

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE TRAINING OF SPECIALISTS OF A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE (UKRAINIAN CONTEXT)

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**Abstract.** *In the presented research we briefly outlined the issues of training specialists of socio-economic profile in higher educational institutions of Ukraine. We addressed certain aspects of social inclusion and the key indicators of social inclusion in accordance with the priorities of social policy development in Europe. In particular, the indicators and goals of social inclusion, such as inclusion and/or exclusion of some groups of population, the impact of the level of «poverty» on these processes. And also, the influence of these factors on the educational process in higher education institutions, the formation of empathy, stress resistance, social adaptation, professional and inclusive competence.*

*As a part of our research, we diagnosed the level of empathy (Yusupov, 2002), stress resistance and social adaptation (Holmes & Rage, 2009), social frustration (Wasserman, 2009) of student youth who are included in project activities and studying in basic educational programs. Comparison of statistical data of EU countries and Ukraine on the indicators of inclusion of persons in need of inclusive education in active social processes has been carried out.*

*The analysis briefly presents pedagogical technologies with high efficiency in the formation of competencies of future specialists of socio-economic profile and presents the main trends in the formation of the environment of social inclusion, which are proposed and implemented in the framework of project activities and cooperation with EU countries on the territory of Ukraine.*

**Keywords:** *EU experience, project activities, social inclusion, specialists of a socio-economic profile.*

## **Introduction**

Trends in the modern world, dictated by the need for a competitive professional community in each area of human activity. In our state, this has led to the need to adjust to the trends of global socio-economic development, and also to adapt the available resources and human capital to the European integration processes by incorporating the concept of a competent approach into the basic areas of quality of life of the individual. This became possible due to the gradual reforming of the healthcare sector, education and, in fact, changes in legislation. Particularly due to the adoption of several laws and sub-legislative acts.

For example, today Ukraine has adopted a “Human Development Strategy”, (“Ukaz”, 2021), which comprehensively regulates the development of Ukrainian society. Among the items that according to this strategy should lead to the reorganization and improvement of the quality of life in Ukraine, to the competitiveness of Ukrainian citizens in the global and domestic labor markets and are designed to continue the process of European integration – the proper place belongs to the reform of the educational sector.

Changes in education began in 2010 (introduction of inclusive education, deinstitutionalization of special schools, etc.) and gradually continued, ensuring the implementation of European norms and standards in higher education in Ukraine (Pro vyshchu osvitu, 2014) and implemented in the main articles and paragraphs of the Education Law of Ukraine (Pro osvitu, 2017).

According to the latter, as Holiuk O. notes. “Universities must constantly work to improve the quality of education, based on the fundamental principles of European higher education: demonopolization of management, autonomy of universities, academic freedom of teacher and student, independent evaluation of the quality of higher education, development of science in universities, which corresponds to the desire of the state to create a competitive environment in the higher education market. The new law defines the conceptual principles of modernization of higher education, which meet the goals and objectives of the EU educational programs Tempus and Erasmus +: integration of Ukrainian higher education into the European Higher Education Area by implementing the provisions and principles of the Bologna Process; three-cycle structure of higher education; quality assurance of higher education and science by developing an independent system of quality assurance in higher education academic mobility; integration of education, science and innovation; academic, staff, organizational, financial and economic autonomy of higher education institutions; cooperation between universities and business” (Holiuk, 2015).

This comprehensive approach to updating the content of education to achieve relevant results has allowed educators and practitioners to reach a new level of training specialists, which is based on the competency-based approach

and involves mastering not only Hard Skills, but also the skills that will meet Soft Skills. According to recent research, Soft Skills «should take into account both personal traits (extraversion, friendliness, openness of experience, optimism, initiative, creativity, critical thinking, time management), interpersonal skills (communication skills, teamwork and leadership skills, fluency in languages), and problem solving and decision making skills» (Lazarenko, 2017; Lazarenko, 2020)

All this should create the prerequisites for the formation of a new quality not only of education itself, but also specialists in professions and areas on which the well-being of the nation and citizens, the socio-economic and socio-cultural well-being of all segments of the population of the state depend.

### **Methodology of Research**

The purpose of our study was:

- to determine the theoretical basis for the introduction of the terminology «specialist of socio-economic profile» in the scientific and pedagogical literature and studies of Ukrainian scientists;
- to study and briefly present the existing practices of interaction with students, which are proposed and integrated from European countries into the practice of training future specialists during their studies at universities;
- to form a methodological proposal to determine the impact of the proposed pedagogical technologies on the formation of the experience of social inclusion in future specialists of socio-economic profile.

### **Results of the research**

Thus, following the trends in the education and training of future specialists, we had an opportunity to trace the shift in emphasis that has occurred in recent years. For example, most of the higher education institutions, including classical pedagogical universities, have switched to competency-based training; the share of practice-oriented classes and the inclusion of student youth in the activities of organizations, institutions and institutions during internships as well as during classroom sessions has increased. In some cases, student youth are involved as part of independent work of volunteer and grant socially significant projects, learning to work in a team and lead a team during such activities.

But these changes are impossible without understanding the essence of training specialists socio-economic profile, gradually entering the terminological vocabulary of the scientific and pedagogical community. It should be noted that this term came to pedagogy by economic research, partly affecting psychological research related to the level of happiness and well-being of the

individual compared with the intellectual level and poverty. In this direction we also turned to the studies of social inclusion and its indicators, prescribed for the countries of Europe (Atkinson et al., 2002), which determine the direction of public policy and the functioning of the state to maintain the environment of inclusion and diversity.

Among these indicators, there are three areas that must be taken into account in our educational system in order to achieve the maximum possible effect of the goals set for the development of the citizen-professional and the state. These are «social context» (general indicators that are not direct policy goals, but are important for understanding the social landscape); «social status» (describing the social results of political influence); and «societal response» (Development, 2001). We do not turn to contemporary documents on this problem, for it was in 2001 that the foundations were laid for the European Community to continue to seek the implementation of policies aimed at improving the socio-economic situation through indicators of self-sufficiency, equality, health and social cohesion in each individual state.

In addition, it is important to remember that the value of the indicators lies in their focus and identification of social problems and subsequently these indicators become indicators of the social progress of each state, the goal of which is common to all members of the European Union to ensure social integration through the method of open coordination and further measurement and comparison of social results (Atkinson et al., 2002). At the same time, in order not to delve into all of the world and national indicators that affect important for our work processes of training specialists of socio-economic profile and relevant interaction in conditions of social inclusion, we propose to go to the Ukrainian scientific research, which will reveal the essence of this topic for our state and the policy aimed at European integration processes.

Thus, we have taken as a basis the scientific research that is offered to society and brought up for discussion since 2015, where it is assumed that every structure, state or non-state organization, enterprise must be socially responsible, so that in practice we will be able to use “an effective tool for responding to various socio-economic challenges” (Zvonar, 2017). After all, this approach to the formation of domestic policy to ensure the quality of life, addressing economic, social and other issues that the state cares about through a system of social responsibility, will help to establish the necessary social interactions (Zvonar, 2015). To continue the issue of social responsibility raised, in particular its importance in economic activity, we must understand that the subjects of such activity are the individuals and institutions involved in socio-economic relations. “Of the latter, three institutional communities are most clearly visible – public power (the state), market (business), civil society (society)» and cooperation between them «must be oriented to the formation and development of appropriate behavioral attitudes of individuals... and to the

formation of a system of partnerships between socio-economic institutions” (Zvonar, 2017).

So, we proceed from the fact that modern society is not only a part of a certain social, socio-economic or socio-cultural strategy, which is led by institutions and each citizen of the state, we must understand the value of each individual and his contribution to the development of the state. What is possible only with qualitative approach to revision of strategy of education of specialists of socio-economic profile (specialists in law, lawyers, managers, economists, administrative personnel and heads, actually scientific-pedagogical and pedagogical personnel) taking into account competences directed on socially responsible behavior, especially in the branches most influencing the standard of living of population.

Therefore, we must train specialists of socio-economic profile who will ensure quality cooperation of society, business and state, will form their activities taking into account social responsibility at all levels of interaction. Moreover, to define social responsibility as basic, in our opinion, can significantly influence the issues of social inclusion. As noted by European researchers (Atkinson et al., 2002), social inclusion must be based on understanding and acceptance of each individual, his/her individuality; acceptance of the influence of «social indicators» on his/her life activity and ability to be an active member of civil society, to influence politics and socio-economic changes in the state.

As the greatest value of the state is a person, the country that will use social responsibility as a basic strategy in the training of professionals will have the largest and most powerful capital to «manage crises» by using human resources. After all, the better the conditions for personal development, its opportunities for social realization and self-realization, the more effective is state and business management, the higher is the standard of living and the welfare of the nation. Therefore, the training of specialists of socio-economic profile in each of the branches of human life at the level of the state and with the support of business and civil society should gradually improve the life of society, reduce the pressure of the existing level of «poverty» on the daily choices of citizens, contribute to the formation of a new model of national identity, consciousness and behavior.

But the main question, which was and is part of the reform of the education system, certain provisions governing the labor market, remains – how exactly should we achieve a high level of social responsibility? What technologies should we implement at all levels of education in order to «output» a «maximally ideal» specialist who meets the needs of the state and other institutions of socio-economic profile?

In addition, we must not only form a socially responsible citizen in his professional activities, we must change the approach to the individual.

Following the world and European criteria of a «welfare» society, we should pay special attention to the issues of inclusion, in particular social inclusion. Without which it is impossible to consider social responsibility, because these are pieces of the same puzzle, as social inclusion is the root and basic concept of respect for the individual and social equality. And the interaction between these components is a prerequisite for achieving the goals of a national human capital strategy.

So, moving on to the second question of our study, we tried to outline the most effective pedagogical technologies, forms and methods of formation of social responsibility, which in the framework of European integration in education were borrowed, adapted to the needs of Ukrainian society, state and other institutions in training specialists of socio-economic profile. Among the proposed and implemented in practice during the study of future specialists were the following pedagogical technologies, forms, methods and techniques of work:

- discussion groups, group debates, discussion games and role-playing games with a discussion of a particular topic from the perspective of professionals, the public, children, parents and other stakeholders in a simulated situation, allowing the practical development of analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to manage time, teamwork and leadership skills, problem-solving situations (Demchenko, 2010; Elina, 2013; Flynn & Klein, 2001; Kitzinger, 1994)
- the «philosophical dialogue» method, which supports the previous positions of discussion and debate, but at the same time allows you to go step by step into the problematic issue and teach you to «listen and hear» the other person. (Helskog, 2019; Lymar & Yu, 2019)
- «focus groups», «round tables» and «expert groups», allowing for in-depth elaboration of the issues raised, form the skills of presentation of the results worked out by the participants in the process both for those involved in the topic and the general public. In addition, they influence the development of creative thinking of the participants, who must work through existing material, develop new directions for its use and implementation in practice and present it qualitatively through printed and audiovisual media, infographics and/or social networks (Iliffe et al., 2008; Kitzinger, 1994);
- research tasks with competitive elements, where the group that finds the most effective and creative way to solve the posed question/problem wins (Elina, 2013);
- reviewing scientific articles examining two or more approaches to the same problem (Elina, 2013);
- a series of mini-reports and short interviews on a seminar/workshop/laboratory topic (Elina, 2013);

- summer schools as events to engage student youth in volunteer activities, aimed at building basic skills for working in an environment of inclusion and diversity, developing empathy and teamwork, in some cases facilitating the learning of languages, in particular sign language (Hartas et al., 2008);
- in the use of empowerment pedagogy (Hroshovenko, 2018);
- participation in the implementation of social projects (Sarancha & Khilya, 2020).

Each of the offered technologies had the purpose directed on development of competences necessary for the further professional formation of the expert of a socio-economic profile. Allowed to reveal potential of student youth and to direct work of each participant (individual and team) on the decision of the tasks offered in the final socially significant project of territorial community with which cooperated the university at realization of the program of selective disciplines.

It is worth noting that to experimentally test in practice the qualitative and quantitative indicators of the impact of the proposed technologies we involved students from three faculties, who joined the study of selected disciplines related to issues of inclusion and diversity, gender studios. At the same time, as we noted, in the process of work we developed a sequence of using and conducting diagnostics of students' inclusion, their motivation to study selected disciplines and awareness of their position in the issues of social inclusion.

We also had the opportunity to form a number of reflective interviews and diagnostic cards based on the entrance diagnostics, which allowed further to determine the effectiveness of the proposed program, the feasibility of the used proposed pedagogical technologies and adjust the pedagogical strategy within the selective disciplines to achieve the main goal – the training of a specialist of socio-economic profile.

Thus, if we consider the pre-diagnostic card, it consisted of a set of techniques that allowed us to identify the level of social inclusion of the students themselves, their «reaction» to «otherwise». Among them:

- diagnosis of the level of multicomunicative empathy (Iusupov, 2002);
- diagnostic technique for stress resistance and social adaptation of Holmes and Rahe's (Holmes, 2009);
- diagnostic technique for the level of social frustration L.Y. Vassermana (Vasserman, 2009).

During the survey at the end of the experiment we used the same techniques as we did during the first stage, supplemented by a reflexive interview on the results of participation in a socially significant project and an art-therapy technique with subsequent commentary by the respondent – «Intuitive Drawing». In this part of the experiment 5 teachers were involved,

who made up a multidisciplinary team, facilitated the relevant classroom and out-of-classroom lessons, provided supervision support to the participants of the experiment during the social projects and volunteer activities. On the part of the students we involved at the first stage 58 persons from three specialties: 231 Social work (15 respondents), 013 Primary education (26 respondents) and 081 Law (17 respondents).

As the experiment continues and we continue to collect and process data in accordance with the proposed program of sample disciplines, it is quite early to draw serious conclusions on the results of the first successful engagement of future socioeconomic specialists in socially responsible activities, although at the same time we have preliminary data on the effectiveness of the program, the need to make adjustments and quantitative data on the percentage of students who continued cooperation with state and public organizations.

## **Conclusions**

So, in the process of presenting the results of the study we were able to characterize the root causes of the emergence in the scientific and pedagogical community of the need for training specialists of socio-economic profile. Briefly outlined the main indicators of social inclusion, which became a prerequisite for choosing social responsibility as a basic concept of training specialists and formation of professional and inclusive competencies to solve socio-economic, socio-cultural problems of the state and support for European integration processes in politics and education reforms.

We also briefly presented those practices of interaction with students that are proposed and integrated from European countries into the practice of training future specialists during their studies at higher educational institutions of Ukraine. We described a preliminary methodological proposal to determine the impact of the used pedagogical technologies on the formation of the experience of social inclusion in future specialists of socio-economic profile.

Of course, for qualitative analysis of the data in accordance with the diagnostic slices obtained during the first year of implementation of comprehensive inclusion of students during elective disciplines in socially significant activities for the formation of social responsibility, in our opinion, is not enough. After all, to verify the effectiveness we must conduct at least three or four cuts of future specialists' involvement and determine their level of professional and inclusive competence to fulfill the state order aimed at improving the standard of living in our state. What will be done during the next two years.



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