and such measures:

- determination of clear criteria for accessibility of different categories of persons to educational and methodical materials;
- development of instructions, recommendations, methods and technical means of learning for an inclusive educational environment of higher education institutions;
- implementation of a system for evaluating and monitoring the educational achievements of education seekers and the effectiveness of the professional activity of teachers in the inclusive educational space of higher education institutions;
- development of mobile applications for education, creation of platforms for the exchange of experience between educational institutions, etc.

DISCUSSION

In the context of the above, research in the direction of electronic inclusion by Yu. Nosenko is relevant, which notes that the development of modern technologies undoubtedly increases the level of division of the population, respectively, into those who have access to such technologies and those who do not have such access. Accordingly, the scientist investigated and named the key reasons for this division:

- lack of relevant skills, ignorance trump cards and abilities opportunities of using ICT;
- insufficient financial resources for the acquisition of digital capabilities, and lack of an Internet network due to the remoteness of the region.

The solution to these problems, according to Yu. Nosenko is the prerogative of electronic inclusion (e-inclusion), which the researcher interprets as a social movement that contributes to the levelling of the digital divide, thereby increasing the level of access to digital technologies in a full understanding of their essence and types for all without excluding geographical regions and strata of the population, regardless of their self-identification, religious or other affiliation, and so on.

Therefore, it is necessary to ultimately agree with those who claim that the digital divide contributes to a conditional division between those who have access to information technologies and those who do not [11, p. 116–123]. Electronic inclusion is an important element in supporting and developing the digital literacy of the population, and the use of digital technologies to solve household, educational, professional and other issues of socialization of individuals.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, we state that inclusion in Ukraine is developing and actively being introduced into the modern educational system. The appropriate level of organization-inclusive education is observed in institutions' state policy of providing educational services in general secondary educational institutions. Instead, HEIs need more active involvement of specialists, technical equipment and financial support for effective educational inclusion. An important factor is the availability of computer equipment: ensuring access to free or low-cost computers, in particular through the implementation of special target programs, charity projects, etc. It is also relevant to search and exchange data to diversify the ways of obtaining education for persons with special educational paths, to ensure effective interpersonal communication despite temporal and spatial boundaries.

We see the prospects for further scientific research in studying the best foreign experience and finding ways to implement it in the domestic system of higher education in order to intensify and improve inclusive educational processes at the network level of professional education (based on general or secondary professional education) institutions. For example, the global experience of overcoming the digital divide through the implementation of state-targeted programs, the implementation of intentions of the most famous modern digitized companies, public organizations, foundations, etc. deserves attention.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: *Nataliia Machynska, Viacheslav Blikhar*

Data curation: *Nataliia Machynska, Viacheslav Blikhar*

Formal Analysis: *Žanna Osikowicz*

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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ІНКЛЮЗІЯ В УКРАЇНІ: СУЧАСНІ ВИКЛИКИ

Статтю присвячено теоретико-практичному аналізу проблеми інклюзії: становлення й розвиток, особливості освітньої інклюзії, механізми реалізації інклюзивно вищої освіти. Автори на основі аналізу нормативних документів та наукових розвідок визначають найбільш значимі етапи становлення та розвитку інклюзії в Україні. Проаналізовано вимоги до фахівців, яких потребує сучасна вітчизняна система освіти. У статті наголошено на тенденціях процесу інвалідизації населення України. Автори визначають доцільність і необхідність широкого впровадження освітньої інклюзії в систему вищої освіти, зокрема: забезпечення вільного доступу всіх здобувачів вищої освіти до навчально-методичних матеріалів і створення необхідних спеціальних підрозділів. На основі аналізу результатів проведеного опитування обґрунтовано та схарактеризовано можливі шляхи вирішення актуальних проблем освітньої інклюзії в системі вищої освіти: підтримка викладацького складу в організації інклюзивного освітнього середовища в закладі вищої освіти; підтримка здобувачів освіти, які належать до категорії осіб з особливими потребами; фінансування та впровадження регульованих і гарантованих механізмів фінансової підтримки закладів вищої освіти; технічний і методичний супровід освітнього процесу. Також акцентовано на електронній інклюзії, яку розглядають як соціальний рух, спрямований на подолання цифрової нерівності серед різних груп населення. З'ясовано, що належний рівень імплементації інклюзивного освітнього простору простежується в закладах повної загальної середньої освіти. Натомість ЗВО потребують більш активного долучення й фахівців, технічного оснащення та фінансового забезпечення для ефективної освітньої інклюзії. Важливим чинником виступає наявність цифрових технологій: повний доступ до безкоштовних, або ж бюджетних комп'ютерних засобів, у тому числі в межах дії спеціальних державних програм, благодійних проєктів тощо. Також актуальними залишаються пошук і обмін даними для урізноманітнення шляхів отримання освіти особами з особливими освітніми патерами, забезпечення ефективної міжособистісної комунікації попри часові й просторові межі.

Ключові слова: інклюзія, освітня інклюзія, електронна інклюзія, вища освіта, інклюзивне освітнє середовище, особи з особливими освітніми потребами

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