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Ukrainian Refugee Children in Czech Schools: Integration in Wartime Conditions

Dr. Oksana Stupak , Jarmila Bradová , Lenka ?ulíková , Miroslav Jur?ík , Martin Fico

Masaryk University, Czech Republic

Abstract

After the onset of full-scale military hostilities on the territory of Ukraine in 2022, large-scale forced displacement took place, as a result of which millions of Ukrainian citizens, predominantly women and children, were forced to seek temporary refuge abroad. The Czech Republic became one of the European Union countries that provided shelter to more than 300,000 Ukrainian refugees. Educational institutions played an important role in children's initial adaptation by providing access to education, language support, and psychological and social assistance.

The issue of adaptation and integration of Ukrainian children into the Czech educational system has been the subject of scientific research since 2022, including the project "On the Road to Inclusion of Ukrainian Refugees in the Environment of Czech Lower-Secondary Schools" (2025–2029), funded by the Czech Science Foundation and implemented at the Department of Education, Masaryk University.

The findings reveal several key trends among participants in the educational process. These include the gradual reduction in financial support for Ukrainian children and their families; limited access to supplementary Czech language learning; a low level of social integration, reflected in few intercultural friendships; the tendency toward closed microgroups among Ukrainian children; and a sense of social tension among parents, despite their active efforts toward integration through employment and improvement of their language proficiency.

Thus, the results confirm the relevance and scientific significance of further research on the integration of Ukrainian children and their families into Czech society, especially in the context of the educational environment, which requires a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach.

Keywords: Ukrainian Refugee Children; Adaptation; Integration; Czech Educational System